JAMAICA HANSARD

Parliamentary Proceedings

of the

HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015 VOL. 40 #1

APRIL 3, 2014 – JULY 29, 2014
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JAMAICA HANSARD

PROCEEDINGS
of the
HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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JAMAICA HANSARD

PROCEEDINGS
of the
HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015 VOL. 40 #1

APRIL 3, 2014 – JULY 29, 2014

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THURSDAY, April 3, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives met with the Senate at Gordon House, at 10.54 a.m. for the Delivery of the Throne Speech.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM MCNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of

Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern

MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central

MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern

MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

His Excellency the Governor-General, the MOST HONOURABLE SIR PATRICK LINTON ALLEN, inspected a Guard of Honour supplied by the Jamaica Regiment outside Gordon House.

The President and Members of the Senate entered the Chamber and took their seats.

Announced by the Marshal, His Excellency entered the Chamber and proceeded to the Dais.

His Excellency then directed the Clerk to the Legislature to summon the Members of the House of Representatives to the place appointed for the meeting of the Senate.

The Clerk did as instructed and accordingly, the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives entered and took their seats.

PRAYERS

REVEREND EVERALD GALBRAITH, President of the Jamaica Council of Churches, offered prayers.

Let us pray:

Almighty God from whom all wisdom and power hath derived, we beseech Thee to so direct and prosper the deliberations of this Parliament now assembled that all things may be ordered upon the best and surest foundations of the glory of Thy Name and for the safety, honour and welfare of the people of this island.

Bless our Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth; Philip, Duke of Edinburgh; Charles, Prince of Wales, and all the Royal Family. Give grace to all who exercise authority in our Commonwealth that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety may be established among us. Especially we pray for

the Governor-General of our island, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Senators and Members of the House of Representatives that they may be enabled faithfully to perform the responsible duties of their high office.

All this we ask for Thy Name's sake. Amen.

Let's join together in the saying of the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His face shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon us and give us peace, now and always. Amen.

The GOVERNOR-GENERAL: Please be seated.

THE PROCLAMATION

By His Excellency, the Most Honourable SIR PATRICK LINTON ALLEN, Member of the Order of the Nation, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Commander of the Order of Distinction, Governor-General of Jamaica:

Whereas it is provided by subsection (1) of section 63 of the Constitution of Jamaica that each session of Parliament of Jamaica shall be held at such place and shall commence at such time as the Governor-General may, by proclamation appoint;

And Whereas it is expedient that a session of the Parliament of Jamaica should be held at such place and commence at such time as shall hereinafter appear:

Now Therefore, I, Patrick Linton Allen, Member of the Order of the Nation, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Commander of the Order of Distinction, Governor-General of Jamaica, in exercise of the power conferred on me by subsection (1) of section 63 of the Constitution of Jamaica, do hereby proclaim and make known that a session of the Parliament of Jamaica shall be held at George William Gordon House in the parish of Kingston, commencing at 11:00 a.m. on the third day of April 2014, given under my hand and the broad seal of Jamaica at King's House this 19th day of March in the year of our Lord 2014, and the sixty-third year of the reign of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

God Save the Queen.

The GOVERNOR-GENERAL: President and Members of the Senate, Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives,

I am pleased to present to you the Throne Speech which outlines my Government's plans and programmes for the year 2014/2015 under the theme "Going for Growth: Creating Opportunities".

Honourable Members, we meet to launch the activities for a new Parliamentary year and to set out the next steps as we continue to improve the lives of our people and further develop our country.

Today, the state of our economy is stronger than it was one year ago. (Applause) In this new spring, the signs of growth are appearing. The country has recorded three consecutive quarters of growth. (Applause)

The year just ended; 2013-2014 was challenging.

The international economy remained sluggish and the balanced sheets of many corporations continued to be impaired and impacted by low levels of consumer demand globally and locally.

Navigating these uncertainties required strong leadership and a steady hand. The Government was determined and it stayed the course in respect of its economic policies. (Applause)

Tough decisions had to be made. In so doing, Government relied on the understanding, resilience and goodwill of the Jamaican people. (Applause) Our people have shown an awareness of the prevailing economic conditions. They have demonstrated their willingness to make the sacrifices to get our economy on the right path. Investors, both domestic and foreign, also made significant sacrifices.

We have forged a partnership with the people. We are creating a partnership society. Our country has maintained stability. (Applause)

Despite the challenges, the Government is meeting its obligations to its international partners, restructuring the economy and improving our governance system for the benefit of our people.

Over 107 reform measures are being implemented.

In March 2014, we successfully met the third review of Jamaica's performance by the IMF under the Extended Fund Facility. (Applause) This resulted in a further drawdown of approximately US$71.4 Million. To date, the Government has met all quantitative fiscal and monetary performance criteria under the programme. (Applause)

The Government is also determined to reduce the huge debt burden which has limited our country's development. For many decades, Jamaica has borrowed too much and saved too little. In order to build a resilient economy, we must reduce our debt to manageable levels. As a country, we must begin to live within our means. (Applause)

Honourable Members, as we reflect on the past year, it is important to acknowledge your role in the passage of some significant pieces of legislation. Forty-two (42) Bills were tabled in the calendar year. This is nearly double the average of 22 Bills per year in recent times.

(Applause) Of those 42 Bills tabled, 40 were passed by the Parliament. (Applause)

These include:

- **The Fiscal Incentives (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act** to introduce a general system of tax incentives applicable across all industries, ensuring a level playing field for all investors. (Applause)
- **The Securities (Amendment) Act** to ban unlawful financial organizations and to facilitate the regulation of collective investment schemes. (Applause)
- **The Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) Act;** as well as **The Public Bodies (Management and Accountability) (Amendment) Act** to introduce stronger fiscal controls for the Government and to ensure that our debt is reduced to manageable levels over the next decade. (Applause)
- **The Companies (Amendment) Act** to provide for the use of a single form for the registration of companies and business names, making us more business friendly. (Applause)
- **The Security (Interests in Personal Property) Act** to reform the collateral system in Jamaica and provide a modern, web-based registration system to reduce risks and enhance the flow of credit in our economy. (Applause)
- **The Charities Act** to define and register Charities and give them "one stop" for accessing tax relief. (Applause)
- **The Registration (Strata Titles) (Amendment) Act** to improve the ability of townhouse and apartment schemes to manage, control and administer the common property and resolve disputes. (Applause)
- **The Committal Proceedings Act** to replace the existing and outdated procedure of preliminary examinations with a paper-based system. It will seek to put in place new committal proceedings in the Resident Magistrate's Court to determine if a case must go forward to trial. (Applause)
- **The Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Act** to bring the Act in line with international requirements and ensure that Jamaica achieves good standing with the International Financial Action Task Force. (Applause)
- **The Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organizations) Act** for the suppression and disruption of criminal gangs which are behind about 70% of the murders in our country. (Applause)

Honourable Members, in the year ahead, some long-awaited Bills will come before you for deliberation and passage.

Among these are:

- **The Integrity Commission Bill** to establish a single Anti-Corruption entity to assume the functions of the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, the Integrity Commission and the Office of the Contractor General. The National Contracts Commission will be placed with its own independent administrative structure.
- **The Evidence (Amendment) Bill** to provide for a more efficient trial process, by facilitating a more straightforward introduction of computer records into evidence. It will allow for the uncontested reports of experts to be admitted into evidence without the need to call the expert.
- **A National Disabilities Bill** to provide for further protection and legal entrenchment of the rights of persons with disabilities. (Applause)
- **A Building Bill** to improve the efficiency of the building approval process and provide a framework for the effective management of the building industry.
- **A Bill to Amend the Administrator General's Act** to address the difficulties in the administration of multi-generational estates, as well as the modernization of the rules governing the probate of wills.
- **The Occupational Safety and Health Act** will provide the framework for securing the protection of workers. It also establishes a joint Health and Safety Council to monitor the safety and well-being of workers. (Applause)

The Bills we have already passed and those that will come before you are part of the broader strategy of the Government's growth and development agenda.

Honourable Members, the Government has set some fundamental objectives for this Budget Year. It will continue efforts to keep growing the economy, reduce the debt, and give our children a future of low inflation and full employment. (Applause) We will continue the transformation in education and pursue economic independence for our people.

Important gains have been made and the Government is determined to continue its efforts to alleviate social problems. Programmes aimed at promoting respect for life and stronger values will be implemented. The Government will be unrelenting in its efforts to reduce crime and build safer communities. (Applause)

Honourable Members, in order to achieve sustainable growth, we must change the way we do business. (Applause)

We are taking a joined-up approach to the facilitation of business. The Public Sector Transformation and Modernization entities have been mandated to ensure that, above everything else, they focus on cutting the red

tape, particularly with respect to the Development Approval Process. (Applause)

We have already started with the Business Registration Super Form. This allows for the "one-stop" incorporation of companies and registration of business names, as well as the provision of certification in relation to the TRN, NIS, GCT, NHT and TCC for immediate business start-ups. (Applause) We have also expanded e-services to facilitate online applications for Tax Compliance Certificates (TCC) and Trade and Business Licences. (Applause)

To promote small business development, the Government will intensify the implementation of the MSME policy. (Applause)

The Government cannot do it alone. It recognizes that the cooperation of all stakeholders, including the private sector, trade unions and NGOs, is critical to achieving the Macro-Economic, Social and Growth Agendas.

We have been proactive in ensuring that the Partnership for Jamaica succeeds. It was given new life in October 2012. This was followed by the historic signing of a social contract with the private sector, trade unions and civil society. (Applause)

The agreement focuses on four areas for the 2013-2016 period:

- Fiscal Consolidation (with Social Protection and Inclusion)
- Rule of Law Adherence (and Timely Justice Outcomes)
- Ease of Doing Business and Employment Creation, and
- Energy Diversification and Conservation.

The Economic Policy Oversight Committee (EPOC) co-chaired by the Government and the private sector (leader) and the Energy Monitoring Committee (EMC) also co-chaired by the Government and the private sector, are further examples of the inclusive and consultative approach that the Government intends to maintain.

We are making progress. (Applause) Among the sectors we will rely on to continue and sustain economic growth are: Agriculture, Mining, ICT, Tourism, Construction and Housing.

Agriculture

Honourable Minister and Members, it is anticipated that the agricultural sector will record significant growth this year. This follows seeing the strong performances in the second (5.4%), third (10%), and fourth (13.1%) quarters of the last calendar year.
Seven (7) of the nine (9) planned Agro-parks are in operation.

Energy

Energy remains a major challenge. While the process continues in relation to the significant base-load project, we are becoming more aggressive with the implementation of renewable assets. Three (3) companies are

concluding arrangements to install 78 Megawatts of wind and solar generation.

The Government is determined to lead in the area of energy conservation and efficiency. We are already seeing significant savings with our joint GOJ/IDB project.

Mining

The state of the economies of the major markets of Jamaica's bauxite and alumina means that our local industry has operated at just over half its capacity for the last five years. We are however, seeing a return to growth with 10% in the last quarter and we expect this trend to continue. Major plans are underway to reduce the dependence on oil at the JAMALCO and Ewarton alumina refineries with the use of alternative sources of energy.

ICT

The Government recognizes the importance of growing the ICT sector. It enhances business productivity and competitiveness. It is also a source of significant employment of our people. The Government has renewed the licenses and issued new spectrum frequencies to our major telecoms providers. This is valued at US$110 Million or approximately J$12 Billion. We anticipate improved services and the roll-out of a full data network.

We are seeing growth return to the ICT sector with the expansion of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) activities and in new areas like animation and software development. Opportunities exist for those who wish to participate and contribute to the country's growth and development.

Work is proceeding to provide ICT access to citizens across the island. Eight Hundred Million Dollars is being spent on 27 thousand tablets for schools which will begin arriving in May. In every parish, at multiple locations, we have provided public facilities where any Jamaican can have full access to a range of data services, including the Internet, at broadband speed.

Tourism

Last year we welcomed for the first time our two millionth stopover visitor. For the first time, we also earned over US$2 Billion Dollars. This year, the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment's priority focus includes increasing visitor arrivals; improving linkages between tourism and other sectors as well as enhancing visitor experiences; strengthening and positioning entertainment as a tool for development; and improving the welfare of tourism workers within a sustainably managed sector.

Construction

Growth is returning to the construction sector. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of construction to the growth of the economy and the provision of jobs.

In the area of road infrastructure, the Linstead to Moneague leg of the North-South Highway will be opened to commuters in time for Independence. Work on the other two sections (Ferry to Linstead and Moneague to Ocho Rios) is underway and, in some instances, ahead of schedule. This US$600 Million investment will improve the ease of travel, reduce energy costs, provide national productivity gains and open more of our country to further development in housing and commercial activities.

As we move to develop our logistics capabilities during this year, the privatization of the Kingston Container Terminal (KCT) is expected to be completed, as well as the commencement of dredging of the Kingston Harbour.

Cabinet has approved the signing of a non-binding agreement between the Government, the Port Authority of Jamaica and China Harbour Engineering and Construction Company (CHEC) to design, finance, develop, operate and transfer a Port Container Terminal in Jamaica and an Industrial Park. The Framework Agreement allows for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as a precondition for any further work. We continue to position ourselves to take advantage of the expansion of the Panama Canal. Some of the projects, while game-changing, will not bear fruits overnight.

Social Protection

As we grow the economy, we will continue to focus on the social protection and upliftment of our people, especially the vulnerable. The Government will spend over $4 Billion for the protection of vulnerable groups, including PATH beneficiaries, children, persons with disabilities, the elderly and the unemployed. Seventy-five Million Dollars ($75M) this amount will be spent on Phase II of the Short Term Poverty Intervention Programme.

The Jamaica Emergency Employment Programme (JEEP) will move into high gear during the new financial year, with a focus on community and labour-intensive projects throughout the country. Special preferences will be given to small contractors, by the NCC as Grades 3 & 4.

Youth

The Government places a premium on the young people because they hold the destiny of our nation in their hands.

This year will see:

- The construction of more Youth Information Centres;
- The Enhancement of the ‘I Say I’ Programme which seeks to prevent and reduce the incidence of youth violence;
- The Strengthening of the new NYS Graduate Work Employment programme which has already placed over 350 University Graduates in work internships;

- Expanding Youth Training workshops. Last year 9,000 youths benefitted from training and short-term work experience.

Education

While education is a lifelong matter, it is largely one for the youth. Our initiatives, with the support of key partners, will have a positive impact on the development of our youth.

In the education sector we will see:

- The conversion of 70 basic schools into Infant Departments and Infant Schools;
- The recruitment and deployment of 90 Reading Coaches in 495 primary level institutions;
- The training of 100 Early Childhood practitioners;
- The full integration of TVET programmes and practices into the formal education system;
- The implementation or enhancement of ICT to improve administration and curriculum delivery; and
- The modernization of the School-Feeding programme.

Security

Of all the challenges in the past 40 years, none has more threatened our sense of national well-being than the explosion of violent crimes. One does not have to be attacked to be a victim. The woman who runs to her car after leaving work at night is a victim. Those families locked up behind burglar bars are victims, as are the children who cannot go out to play or walk home from school without being afraid.

In December 2013, the Unite for Change (UFC) initiative, aimed at building a national movement to encourage positive social behaviour and promote a safer, gentler society was launched. This important prevention initiative was born out of the realization that violence is the outcome of dysfunction at many different levels in our society including family, school, community, social services, and popular culture.

The year 2013 saw an increase in the number of homicides, however, in the first quarter of 2014, we have returned to a downward trend in all major categories of crimes. There is a 12% reduction in murders and a 13% reduction in the overall category of serious and violent crimes. Police fatal shootings have been reduced by over 50%, reflecting better operational planning and improved community cooperation.

The long contemplated merger of the JCF and the ISCF has been approved by Cabinet and will be implemented in this fiscal year. It will eliminate duplication in the command structure and release more personnel for operational duty.

Significant capital investment will be made to upgrade the technology available for the investigations and operations of the police, including communication, palm and

fingerprint identification, and cyber forensic systems.

Sport

Sport has been a unifying force in our country and is one area that gives us global visibility, glory and a competitive advantage. Work is proceeding on the establishment of an Athletes Insurance Fund. The National Sport Council is working on plans for Financing and Economic Development; Athlete Development and Well-being; Capacity-building and Infrastructure; Standards, Regulation and Anti-Doping.

Health

The health of our people is critical to the development of our nation. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the National Health Fund and the CHASE Fund, will be establishing two Linear Accelerators for improved cancer care in Montego Bay, St. James, and later at the St. Joseph's Hospital site in Vineyard Town, St. Andrew. (Applause)

- The Ministry will continue to upgrade health facilities throughout the country. The establishment of a Children's and Adolescent Hospital in Montego Bay is progressing. (Applause)
- Efforts are underway to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as high blood pressure and diabetes. (Applause)
- The anti-smoking legislation is bearing fruit. Asthmatic admissions to hospitals have been reduced. (Applause)

Housing

Safe, secure, affordable housing is a basic human need and meeting the housing needs of Jamaicans is a major preoccupation of the Government.

(Applause by Government Members)

During the last financial year, the National Housing Trust spent $22 Billion, and for this year, a similar amount will be spent. The main areas of expenditure will be on open market loans, Build On Own Land, home improvement loans and the construction of solutions, particularly, the small contractors programme. During the last fiscal year, 2,700 housing solutions were completed and $3.1 Billion in refunds, paid to 150,000 contributors.

(Applause by Government Members)

This year, the National Housing Trust will complete over 2,000 more housing solutions.

The Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, has also constructed houses across the island. Among them, traditional units and the unique programme between the JEEP Secretariat and Food for the Poor to provide solutions for needy households. Just under

1,200 units have been delivered since the inception of the project.

(Applause by Government Members)

Environment

Jamaica has a number of environmental challenges to which greater attention will be given. They include: the reduction of hillside erosion on farmlands and along roadways; the denudation of the country's forests; the disposal of sewage, garbage, and containers, including plastic bottles. The recent launch of the PET Recycling Project is a small but important step in the right direction.

(Applause by Government Members)

It aims to reclaim 35 per cent of plastic bottles over the first three years. This is another positive outcome of JEEP, and will contribute $50 Million, supported by the private sector with $23 Million annually. At least 300 jobs will be created.

(Applause by Government Members)

Climate Change

Apart from our people, the natural environment is our most precious resource. Its protection is critical to our economic and social development. This year, the Government will:

- Increase awareness in the public sector and the wider society on climate change;
- Generate information to guide Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies, Policies and Plans;
- Develop technical expertise within the Climate Change Division of the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change;

and,

- Coordinate and facilitate Jamaica's strategic and unified position in the regional and global negotiations.

Water

The provision of potable water to all households is a priority of the Government. There is a comprehensive set of programmes and projects planned for the new fiscal year. One such is the rehabilitation of 26 well sources, pumping stations, and reservoirs, at a cost of $1.7 Billion. Some 750,000 persons will benefit.

(Applause by Government Members)

Foreign Policy

The thrust of Jamaica's Foreign Policy has been to fashion a strategic vision for the country's role in international affairs. Integral to this, has been active engagement with other countries on matters of interest to Jamaica as a small developing country. The third United Nations Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) will be held in September of 2014 in Samoa. The SIDS Conference will play an important role in placing the concerns of SIDS squarely on the international agenda. Jamaica will be focusing on the issue of Small States on many fronts,

including within the Commonwealth where Jamaica is a member of the Ministerial Open-Ended Group on Small States.

(Applause by Government Members)

The year Twenty-fourteen (2014), marks the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of the International Seabed Authority in Kingston.

(Applause by Government Members)

The Authority has completed a number of regulations which govern the exploration of the deep seabed, and is about to embark on the process that will allow for active exploration.

Jamaica will continue to promote its national interest by increasing the level of consultation and engagement with the Jamaican private sector on trade policy. Through our overseas missions, we will continue to target business opportunities and investments.

(Applause)

The Government values the interest and support of the diaspora in the country's development and will continue to strengthen linkages.

Work is far advanced on the development of a Diaspora Policy which will complement the National Policy on International Migration and Development.

(Applause)

Conclusion

In concluding Honourable Members, let us make this another year of action and achievements. Jamaicans want more focus on their lives, their hopes, and their aspirations. We can all agree that regardless of colour, class or party affiliation, there should be equal opportunity for all. (Applause)

Our success should depend, not on the circumstance of birth, but on the strength of our work ethic and the scope of our dreams. (Applause)

Every Jamaican child should feel that if they dream and work hard, they, like the Prime Minister, the daughter of a farmer and a housewife, and the Leader of the Opposition, the son of a civil servant and a farmer, can take on the mantle of political leadership in our country.

(Applause)

My fellow Jamaicans, our economic freedom, and maintaining our strong democratic principles must remain our ideals.

As we enter our 52nd year as an independent nation, together let us put our shoulders to the wheel so we can create, build and expand the possibilities for everyone. We can promote justice, fairness and equality under the law, build stronger families and communities and a stronger and prosperous Jamaica.

(Applause)

We have triumphed too often to stop believing in ourselves and our possibilities. We are a great people; we are a great nation. Let us unite and let us build. (Applause)

Honourable Members, the Estimates of Expenditure will be presented later today. May the Eternal Father, our God, bless our land and guard us with His mighty hand.

I thank you.

(Applause)

The Governor-General vacates the Chamber at the conclusion of the Speech at 11:35 a.m. He was followed by Members of the House of Representatives, led by the Speaker.

(Applause)

THURSDAY, April 3, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:27 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM MCNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State

in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western,

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern

MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern

MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern

MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Hugh Buchanan.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 36**
- Motor Vehicle Import Policy (MVIP) **Ministry Paper No. 37**
  South East Regional Health Authority Annual Report for the period July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009
- **Ministry Paper No. 38**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Firearm Licensing Authority for the period September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013
- Bureau of Standards Jamaica Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year ending March 2012
- Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year ending March 31, 2015
- Jamaica Public Bodies Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure For the Year ending March 2015

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move the following motion:

Be it Resolved that the Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year ending March 31, 2015 and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure on Public Bodies 2014/2015 which were laid on the Table of the House on the 3rd day of April 2014 be referred to the Standing Finance Committee of the whole House of Representatives consisting of all Members of the House for consideration and report.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today I will move suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take this Motion.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE HOUSE FIRST OBTAINED

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I now move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled: The Banking Services Act, 2014.

Bill shortly entitled:

The Banking Services Act, 2014,

read a first time.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of second reading of the Bill. Mr. Speaker, I also beg to give notice that at a later stage today, I will move for the Suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take second reading of the Bill and to refer it to a Select Committee of this House, which will sit jointly with a similar Committee to be appointed by the Senate for consideration and report.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Labour, I now move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill

shortly entitled: The Employment (Flexi-Work Arrangements) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014.

Bill shortly entitled:

The Employment (Flexi-Work Arrangements) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014,

read a first time.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister, I beg to give notice of second reading of the Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I now move on behalf of the Minister of Health to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled: "The Quarantine (Validation and Indemnification) Act, 2014"

Bill shortly entitled:

The Quarantine (Validation and Indemnification) Act, 2014,

read a first time.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister I beg to give notice of second reading of the Bill.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will now deal with the two matters he addressed earlier.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips. (Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I now move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion in relation to the Estimates of Expenditure, notice of which I gave earlier.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow the Minister to take the motion, notice of which was given earlier. Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, as is usual, the Estimates of Expenditure and the Public Sector Consolidated Estimates of Expenditure and the Public Bodies Revenues and Expenditures are referred to Standing Finance Committee for consideration. I would like to indicate that it is proposed that the Standing Finance Committee will meet on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of next week. That is to say April 8, 9 and 10 beginning at 10:00 a.m. respectively. Of course, Mr. Speaker, the discussions, I would hope, would take place between the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition Business in the House with a view to establishing the arrangements which would guide the work of the Committee.

As I indicated earlier, we are committed to having this exercise take place next year before we reach March 31. But it is also the case Mr. Speaker, that I think you all recognize that we cannot persist with a procedure which requires us to take one month in the budget consideration exercises, including the debate. And so, I state here again, that maybe when the Leader of the Government Business and Leader of Opposition Business meet, they can begin the discussions about an alternative procedure which we would want to put in place for next year as well.

(MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: There is no requirement that we take the three days, but if Members so choose, they are at liberty to do so dispose of their time.

Mr. Speaker, with those remarks, I put the Resolution that the Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year ending March 31, 2015 and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Public Bodies 2014/2015 be referred to the Standing Finance Committee of the House which will meet beginning Tuesday, 8th at 10:00 a.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Motion carried.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I move suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me...

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended for us to do any further business this afternoon. So I therefore move for the adjournment of the Parliament until we meet in the Committee, the Standing Finance Committee - adjourn to the 17th of April, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do adjourn until Thursday the 17th of April, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The House stands adjourned.

The House accordingly adjourned at 2:40 p.m. until Thursday the 17th of April at 2:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, April 17, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:12 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. DR. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of

the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, Attorney General, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western,

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central

MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern

MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Mikael Asher Phillips.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Papers No. 39 - 42**
  Cabinet Agenda Issues dated March 3, March 17, March 24 and March 31, 2014
- **Ministry Paper No. 43**
  Medium Term Debt Management Strategy 2014/15 to 2016/17
- **Ports Management and Security Limited**
  Annual Reports Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Years 2004/2005 to 2012/2013
- **Devon House Development Limited**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the period April 2008 to March 2009
- **The Overseas Examination Commission (OEC)**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the period September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013
- **Bureau of Standards Jamaica**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year 2012/2013
- **Companies Office of Jamaica**
  Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Financial Year 2011/2012 - Tax expenditure estimates 2010/2012
- Public Debt Management Annual Report for the Financial year 2013/ 2014
  Fiscal Policy Paper for the Financial year 2014/15
- Economic and Social Survey Jamaica 2013
- Bank of Jamaica Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the year Ended 31st December 2013
  2013-14 statistical reports
- Report of the Standing Finance Committee of the whole House of Representatives consisting of all Members of the House on the estimates of expenditure for the Financial year ending March 24, 2015 and the Jamaica Public bodies for estimates of revenue and expenditure for the Financial year ending March 2015

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the Report of the Standing Finance Committee of the House of Representatives consisting of all Members of the House on the Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial year ending March 31, 2015 and the Jamaica Public Bodies Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the Financial year ending March 2015.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

> Whereas on the 25th day of March 2014 this Honourable House of Representatives gave approval for the Sessional Select Committees which were appointed in that session of Parliament to continue in this session with unchanged composition of membership, except where necessary on a further motion taken and approved by this Honourable House.
>
> Be it Resolved with reference to the Standing Orders Committee that the name Phillip Paulwell be added thereto.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today, I will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning that at the next meeting of the House I will move to introduce and have read a first time, a Bill shortly entitled: "The Betting, Gaming, and Lotteries (Amendment) Act, 2014".

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to, with your permission, I have indicated that there is some information that I should have received from the Minister. I have just gotten a folder from him and there are - while I have acknowledged receiving what I have gotten there are critical pieces of information that are still missing. Tomorrow being a holiday and Monday being a holiday, I am just wondering what arrangements the Minister has to let me have that information over the weekend or today. This includes incidentally, the arrears in payments of ministries, departments and agencies. And a number of other things that have not been answered in the answers provided.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, all the information that the staff of the ministry has been able to acquire has been handed to the Member. I indicated to him when I gave him this information that there would be additional information that he should receive before the end of this afternoon.

The SPEAKER: Okay, and that includes the list he read out?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Everything that he has asked for that we have, he will get.

The SPEAKER: And those that you do not have?

Dr. PHILLIPS: He can't get it.

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Not funny.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, I am making the point, any information that he has asked for that is in possession of the Government of Jamaica, appropriately collated, he will get. There is nothing that we have that he will not have once we have it. But he might be – I, in fact - the public officials who are putting together the information, under the direction of the Financial Secretary, have been working at great pace since Standing Finance Committee to get the information together, they can only give him what they have. There is no plan to withhold, to disguise, to hide or anything else with the information. So I was just being factual.

(DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM MCNEILL, Westmoreland, Western, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker I just want to remind you that the Honourable Minister had promised to provide the information within one week which would have been Tuesday, past Tuesday, and just to remind that in respect of the arrears owed by ministries, departments and agencies this certainly would be information that the Government has and it must be made available, as I have requested.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that he will get that later today.

(HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, may we recommit item, Notices of Motions given Orally.

The SPEAKER: That is where we are - Notices of Motions given Orally.

(MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, Clarendon, North Central entered and took his seat.)

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, St. Catherine, Eastern entered and took her seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move the following motion:

Be it Resolved that the Report of the Standing Finance Committee of the House of Representatives consisting of all Members of the House and the Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial year ending March 31, 2015, and the Jamaica Public Bodies Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the financial year ending March 2015, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 17th day of April, be approved.

I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today, I will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take this Motion.

I also beg to give notice, that at the next meeting of the House I will move to introduce and have read a first time, A Bill entitled:

"AN Act to apply a sum out of the Consolidated Fund to the service of year ending on the 31st day of March 2015 and to appropriate the sums granted in this session of Parliament".

(MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, Kingston Western, entered and took his seat.)

I also beg to give notice, Mr. Speaker, that at a later stage today, I will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to have the Bill read a first time and commence debate on it.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I now move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion, notice of which I gave earlier.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow the Minister to take the motion, notice of which was given earlier?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the matter has to do with the Standing Orders Committee and it is felt that the House Leader should be on that Committee, so I so move.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I make reference to Item No. 6 on the Order of Business, which stands in the name of the Minister of Finance. It is his intention for the Bill to be examined by a Joint Select Committee of this Parliament for consideration and report. However, for this to be done, Mr. Speaker, the Bill must be read a second time. So, Mr. Speaker, on his behalf, I now move that the Bill be read a second time.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be read a second time.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Bill entitled:

"AN ACT to repeal the Banking Act and the Financial Institutions Act; to amend the Bank of Jamaica Act and the Building Societies Act to make new provision with regard to the supervision of the banks, financial holding companies and other financial institutions, and for connected matters",

read a second time.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I now move on behalf of the Minister of Finance:

Be it Resolved that notwithstanding Standing Order No. 76(1), this Honourable House of Representatives appoint a Select Committee comprising the following Members:

Dr. Hon. Peter Phillips, MP
Hon. Peter Bunting, MP
Hon. Julian Robinson, MP
Mr. Fitz Jackson, MP

Mr. Mikael Phillips, MP
Mr. André Hylton, MP
Mr. Audley Shaw, MP
Mr. Karl Samuda, MP
Mr. Gregory Mair, MP

to sit jointly with a similar Committee to be appointed by the Senate to consider and report on a Bill shortly entitled: "The Banking Services Act, 2014".

Put to the House and agreed to.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I now move for suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion regarding the Report of the Standing Finance Committee. And two, to introduce and have read a first time, a Bill shortly entitled: "The Appropriation Act, 2014", and to commence debate on it.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow the Minister to take the motion, notice of which was given earlier.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I now move:

> Be it Resolved that the Report of the Standing Finance Committee of the House of Representatives consisting of all Members of the House and the Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year ending March 31, 2015, and the Jamaica Public Bodies Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the Financial Year ending March 2015, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 17th day of April, be approved.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I now move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled: "The Appropriation Act, 2014".

Bill shortly entitled:

"The Appropriation Act",

read a first time.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of second reading.

(Applause)

BUDGET DEBATE

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the Budget Debate each year provides us with an opportunity to take stock of our performance over the previous fiscal year and to measure our progress in relation to the targets previously set and to assess the effectiveness of our management of the country's finances.

Let me begin this review by expressing a deep sense of gratitude to a number of people. I begin with the Most Honourable Prime Minister (Applause) for her continued confidence and support. To you Mr. Speaker, for your guidance of this Honourable House even in the most frenzied of times.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I continue to serve this Honourable House at the will and pleasure of my constituents in East Central St. Andrew. (Applause) The fact that they have kept me as their Member of Parliament since they first elected me in 1994, I interpret as an indication that I continue to serve their interests.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

(Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: This job comes with highs and lows and at all times they have been there for me and have never failed to give unreservedly of their love and support. I can hardly thank them enough. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I must commend my Cabinet colleagues for their understanding and the support they demonstrate in managing their respective portfolios in a tight fiscal environment, which affords them fewer resources than they would normally have expected, yet, without fail for every single one, Mr. Speaker, we have offered support and have endured the difficulties, and I am grateful to them. (Applause)

I must also place on record my appreciation for the support of my team in the Ministry and especially my colleague, Minister Horace Dalley (Applause) who shares with me (Applause) the responsibilities of an extremely demanding ministry. Over the last year as the pressure mounted, he proved himself to be more than equal to every occasion.

(Applause)

While assessments of our performance over the past fiscal year may differ, there is one area of consensus and that is the absolute indispensability of the resourceful team, which it has been my privilege to lead.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

(Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: So let me, Mr. Speaker, thank the Financial Secretary and the staff of the Ministry for their unwavering and professional support. (Applause) The Governor of the Bank of Jamaica and the Director General of the Planning Institute of Jamaica, and their respective teams, who continue to go above and beyond the call of duty in the execution of their functions. The staff in the other departments and agencies, which underpin the work of the Ministry, in particular the Development Bank of Jamaica, the EX-IM Bank, STATIN, and I want to recognize the work done by the Board members of the respective institutions, who give of their time in service of Jamaica.

(Applause)

In particular, I would also like to recognize the contribution of the members of my Advisory Group, the Honourable Shirley Tyndall and Mr. Dennis Morrison (Applause) and, Mr. Speaker, my personal staff for their patience and commitment and for the endurance of my temperamental moments (Laughter) particularly in those difficult moments that come with the territory.

And let me also take this opportunity to thank my family, my wife, whose caring advice and love (Applause) has enabled me to survive the daily rigors of public life. And my children, one of whom has been foolhardy enough to follow me (Laughter) into service in this Chamber. (Applause)

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the countless Jamaicans from all walks of life who through their letters, their telephone calls and text messages, their prayers have sought to reach out to me and offer me their support.

(Applause)

It is important that we recall the situation that existed when I opened this debate last

year. While the Economic Reform Programme was in place, our negotiations with the International Monetary Fund had not been concluded. Our reserves stood at less than US$800 Million and were declining. The multilateral institutions and critical bilateral partners were not providing support, consequent upon the fact that the previous Fund Programme had gone awry. The established pattern of weak or negative growth persisted. So desperate was the situation that an increasing number of voices urged us to sign now, whatever the cost and on whatever terms.

Today, one year later, our Economic Reform Programme is on track and the IMF Agreement is in place....

(Thunderous applause)

....and we have concluded and have passed all our Tests and met all our benchmarks, much to the dismay of some.

(Applause)

Growth has returned. We have had three consecutive quarters of increasing growth, (Applause) each level higher than the one before. (Applause) We have received in excess of US$500 Million from our multilateral partners. The debt-to-GDP ratio is moving down and confidence has returned and is moving up. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, all I can say is what a difference a year makes.

(Applause)

In this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, we should not forget, neither should any Jamaican forget the critical need that existed for a programme of Economic Reform. Let me remind you what we inherited.

A debt-to-GDP ratio that was upwards of 146%. We were in the 40th year of anaemic growth with an expansion of gross domestic product over the 40 years, averaging less than 1% *per annum*. During the same period that the average growth of GDP was less than 1% *per annum*, our debt had grown by more than 700%.

The IMF Programme, which had been negotiated in 2010, quickly went off the rails with the basic targets regarding the primary surplus and the fiscal deficits, which were necessary if you were to place the debt on a downward trajectory, all having been breached.

As a consequence, Jamaica was closed out from global capital markets, except at exorbitant rates of interest, our reserves were rapidly deteriorating and flows of funds from our multilateral and key bilateral partners had come to a standstill.

Our situation was compounded by those who found it politically convenient to propagate the view that proven laws of economics did not apply to Jamaica. Whereas other countries had to work their way to prosperity, Jamaica they said, could borrow its way to prosperity.

I trust it is now evident to everyone that there is a limit to any country's capacity to sustain such fiscal irresponsibility. Jamaica has reached this limit; high debt prevents growth and limits the country's capacity to withstand unforeseen economic shocks.

This dubious doctrine of economic exceptionalism contributed to the situation which we inherited in January 2012. Eleven successive quarters of negative growth

between 2008 and 2011, and a massive debt build-up and on programme borrowing.

It is against this background, Mr. Speaker that we mobilize the nation to design an Economic Reform Programme that could begin to reduce the level of debt and by so doing, unlock the growth potential of Jamaica's economy.

The Programme we designed was one that required us to reduce the fiscal deficit - or, put another way, one that required us to live within our means. In order to sustain our Economic Reform Programme and to assure our global markets and the wider international community of our seriousness of purpose, and quite frankly, in order to secure the necessary resources to support the Programme, we entered into an Extended Fund Facility with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

But, I want to emphasize, Mr. Speaker - as I doubt that everyone gets it - that this is our Programme, this is Jamaica's Programme if we are to guarantee our nation's survival and prosperity for the future. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Apart from fiscal consolidation, the Economic Reform Programme involves critical structural reforms including Tax Reform, Public Sector Reform, changes to facilitate the ease of doing business and legislative changes, all of which are aimed at creating a more vibrant economic environment in the country for businesses, whether small, medium or large, local or foreign, who want to do business in Jamaica, and thereby expand our economy and provide jobs.

Mr. Speaker, the Economic Reform Programme that we are presently pursuing is critical to our long-term survival as a nation. But we must never forget our obligation to all those Jamaicans who sacrificed to make this Programme possible.

(Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: I am here referring Mr. Speaker to the public sector workers who agreed to a further three years of wage restraint. (Applause) I am referring also to the bond holders, to our creditors, including pensioners and others who agreed to lower returns on their investment in order to facilitate the economic reform effort. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: And, of course, we should remember the general populace of Jamaica who endured increases in the cost of living.

Our obligation, Mr. Speaker, means that we must ensure that their sacrifices are not in vain. We must stay the course and most of all, ensure that never again does Jamaica have to walk this path of dependence on external creditors and institutions (Applause) which, if we are to be honest, entails a significant loss of sovereign autonomy.

The only way out of our present difficulties is to continue with the Programme, to pass more IMF tests… (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...get access to more multilateral support, secure investments and achieve our mission of sustained economic growth and job creation. (Applause)

Over the past year as we have embarked upon the Economic Reform Programme and have met all our quantitative targets and our structural benchmarks, there have been major legislative achievements, as well.

We have amended the Revenue Administration Act to strengthen tax administration by providing, among other things, access to third-party information and requiring mandatory e-filing for certain types of taxpayers and certain taxes. (Applause)

We have passed the Secured Interests in Personal Property Act, to enhance access to credit, especially for non-traditional businesses such as those in the creative and cultural industries and in agriculture.

We have passed the Charities Act and harmonized the treatment of charities across tax types (Applause) in addition to removing ministerial discretion for granting waivers for charities.

We have passed the Fiscal Incentives legislation which has lowered the effective tax rate for business operators.

We have passed amendments to the Financial Administration and Audit Act and the Public Bodies Management Act, which strengthened the legally binding Fiscal Rules to ensure a sustainable Budget balance and debt reduction. (Applause)

We have amended the Securities Act to include provisions which seek to combat the establishment and proliferation of unlawful financial organizations, and implement a legal and regulatory framework conducive to the operations of collective investment schemes.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: We have tabled today the Omnibus Banking Services Bill, which when enacted will harmonize the prudential standards across deposit-taking institutions, and enhance supervision of financial institutions.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: We have also tabled an Insolvency Bill, which is currently being reviewed by the Joint Select Committee of this House.

We have passed legislation to establish Tax Administration Jamaica as a semi-autonomous revenue agency, appointed by the related Supervisory Board.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think that there is any period of time when we have had such a concentrated wave of legislative amendments governing the financial sector of our country, and dealing with its fiscal affairs.

And I want to say a big thank you to the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, to the Minister of Justice (Applause) as the Chairman of the Legislation Committee, and to all the officials, including the Members of the Legislation Committee who have contributed to this impressive legislative

agenda. And I also want to say thanks to the members of Parliament on both sides of the aisle who have done their part to ensure that Jamaica has undertaken these events. (Applause)

The legislative record tells only a small part of the narrative however, Mr. Speaker. During this past year we also completed the implementation of the Central Treasury Management System so that we now manage government accounts out of a single treasury account at the Bank of Jamaica. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: We converted the Jamaica Customs Department into an executive agency within the Ministry of Finance and Planning to complement the work of Tax Administration Jamaica.

We have created a Strategic Human Resource Management Unit at the Ministry of Finance and Planning.

We have established a National Collateral Registry at the Companies Office of Jamaica to list interesting assets used as collateral under the Secured Interests in Personal Property Act and thereby improve access to finance.

We have eliminated Ministerial discretionary powers to grant or validate any tax relief.

We have completed a formal review of public sector employment and remuneration as part of the Public Sector Reform Process.

We have improved transparency as it relates to public sector procurement, by publishing in the print media a Government of Jamaica procurement page.

We have tabled a White Paper on Pension Reform in the public sector, and legislation is being prepared for the establishment of a single pension system for public sector workers, to begin in 2016/2017.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Working! Working! Working!

Dr. PHILLIPS: It has been acknowledged, Mr. Speaker that the adjustment has been difficult, budgets have been tight, and in many areas, difficult adjustments have had to be made.

The Jamaica Urban Transit Company, for example, has had to increase its fares and undertake systems and operational changes in order to reduce the extent of its losses. Without this it might have been difficult to keep the company operational.

We have not been able to do as much as we would have liked, in relation to school construction and road repairs, God knows, as we have gone through this difficult adjustment period. Nevertheless, we do take particular pride in the fact that we have maintained our commitments to spend a minimum percentage of our budget on social protection services.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: We are proud of the fact that we have increased the provision to PATH beneficiaries by 15 per cent.

(Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: At the same time, we have increased the provision for pensioners...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...by some 66 per cent. (Applause)

And it should not be forgotten that we raised the Income Tax threshold and relieved some 3,000 persons from the obligation to pay any taxes at all under PAYE.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of the difficulties over the past year, perhaps the most encouraging news is the return to growth by the Jamaican economy. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: During the quarter July to September, 2013, the economy recorded modest growth of 0.5 per cent, following a period of economic contraction, beginning in January, 2012.

The momentum of growth improved during the quarter October to December, with STATIN confirming growth in GDP for that quarter to be 1.8 per cent, our projections had been 1.4 percent. Preliminary estimates indicate that real GDP growth has continued during the January to March quarter of 2014. (Applause) Growth is preliminarily estimated for that quarter at some 1.7 per cent, with GDP for the fiscal year projected to be approximately one per cent. In this matter, Mr. Speaker, all I can say is, plus is better than minus.

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: There are some areas of particular significance. Agriculture has been growing at an annualized rate in excess of 13 per cent. (Applause) And commendation must be given to those in the sector, led by the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. CHARLES: Nothing like that! Nothing like that!

Mr. SAMUDA: Both can't be right! This doesn't say anything like that!

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, we are talking - that estimate wouldn't be in the book.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Annualized for the quarter, annualized it is 13 percent.

Mr. Speaker, Mining and Quarrying at 12 per cent, Tourism at 6 per cent... (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: And I am referring here to the quarter ending December 2013.

We expect the rate of growth to continue to strengthen, especially as we continue to implement major reforms to enhance the business environment, as well as to intensify the efforts regarding strategic investment projects in Tourism, Transport, Agro-Parks, Logistics, among others.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: We are also hopeful that the consecutive successful completion of the quarterly reviews under the IMF Programme will stimulate investors to make further investments... (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...and drive job creation.

In relation to employment, STATIN recorded that their unemployment rate as of October 2013 was 14.9 per cent. That was 0.9 of a percentage point higher than the recorded rate of 2012.

However - and this is a critical point Mr. Speaker - between April and July, 2013 the

unemployment rate declined by one percentage point, and July and October there was a decline of a further 0.5 per cent for that quarter.

Mr. Speaker, unemployment is trending down in the same way that growth is trending upwards. (Applause)

There have been significant increases in a number of sectors, Real Estate and business employment is up. This relates, I believe Mr. Speaker, to what is happening in the BPO sector. Manufacturing by 6.2 per cent, Health and Social Services also up and Construction.

We need to build on this progress, Mr. Speaker, to increase the overall employment rate.

Commercial banks lending rates continue to decline. The weighted average lending rates declined by some 48 basis points to 17.9 per cent at the end of December 2013, compared to the end of March 2013. Treasury Bill rates trended in the opposite direction with the average yields on Government of Jamaica Treasury Bills on 30 to 180 days trending upwards. Accordingly, at the end of March 2014, average yields on the 30-day, 90-day, and 180-day instruments were 6.7 per cent, 8.35 per cent, and 9.11 per cent representatively.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: During the past year, inflation would have been affected by increases in bus and taxi fares, by water and sewage rates, as well as the pass-through of exchange rate depreciation to domestic prices. There was evidence of pass-through to domestic prices on some durables, such as clothing, footwear and household furnishings. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, the headline rate for the fiscal year for inflation was 8.3 per cent, which was below the target range of 8.5 to 10.5 per cent.

(Applause by Government Members)

This outturn is also lower than the 9.1 per cent recorded for the same period for 2012/2013.

The current account deficit on our balance of payments is projected to narrow by some US$461 Million to about US$1.4 Billion or 9.9 per cent of GDP for the fiscal year. This compares with the deficit of $1.9 Billion or 12.8 per cent of GDP for the fiscal year 2012/2013. Put another way Mr. Speaker, we are reducing the gap between what we spend in foreign currency each year and what we earn in foreign currency each year.

(Applause by Government Members)

We are actually importing less, even if we are not seeing our exports pick-up as we would want them to. The deficit on the goods sub-account is expected to narrow by some US$285 Million.

Flows from official and private sources are projected to be more than sufficient to finance the current account deficit and to contribute to the build-up of the Net International Reserves by the Bank of Jamaica. The closure of this gap however, as I indicated, is primarily due to a decline of close to US$500 Million on the import side. Much of this is the result of the change in value of the Jamaican Dollar.

And I would like to say something directly about this Mr. Speaker since the exchange rate has been the focus of much

discussion, some of it sincere, some of it sincere and misplaced, and I dare say, some of it calculated to spread confusion and panic.

Over the past year, there has been a decline of 10.8 per cent in the value of the Jamaican dollar. The heart of the issue here relates to the current account deficit which we discussed before. When we spend abroad more than we earn from abroad, we run up what they call a current account deficit. It is not possible to continuously spend more than we earn from overseas.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: ...overdraft.

Dr. PHILLIPS: The only way any country, including Jamaica, can do this is if we are able to find someone to give us the difference between what we earn and what we spend, which is not likely...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Not at all.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...or, if we were able to borrow money, and we have reached the limit of our capacity to borrow, or if we secure investments in sufficient quantity, or if we buy fewer goods and seek to earn more.

Since we have no godfather to keep giving us money and we have exceeded our capacity to borrow more, we only have one option in the short term, spend less and earn more.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's it.

Dr. PHILLIPS: If we are going to spend less overseas, there are a few ways in which we can seek to do this. We can try simply to administratively ban imports and just say, by legislation or administrative rules, certain things can't come in, or we can try and ration foreign exchange by administrative means.

In a sense, as a country, we have tried both these things before. In the 1970s we try to put quantitative restrictions on imports and in the 1980s we tried through the auction system to restrict foreign exchange to just some importers. We should all try to learn from our history, Mr. Speaker. These approaches do not work. They lead to the emergence on the one hand of a black market for currency, or to increasingly sophisticated efforts to smuggle goods, breach our borders, and lead, inevitably, to shortage of goods on the other hand. We have been on that road before and we are not going to go there again.

(Applause by Government Members)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: The only tried and proven way is to operate an exchange rate system where the market sets the rate - a flexible market-determined exchange rate...

Mr. CHUCK: You sound like a capitalist now, and a good one.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...which allows relative prices... Looks like you are caught up in the debates long past.

Mr. CHUCK: No man, this is a good product; you are moving forward.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: The only way Mr. Speaker is a flexible market-determined exchange rate which allows relative prices to change in ways that alter the choices we make as to what we produce, where we sell, how much income we make as a result.

The adjustments that have been made to the Jamaican Dollar will allow what we

produce to be more competitive in external markets and at the same time to develop what we can produce in Jamaica. Therefore, having a competitive exchange rate is one of the keys to economic expansion and growth in jobs as we see it.

So, what then is the right value for the Jamaican Dollar? How does one determine the right value? The first point to make in this regard is that the nominal exchange rate does not by itself tell you whether a currency in question is weak or strong or whether the economy of that country using that currency is weak or strong.

Take, for example, the Japanese Yen which is currently valued at 102 Yen, approximately, to the US Dollar and the Indian Rupee which is valued at 60 Rupees to the US Dollar, few would believe that the Indian economy is stronger than the Japanese economy, or that the Rupee is a more attractive currency to hold than the Japanese Yen.

Closer to home, Colombia has an exchange rate of about 2,000 Pesos to the US Dollar as compared to the Brazilian Real which is about two Reals to the US Dollar. The differential in the nominal exchange rate does not reflect the difference in wealth, or capacity, of Columbia on the one hand or Brazil on the other hand. What is significant, most of all, is the level of competitiveness of the economy...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...and its capacity to earn from abroad to support its consumption of goods and services from overseas. (Applause)

(Applause by Government Members)

Dr. PHILLIPS: In a case such as Jamaica where we have to make an adjustment to our economic circumstances in order to import less and export more, the adjustment is very difficult, as the pain - and I am spending some time on this Mr. Speaker, because I think the country deserves an honest debate and discussion about this matter, and not obfuscation and confusion.

(Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: The pain comes before the gain, no doubt about it. The pain which is the result of imports becoming more expensive immediately is felt by everyone immediately; every household, every business, every individual, and it comes before the gains that would come to the country as a result of the expansion of domestic production whether for export or local consumption. But even so Mr. Speaker - and there is no denying the pain that has resulted - we can see that some of the potential benefits are already being realized.

Some of our companies are exporting products like animal feeds from new crops such as sorghum, and there is planned domestic production of cassava on an industrial scale to go into the making of beer. Construction companies which used to import their roofing materials are now looking to replace the imported roofing materials with domestically produced cement. That means putting workers in Jamaica to work, rather than borrowing to keep workers overseas employed.

(Applause by Government Members)

This is an example of a shift in production, and we need to make no apology for this shift because as I said, it will put more Jamaicans to work rather than borrowing money to finance the current account deficit and keep foreign workers employed at the expense of a growing Jamaican debt.

We will continue to maintain a market determined exchange rate and the Bank of Jamaica remains prepared to intervene in this market in order to reduce and eliminate the numbers of those who would want to speculate on the exchange rate, or disrupt the stability of the market.

(Applause by Government Members)

As we reduce our import bill, as we attract more tourists and export more goods and stabilize the economic environment, I would expect the exchange rate to stabilize.

In summary Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we have begun to see the first fruit of our efforts, from a macro economic perspective. These have manifested themselves in a number of ways. We have now seen a return to growth. Inflation has been contained. By living within our means, the country has maintained the primary surplus of 7.5 per cent, but was also able to achieve a fiscal surplus. Our revenues covered all recurrent expenditure, including interest costs. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Our net international reserves have grown over 40 per cent, and at the end of March 2014, stood at US$1.3 Billion. This has put us in a better position to withstand unforeseen shocks in the external economy.

Debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to have declined by approximately five percentage points for the 2013/2014 fiscal year.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Our growth has been inclusive growth. For the 12 months to March 2014, the Development Bank of Jamaica has provided nearly 10,000 loans to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises...

Government MEMBES: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...surpassing the $2 Billion target announced last year by 15 per cent. Agriculture has been growing; small farmer production has been expanded. Tourism is growing, mining is growing.

Mr. Speaker, we have not yet reached to the end of our journey but we have certainly started and we are moving in the right direction.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, in this context, what are the challenges that remain and what are the priority activities that we must set as our targets as we continue to reform the fundamentals of our economy and to strive for greater levels of growth and job creation? The first point to emphasize here Mr. Speaker is that we need to continue the process of fiscal consolidation. (Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: But simple belt-tightening will not get us very far.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: No, no!

Dr. PHILLIPS: We have to continue essential structural reforms that will lock-in the current gains of fiscal consolidation over the long term and create an environment that facilitates investment, protects and strengthens the foundations of our financial system and facilitates improved levels of productivity in the economy as a whole. Of fundamental importance also is the continued reform of our tax collection system to ensure higher levels of compliance. We have to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that everyone pays their fair share into the revenues. (Applause)

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Among the other critical elements in the process that will be tackled in the course of this financial year is the Public Sector Transformation and Modernization Programme. This is essential to achieving acceptable levels of sustainable economic growth and job creation. Nevertheless, this has been one of the biggest challenges facing Jamaica and one which we must tackle urgently. According to the Global Competitiveness Index for 2013 and 14, Jamaica ranked 94th out of 148 countries, an improvement since 2012. Nevertheless, we cannot continue to accept such a low performance.

Government MEMBER: No!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Several factors related to the performance of the Jamaican public sector have influenced our rankings. The most important of these factors are:

- excessive bureaucracy and red tape and I believe every Minister will agree with me that the red tape is excessive and we have to cut it down and cut it out.
- duplication of functions;
- the underutilization of Information and Communication Technologies; and,
- poor inter-agency communication and coordination.

The Public Sector Transformation and Modernization Programme that we have commenced and intend to intensify over the medium term will be more focused on targeting those elements within the public sector, relating to service delivery that will have a direct impact on the private sector's ability to contribute to sustainable national economic growth. The programme is built around the following broad areas:

- enhancing the business environment and facilitating growth and competitiveness; and,
- public sector transformation and modernization - reducing the bureaucracy.

Initiatives to be undertaken this year to include the establishment of a one-stop shop for import/export inspection services at the Montego Bay ports.

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: The one-stop facility brings together all regulatory agencies involved in the inspection process to a single location. In this way, all associated transactions occur in one place. There's already a facility like this at Berth 11 in Kingston. We're going to ensure that those in

Western Jamaica who export enjoy the same type of facility and can get to move their products to market more effectively. (Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: We will be simplifying the Government Electrical inspection process and increasing transparency. It might sound like a simple thing but often times this is where the bottleneck in getting a factory started up or a new office complex or a hotel, this is where it is. So we're going to automate the process and reengineer the process to make it easier for applicants to access the service in a timely manner and remove much of the difficulty which many developers in particular face.

The Jamaica Productivity Centre, in collaboration with the Hugh Lawson Shearer Trade Union Education Institute and the Management Institute for National Development (MIND), will spearhead the development and delivery of a national productivity training programme focussed on enabling staff to develop productivity enhancing programmes in organizations in the public and the private sector. As far as improving Government's internal operations is concerned, we are committed to improving the public procurement process: legislation which was promised last year has been prepared, and consultations are underway and that will be laid in the House this year. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Minister's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended sufficient to allow him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Minister's time be extended sufficient to allow him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

The Central Treasury Management System has improved the management of public funds. Further modification and roll out of additional elements of this system to increase efficiency will take place this year.

Among the benefits being realized under the system is a significant decrease in associated bank charges to the Government and reduced borrowing by Government.

The implementation of a Human Capital Management Enterprise System, which will begin later this year, will integrate payroll performance and employee demographics into a single database to further improve human resource management across Government. With the creation of the web-enabled e-Census, we will have at our fingertips, for the first time, a means of determining the size, distribution, and qualifications of all public sector workers and get a basic demographic profile for the first time in our history. (Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, labour market reform is essential if Jamaica is to

retain its qualified workers. It is critical that we create an environment that can sustain social stability and social inclusion. In this regard, the Government recently tabled legislation for Parliament's consideration related to the introduction of flexible work arrangements. We believe that flexible work arrangements are vital to increasing productivity, efficiency and competitiveness in both the public and private sectors. (Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: This Legislation is, therefore, crucial to fostering economic growth, the creation of jobs and attracting investments. The implementation of flexi-work arrangements will provide for a more attractive investment climate, allowing companies to take advantage of off-peak rates on Saturdays and Sundays, on overheads such as utilities and make more efficient use of their capital resources. In manufacturing, for example, it will result in more productive work days per year and the use of machinery for longer hours each day. (Applause) It will also allow for wider and better customer service due to varied opening hours and more business days.

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it will provide workers the opportunity to better manage their time between work hours, school hours and other parental opportunities. It may even reduce traffic congestion and save us with our energy bill.

Mr. Speaker there has been much discussion about the growth agenda. Last year I addressed this issue but believe it may be useful to repeat some of it as it may be clearer given all of the work that this Government has done during the past year. Let me quote what I said last year:

"The first requirement of the growth agenda is that we need to maintain our commitment to the current economic reforms and the difficult adjustments that they entail. We have to stay the course and reduce our public debt".

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS:

"Beyond that, I think we can all agree that the basic prerequisite for growth should include:

- *easy access to affordable credit;*
- *efficient, facilitative government institutions supportive of investments;*
- *a legal system that resolves disputes impartially and speedily; and,*

(Applause)

- *a society which will view positively and reward those who achieve successful business investments.*

Sustained growth will also require an environment which facilitates new entrants coming on to the field of business investments and allows the small to become medium sized and the medium sized to become large, not on the basis of political or social connections, but simply on the basis of their capacity for hard work and their entrepreneurial drive."

Mr. Speaker, I have already spoken about tax and other reforms undertaken to improve the business environment, for example, the Collateral Registry, the Insolvency Bill and Security Interests in Personal Property Act. But I want to address the topic of construction permit approvals, a topic which has consistently been the focus of discussions in the media. Successive Governments have committed to implementing a process that will ensure that construction permit applications are approved within ninety days from submission for projects that do not require an Environmental Impact Assessment. This Government has committed to not only improve the approval process but to fully implement the Application Management and Data Automation system (AMANDA), which will allow the Government to track approval of construction permits across all local authorities across Jamaica. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: We have committed to complete this implementation in all parish councils by the end of this year and then we will implement the system for associated agencies such as the Jamaica Fire Brigade, the National Water Commission, the National Environment and Planning Agency, for example. Notwithstanding that, it will take some time for the AMANDA system to be fully installed. The Ministry of Local Government and Community Development in its commitment to address this issue, has confirmed that parish councils have substantially cleared most of the outstanding construction permit applications and is committed to dealing with applications in a timely manner going forward. (Applause) And I want to commend the Minister of Local Government and the leadership of all the parish councils, and I want also to commend the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, because they have also made a contribution to eliminating the backlog in development approvals. (Applause) We want to get Jamaica moving, Mr. Speaker. We want more growth.

Secondly, as I have said, we need an efficient public sector, that's a second requirement of the growth agenda. And I have already outlined the steps being taken to ensure that public sector reform places priority on those changes that will improve the business environment, speed-up developmental approvals for example, as we have just said, and support the easy payment of taxes and the easy provision of services such as water, electricity, work permits, and the like. (Applause)

Another element relates to the Government divestment programme and the public-private partnerships, which are geared to provide ready opportunities for economic growth. Last year I mentioned that Enterprise Teams had been formed to facilitate the privatization of a number of entities. By way of update, let me say the divestment of the Wallenford Coffee Company was completed. (Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: With regards to the Kingston Container Terminal Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet approved the recommendations of the

Enterprise Team and a request for proposals was issued in January of this year to three pre-qualified bidders. It is expected that responses will be received in May with the expectation that a final bidder can be chosen and negotiations concluded this year. Though I should echo the words of the Minister responsible, there will be no fire sale, I believe is what he said. We will guard the asset.

Mr. SHAW: He's used to fire sale otherwise. (Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: In respect of privatization of the Norman Manley International Airport, Cabinet has approved the transaction structure recommended by the Transaction's Enterprise Team and it is expected that request for expressions of interest will be issued shortly.

The Development Bank of Jamaica is actively pursuing the divestment of the Jamaica Railway Corporation under the leadership of an enterprise team and is in discussions approved by Cabinet with two interested parties. The Development Bank of Jamaica is also pursuing the sale of a number of other Government assets, including Caymanas Track Limited, the Cocoa Industry Board and PETCOM, all of which are at various stages in the divestment process.

I'd like to say something, Mr. Speaker, about the role of the Development Bank of Jamaica in support of the Growth Agenda. The Development Bank of Jamaica has developed an enviable record as one of the premier development banking institutions of the Caribbean, and it is vital not only because of its provision of capital through associated financial institution, but also because of its support for the micro, small and medium enterprises - the so-called MSME sector.

Mr. Speaker, over the past year the loan commitments of the DBJ increased by some 36% for the first time in its history. (Applause) The bank approved loans totalling some $8.2 Billion and this $8.2 Billion of approved loans supported an investment of J$15 Billion with the potential for over 4,000 new jobs. But it is also significant, Mr. Speaker, that the DBJ which had set a target of $2 Billion for the MSME sector exceeded this target, as I indicated, by some 15% and this included some 9,600 loans to the micro sector because we want inclusive growth on this side. (Applause)

In support of the Growth Agenda, Mr. Speaker, for the Fiscal Year 2014/2015 the DBJ, the Development Bank of Jamaica, has set a lending target of $9 Billion with some $3 Billion specifically set for the MSME sector. (Applause) Important though all of this is, Mr. Speaker, one of the most exciting aspects of the work of the Development Bank of Jamaica to support growth concerns their role in capacity building. We all know that many of our small and medium enterprises failed to develop adequately because of technical deficiencies and limitations to their business capacity. For example, many of our small businesses lack proper business plans and accounting records, which deny them access to the formal financial sector.

Last November, following a consultation between the DBJ and the Small and Medium Enterprise Sector, the DBJ developed an

action plan to address some of these issues. Starting next month, the Development Bank of Jamaica will be providing a voucher for technical assistance to those small and medium enterprises which qualify, (Applause) starting next month. What is it? This is an electronic voucher issued by the financial institutions and redeemed by the enterprise, the small or medium-sized enterprise at a business development organization for receiving capacity development. So you will get a voucher and you go to an approved organization like JBDC or some other approved organization, which will be selected, you can get training, you will be able to get help in developing your business plan and you will be able to get mentoring if you need it - accounting help.

The DBJ will finance 70% of the cost of the services with vouchers of values ranging from $100,000 to $300,000 to be accessed by up to 85 small and medium sized enterprises. (Applause) As I said, what can it be used for? Vouchers can be used for business plan development, business process improvement, financial management, mentorship and coaching and preparation of financial statements, strategic plans and marketing plans. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: When will it be available? The voucher system will go live in May 2014, next month. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: I should also mention...

Mr. DALLEY: Live May 2014.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Live May 2014.

Mr. SHAW: Production.

Mr. SAMUDA: Existing or new?

Dr. PHILLIPS: And direct.

I should also mention Mr. Speaker that DBJ will continue its successful energy management strategy in 2014/2015 and will explore and implement other energy projects, in partnership with the development partners in an effort to drive down energy costs and propel concessionary lending in the market. The Development Bank of Jamaica will continue its Energy Audit Grant Programme and has allocated $5Million for energy and energy audit grants to small and medium enterprises to decrease their energy cost. (Applause) We want inclusive growth on this side. The Energy Grant Programme provides up to $200,000 towards the cost of an audit. The programme is opened to private sector entities of all sizes which are interested in accessing loan funds to implement the recommended energy projects. The Development Bank of Jamaica is also continuing its work to foster the establishment of a venture capital and private equity fund system through public and private sector collaboration with local and international fund managers.

The Development Bank of Jamaica will seek to stimulate investments in new venture capital funds through co-investment with private sector partners. A target of J$1 Billion has been set for investment in high potential small and medium-sized enterprises over the next five years. Before the end of May requests for proposals will be issued to potential fund managers and it is projected

that a venture capital fund will be established by the end of this year. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this will provide for a number of promising entrepreneurs who may not have access to capital directly. The value of this is not just the economic benefits but also the social benefits because this will mean that the potential for economic success will not have to be as firmly tied as it has been in the past to those who have been blessed with inherited wealth or capital. In fact, when we can provide capital for those who have a great idea but may not have been blessed with the inheritance of wealth, then we will be in a situation where we will perhaps undertake some of the most far-reaching social reforms in Jamaica because we know that wealth has been too confined to too few hands in this country over the years. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, without going into too much detail because I know that the respective Ministers will speak to these matters in the course of their presentation, I want to highlight some of the areas of potential growth that are being expanded or developed as the case may be.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Even now. When you were at the arena you would understand that...

Dr. DAVIES: Even now he does.

Dr. PHILLIPS: You would understand that part of the reason why economic reform has not worked as it should have is because we have left too many of the majority of the people outside of the ambit of economic growth. (Applause) You know that. I know you know that. (Referring to Mr. Samuda)

Mr. CHARLES: You are going to bring them in now?

Dr. PHILLIPS: We are going to bring them in. We are going to bring them in.

A Government MEMBER: Listen, Pearnel!

Mr. CHARLES: I am listening.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. CHARLES: Bring them in, Lord Jesus.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Bring them in one by one. Bring them in two by two, three by three until we have an army of Jamaicans, green, orange, no colour at all, all moving forward together in the interest of (wealth) creation. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Pearnel, you make a mistake, you dye the wrong side.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, agriculture is one of the fastest growing sectors in the country. For the quarter ending December 31, 2014 it was one of the best performing, seven Agro Parks: Plantain Garden River, Yallahs, Amity Hall, Ebony Park, Hill Run, New Forest/Duff House and Spring Plain are now operational. (Applause) The production across the seven agro parks is not insignificant. And I know the Minister early after Easter will give a full accounting of what is happening.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Fulsome.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Hutchinson)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Tourism also represents an area of substantial growth and the Minister of Tourism and his team should be - should be commended for doing a difficult job in the context of a fragile global economy. (Applause) The sector for the quarter ending

December 31 grew at a rate of approximately 6%. And this, Mr. Speaker, is against the backdrop where a number of rooms have been out of service for refurbishing and because of the transfers of ownership of some of the properties, yet there was still growth. There is still a lot of activity in this sector with new rooms coming on stream. The Azul Sensatori, (formerly Poinciana in Negril) which was acquired by Karisma, will officially open next month having completed a J$l.l Billion renovation programme. (Applause) The Royalton White Sands Hotel, (formerly the Starfish Hotel) owned by the Sunwing Travel Group of Canada, completed its major refurbishing involving an investment of over J$2.5 Billion and reopened last December. (Applause) The new RIU Hotel at Mahoe Bay in Montego Bay, Mr. Speaker, that hotel built at Mahoe Bay in Montego Bay represents an investment of some J$4.5 Billion and is now opened. The Playa Hotel and Resorts, new property in Montego Bay, will be a 620-room Hyatt luxury all-inclusive resort, which will open in the fourth quarter of 2014 after total renovation and expansion investment of over US$80 Million. (Applause)

The Braco property being managed by the Melia Hotel International is currently being refurbished and is expected to open for the 2014/2015 winter season. (Applause) And of course, there is the Marriott in New Kingston, the Courtyard Marriott where construction is taking place and is underway now. (Applause)

There is not only life in the tourism sector, but on the basis of the rising confidence, we expect to see a lot more activities in this sector. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I indicated, during the Standing Finance Committee and, in fact, previous to that in this House that we were not going to let this year pass without taking some definitive decision in relation to Harmony Cove. I can point out that we have received positive news in this regard, in that, there has been a commitment of an additional equity interest by a Chinese partner, but there is still further to go in this and I will repeat what I said - I repeat what I said that this year, this year, we need to have a definitive and final decision taken in relation to this project. (Applause) There has been forward progress since I last spoke, but we will need to bring it to conclusion very quickly. (Applause)

In relation to integrated resort developments, as I indicated, the proposals have been received, they are being assessed, and before the end of this calendar year decisions will be taken regarding the proposals before us.

The provision of cheaper energy is an essential part of our growth strategy. The Minister of Energy has already informed the country in relation to the proposed 380 megawatt project. Must remember also that request for proposals for an additional 115 megawatt source from renewable sources was already issued and some 70 megawatts have already been awarded. (Applause) We are going to persist in this effort to get cheaper energy to our producers and to the consuming public.

Bauxite and alumina continues to figure centrally in our economic growth plans, energy here is the critical element in the equation and both in relation to JAMALCO and in relation to Ewarton, energy solutions have been prepared and are at various stages in the implementation progress.

Regarding the development...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. D. Smith)

Dr. PHILLIPS: What happen to Alpart? Alpart remains an important part of the planning and the Minister, when he speaks, will speak directly to what measures are being taken in that regard.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. D. Smith)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, we don't threaten.

Mr. Speaker, it no secret that we place a lot of emphasis, as with that side, on taking advantage of Jamaica's geographic location, to become a global logistics centre. (Applause) Work is far advanced, our discussions are far advanced, discussions and negotiations are far advanced in relation to the potential establishment of additional port transshipment facilities and a Special Economic Zone in St. Catherine in the Portland Bite area. That has been reported on. (Applause) And we are...

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes, but you know, a huge project of US$1.3 Billion is not something that you sign on the back of an envelope, we approach it systematically. But the message here, the message here is that we are proceeding, as we are proceeding with the KCT facility, as we are proceeding with the Caymanas Zone.... (Applause) ...and we are going to, and we are going to, we are going to ensure that this opportunity does not slip from us. One thing I can say though...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I want so say something Mr. Speaker, about what to me is one of the more exciting prospects in relation to job creation in Jamaica. And that relates to the ICT BPO subsector, the Business Process Outsourcing Subsector. Last year JAMPRO facilitated five new entrants to the Jamaican market, two software development firms and three outsourcing companies, four of these companies have already begun operations. The BPO industry currently employs some 12,000 people in over 30 companies and is growing rapidly due to the expansion of companies already established in Jamaica.

The Development Bank of Jamaica has already approved six projects totaling US$22 Million to create 334,000 square feet of space with two additional applications totalling US$11 Million under review at the moment that will create an additional 245,000 square feet of space - of additional space. This would amount to another 570,000 square feet of space for this important sector.

I had occasion, Mr. Speaker, to speak at one of the - a graduating class, small class, in the animation segment of this industry. It was an experience that filled me with considerable hope. For one thing, it is one of the few graduating classes at the University where there were more men than women in the class. But what was most significant is that every one of the graduates had already been placed

in a job by the time they reach the graduation ceremony, animation. (Applause) What is most exciting about the sector at this time is that we are seeing a lot of private investors coming alive to the prospects in this sector and beginning to engage in property development without looking for any Government subsidy in this regard... (Applause) ...and it can only augur well as the interest rates come down. Mr. Speaker, we can put all our high school and tertiary graduates to work in this sector, there are some marvelous things happening in Jamaica now. Some of the call centres right here in Jamaica are bilingual call centres, they answer in English and Spanish, and if you are not careful we might even down the line throw in some Manderin and other things as well. (Applause) We have the people, we have potential, we need to get the foundations right and put the Jamaican people to work. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I have said that we are committed to inclusive growth. And a critical instrument of securing this inclusion is to ensure that the Jamaican people, many of whom live in informal settlements, rural and urban without title to land, and therefore find themselves in a situation where they are not able to secure the capital, even though they live on this capital. It is for that reason why the LAMP Programme, the Land Administration and Management Programme was started in 2001, I believe or I think you are the - 2001.

We envisage an ownership society with more and more Jamaicans having their ability to own a piece of this rock, Jam Rock (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Call it home sweet home.

Dr. PHILLIPS: The LAMP Programme was launched in 2000; in excess of 25,000 files have been opened with approximately 4,000 titles issued. To date, however, there have been a number of issues regarding the success and the grant of titles to some of the potential beneficiaries. Current data shows that in excess of 2000 land title files are in possession of LAMP which cannot be transferred primarily because the beneficiaries are unable to meet the cost. Without titles the land owners cannot access financing from banks or other financial institutions to undertake the productive activities and improve their social status. If they had the title they could borrow some money to plant three more squares of peas or another two squares of...

Mr. DALLEY: Lettuce.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...lettuce or cane, or put on another room on the house and produce some condiments. We want this segment of the society to also contribute to production.

Our vision of production and growth is not something for big factories alone, it is something that starts off organically down at the grass roots of the country. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in order to correct this deficiency, the Development Bank of Jamaica has agreed to provide funding to help land owners who have applied to LAMP for titles and have made some payments towards their

files, but have so far been unable to make the remainder of their payments to complete the process. This will be done through a land owner payment assistance facility of J$90 Million... (Applause) ....which will allow these land owners to complete the process. This is significant, Mr. Speaker, because it has implications for rural developments, as many of these land owners will use their titles as collateral to access loans for agriculture and other productive purposes. (Applause)

In addition to support for the administrative processing to these titles, an allocation J$20 Million will be provided to the Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change to fund the operation of the Adjudication Committees in the various communities within affected parishes to resolve ownership issues. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change will speak further about the developments in the Land Programme - in the LAMP Programme. But I want to say, the Public Sector Modernization Programme will have as its mandate, working together with the Ministry, to ensure that not only those files which are currently languishing get dealt with, but to find ways to speed-up the process, because we want all of rural Jamaica who live in the conditions of informal tenure, to get the title to their land and become a functioning part of the Jamaican economy. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Audley, *yuh pay di man fi de lan' weh yuh tek* yet?

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like now to turn to some of the specific provisions in the budget.

The Central Government's Budget for fiscal year 2014/2015 is consistent with the target set under the Extended Fund Facility negotiated with the IMF. Crafting the Budget for 2014/15 has been challenging. Expenditure has to be controlled and kept in line with the country's ability to fund its operations.

Within the limits of the available resources, strong commitments toward the protection of the most vulnerable, improving the physical infrastructure, fixing the justice system and reducing expenditure arrears have been made. But, there is no disguising the fact Mr. Speaker, the Budget is tight and many Ministries, Departments and Agencies have seen real reductions in their allocations, but, every challenge provides an opportunity.

This is an opportunity for Central Government to become more efficient in its operations.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes, yes!

Dr. PHILLIPS: To find ways of doing more with less; to reduce waste, to increase productivity and justify every dollar spent, maximizing the value for every dollar. (Applause)

Accounting Officers, Board Chairmen and CEOs will be called upon to be vigilant in ensuring that we begin to reduce the cost of government operations. The Taxpayers will expect no less from us.

For Fiscal Year 2014/2015, $557.7 Billion will be spent on Central Government

operations. This includes $17.7 Billion to be funded from user fees, charges and grants. $233 Billion or 42% will go towards debt-servicing. And there's the 'nub-of-the rub', so-to-speak, we're still spending too much, but that's what we have to overcome. Fifty-eight percent (58%) will go towards wages, salaries, capital projects and recurrent programmes.

One Hundred and Sixty-One Billion Dollars ($161 Billion) has been provided to meet wages and salaries of public sector workers. Significantly, provision has been made to honour all agreed settlements....

(Applause)

…to public sector workers, including $4 Billion, the final tranche of the 7% wage settlement is due in May.

Two point Eight Billion Dollars ($2.8B), the second year of the One-off Payment due in August; $2.3 Billion for health sector reclassification, the second phase of that, second of three. The Minister of Finance will continue discussions with those groups that still have outstanding matters not yet settled.

Spending on social programmes continues to receive priority treatment in the Budget in keeping with the Government's commitment to the protection of the most vulnerable among us.

(Applause)

A total of $22,563 Billion has been reserved for a set of social programmes for which the Government of Jamaica has established a floor, below which expenditures will not fall. This floor is $20.7 Billion, which was set in 2013/2014, and the commitment given is to maintain this in real terms throughout the life of the programme. This has been achieved in this budget.

Over $5.5 Billion has been provided for social protection programmes carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. This reflects an increase of over $900 Million to enable the Government to honour its commitment to providing another 15% increase in PATH payments.

So while - put simply - while there are other areas that have faced real reductions, we have increased the spending on social protection matters. (Applause)

A total of $4.3 Billion has been allocated to the School Feeding Programme up from $3.9 Billion for 2013/2014.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: This includes just under $3 Billion for the PATH component.

Education: $727 Million has been allocated to support the provision of additional classroom spaces in infant, primary and secondary schools across the island.

(Applause)

An additional $119.3 Billion has been provided to improve sanitation in schools.

(Applause)

National Security and Justice represents an area where we have given priority treatment. Not enough, not enough the Minister would say, and I....

(Mr. Bunting laughs)

….I have had experiences to prove that I feel his pain. I know that it takes a lot of resources to meet the security needs, but we have tried

to provide within the resources available. (Applause)

One point Three Billion Dollars ($J1.3B) has been provided to support improved mobility and upgrade the facilities of the Jamaica Defence Force. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear! (Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Six Hundred and Thirty-One point Two Million Dollars ($631.2M) has been allocated to complete acquisition of telecommunications equipment and the enhancement of the Automated Palm and Fingerprint Identification System. And Five Hundred Million Dollars ($500M) will be spent from Appropriations-in-Aid by the police to repair and improve police stations and support improvement. (Applause)

Three Hundred and Forty-Five Million Dollars ($345M) has been provided for the Ministry of Justice to continue work on improving the Justice System, including completion of another phase of the Justice Square Judicial Complex and acquire lands and complete designs for other judicial complexes in St. James, St. Ann, St. Catherine and Manchester. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, over $8 Billion or approximately 23% of the Central Government Capital Budget has been reserved for infrastructural works to be carried out through the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing during 2014/2015. Some of the major projects which will be undertaken include $4 Billion for the MIDP, Major Infrastructural Development Project, funded by the China EX-IM Bank and the Government of Jamaica to undertake reconstruction of bridges, commence rehabilitation of main roads and through the JEEP Programme to repair works and community road, retaining walls, drainage structures, *et cetera*.

One point Seven Billion ($1.7B) for the Jamaica Economical Housing Project to complete works in St. Ann and Luana Gardens in St. Elizabeth.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. PHILLIPS: St. Elizabeth, Luana Gardens. I believe….

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: That is it?

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yes.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Okay. Long time in coming, but it is here at last. (Applause)

Six Hundred and Eighty-Nine Million Dollars ($689M) to complete drainage rehabilitation works remaining on the Sandy Gully under the Kingston Metropolitan Area Drainage Project.

Six Hundred and Eighty-Nine Million Dollars ($689M) to the Transportation Infrastructure Project to complete road construction in Westmoreland, Hanover, St. Thomas and St. Catherine. He doesn't want the Sandy Gully benefit?

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. PHILLIPS: You don't want it? (Dr. Phillips refers to Mr. D. Smith)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. D. Smith)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Four Hundred and Ninety-Four Million ($494M) to the Road Rehabilitation Project to commence road construction works in Clarendon. Two Seventy-Three Million ($273M) to Road

Improvement Programme to undertake maintenance work on the North Coast Highway.

The Capital Expenditure included in the Central Government's Budget will be enhanced by investment and Capital Expenditure of other public bodies.

Investment infrastructure and other capital projects by public bodies are estimated to be $53.9 Billion.

Approximately 1.6 Billion will be spent on road rehabilitation by the Road Maintenance Fund.

Approximately $26.3 Billion will be spent on housing solutions by both the National Housing Trust and the Housing Agency of Jamaica. The National Housing Trust expenditure of $22.4 Billion, should support some 7,600 new loans, 2,400, approximately 2,500 housing starts and 2,163 completions.

In addition to these housing solutions, NHT has provided for $971 Million to support a programme of special subsidies and grants to facilitate access by contributors to the lower income bracket.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Million.

(Laughter)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw/Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I won't say *nutten* bout dat. (Laughter)

Housing Agency of Jamaica is expected to spend $2.9 Billion to work on White Hall, Phase 3, Westmoreland. But my plan is, you know, my plan before all of this is finished is for us to begin to talk about spending $970 Billion on housing, but that is not this year or next year. But, we'll be here still when we begin to do that.

(Applause)

It all starts there.

The National Water Commission's Capital Programme is estimated at $6.3 Billion of which $1.9 Billion will be spent on non-revenue water relieve stations, pipeline and installation of residential and domestic meters.

The Rural Water Supply project will benefit from an expenditure of $1.8 Billion. Eight Billion ($8B) will be spent on the Portmore Sewage Project and the Tanks and Pump Project will get another $1 Billion.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say something specifically about the Students' Loan Bureau, given the interest that so many have in this institution as they seek to satisfy their quest for tertiary education.

The first point I'd like to make Mr. Speaker is that for this year, the Students' Loan Bureau will be able to meet the projected demand at the same level as was satisfied last year. (Applause) There is a provision of $2 Billion, which when added to the expected collection and funds-in-hand, will meet the demand projected to be at approximately $4.8 Billion.

In the meantime, I should also point out that the Board of the Students' Loan Bureau has approved a number of policy changes, which it is expected will make it easier for students to qualify for loans, and which will reduce the overall delinquency rates. (Applause) While I don't propose to set out in detail all the changes, there are some of the

changes that I'd like to particularly refer to here.

First of all is the decision to extend the moratorium period for particular target groups of beneficiaries, such as nurses, pharmacists and mechanical engineers. (Applause)

Whereas now there is a fixed moratorium period for all beneficiaries of the Students' Loan Bureau, which ends on December 31 of the year when their course ends, for these groups, the moratorium - which are licensed groups, licensed professional groups, the moratorium period will be extended to include the time before they are licensed to practice their professions instead of the December when their courses are finished. (Applause) This will ensure that these beneficiaries have the capacity to earn before they are required to start repaying their loans.

(Applause)

The Students' Loan Bureau will also be implementing a two-tiered system of interest rates, so that the interest rate during the moratorium period will be lower than the interest charged during the payment period. This will reduce the monthly payments that the beneficiaries are called upon to make.

In relation to guarantors - everybody is living longer - the requirements are also being changed. Currently, the stipulation was that a guarantor could not be older than sixty years, which would disqualify many people in this House.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: That rule is now being relaxed... (Applause) ...and guarantors may be accepted beyond the age of sixty, on a case-by-case basis, depending on their financial capabilities and providing they fulfill the other stated criteria.

(Applause/*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: And this will also mean that rather than people going to find guarantors who can't fit the bill, or who can't meet the requirements, they will find people - qualified people who are up to the responsibilities, who can provide the mentorship and the guidance, and stand behind the borrower, as the case may be. And we expect that it should help reduce the delinquency rates in the Fund. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: The SLB will also be relaxing the rule whereby one guarantor could only provide a guarantee for one student. (Applause) Some people have the capacity to do more, and what we want to do is have guarantors of quality rather than just have quantity. Now an individual with the financial means will be able to provide guarantees for up to a maximum of three students... (Applause) ...provided that he or she proves to be financially capable. So, you may be capable but somebody else may not be, you can go up to three.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, it is also proposed - hold on - it is also proposed that interests due on outstanding loans to the SLB will not be calculated any longer on the current add-on basis, but on the reducing balance...

(Members on both sides applauded)

Some MEMBERS: Brilliant! Brilliant!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...thus reducing the monthly payment for the beneficiaries who pay. These changes and others should go a far way towards making students' loans more accessible and more affordable to potential beneficiaries. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Overall, Mr. Speaker, there has been a significant improvement in the level of collections by the Students' Loan Bureau, not least because borrowers are now much more attuned to the fact that how they treat with their loan obligations will determine their credit history in this new environment in which credit bureaus exist. (Applause) And it will affect their capacity not only to borrow from the Students' Loan Bureau, but from other institutions to get loans for other purposes, whether it is for housing, or for the car loan or for other things.

The Students' Loan Bureau and its Board have been charged to collect from those who borrow so that another generation can continue to benefit from the Students' Loan Bureau. (Applause)

We still have to deal with the overall question of how we finance tertiary education in the country, as a whole. We have to explore other means of providing support for students who aspire to higher learning. We have to discuss with the universities and with the private sector and public sector institutions, issues such as work-study programmes, so that we can assist students to find their way through it, to provide their way through.

Some consideration should be given by private financial institutions to develop more attractive financial products that can assist families to finance their children through university.

The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education have begun discussions, and at a later date we will say more about this, because what we need is a unified national endeavor linking private sector, public sector, universities, students, parents and everyone, to find a way of providing in a new environment what is needed for tertiary education. We cannot continue to have the illusion that all the resources needed in the near-term or medium-term are going to come from the Consolidated Fund. To believe that would be to believe an illusion.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, you may grow, you will grow, but we have a commitment - I don't know if you passed - you voted yes, but we have a commitment to get our debt to GDP ratio down to 60 per cent by 2025. That will be your what, fifteenth term, yes. (Laughter)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: But the fact is, we just need to face it. While we expect some greater space in the Budget, it's not going to be so vast that we can undertake from the Consolidated Fund all those expenditures that make our institutions not just available to accept the students, but have the institutions becoming the first-rate institutions in the ranking of the world. We don't just want to have a university to call it a name; we want the best universities that money can buy. (Applause) And to have the best universities that money can buy we have to provide money

for those universities. And that's what we have to do to try and find the way.

Mr. Speaker, on the matter of Government Domestic Payables and Arrears, it must be acknowledged that ministries, departments and agencies in the course of their operations, like other businesses, do carry payables.

However, in addition to normal payables associated with conducting business, several ministries, departments and agencies have, over the years, built up sizeable payments arrears, that is, those payables which extend over ninety days. A significant portion of these arrears go back over several years, in fact, there are arrears that go back over twenty years in some of the ministries, departments and agencies.

The fact is that successive Administrations have struggled over the years with this issue of containing the buildup of expenditure arrears in the Central Government. The problem has up to now, however, persisted.

In March 2013, the stock of domestic arrears reported by MDAs, stood at some Twenty-one point Six Billion ($21.6B). That is, all domestic arrears known at that time, including those going back over the years.

We have taken the decision that the arrears build up in ministries, departments and agencies is a serious issue and will therefore have to be treated as a matter of major priority.

A firm commitment has been given under the Extended Fund Facility and recorded in the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies, to control arrears. A cap has been placed on domestic arrears, at the level which existed at March, 2013, in order to prevent any further increase in the stock of arrears. (Applause) As at February, 2014, this cap was not breached. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Measures are being put in place, including structural changes, to reduce the existing stock of arrears over time and to control the build-up.

Mr. Speaker, it is well known that a central plank of our Economic Reform Programme involves tax reform. Among the central tax reform objectives is the strengthening of Tax Administration, improved rates of compliance, but perhaps more importantly, providing incentives for strong economic growth and job creation.

Last year, the centerpiece of our legislative efforts in this regard was the so-called Omnibus Incentives Legislation to introduce a rules-based and non-discretionary regime that was accessible to all investors.

The new regime focuses on granting of incentives to inputs to production, that is, capital and labour, by way of modern capital allowances that are more in line with the useful life of the assets, and which allow for a more meaningful and more generous write-off period for these taxes. It also provides for a new employment tax credit and incentives for the employment of labour, by allowing all tax-compliant businesses to claim credit against their income tax liabilities to the tune of 30 per cent of their statutory deductions. And it also provided a new regime to make provision for a reduction of the tax-related cost of the

productivity inputs, by providing tax relieve on imported operating inputs. The PIR applies to all inputs, including consumer goods such as, for example, carpets and fans for the tourism sector, or recording equipment for the creative industries... (Applause) ...once these are directly used as raw materials, intermediate goods or consumer goods in the production process.

Also, we should recall that the Customs Tariff revision introduced as part of the legislative package - the aim was introduced as part of the legislative package. The aim has been to reduce the list of non-consumer goods that attract customs duties while remaining consistent with our treaty obligations to CARICOM, and other international agreements. Tax incentives for the tourism sector were considered by the Working Group.

Mr. Speaker, implementation of the new incentive regime is proceeding with active facilitation from the relevant agencies, including Tax Administration Jamaica, the Jamaica Customs Agency and the Tax Policy Division under the Ministry of Finance and Planning.

At present consultations are ongoing in relation to the registration and certification procedures for businesses, that will access productive input relief, in particular, discussions are taking place with the manufacturing and tourism sectors. Every effort is being made to conclude these arrangements by June of this year.

Mr. Speaker, one outstanding area in the system of productive input relief, concerns the tourism transportation subsector, U-drive, contract carriage and tour operators. Under the old regime of waivers these operators were provided with concessionary rates at the discretion of the Minister of Finance, in order for them to offer competitive prices for their services.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, these powers have been removed. Without these concessionary rates the operators are at a disadvantage.

Motor vehicles are essential inputs to the services that these operators provide in much the same way as some consumer goods are an input to the accommodation and attraction subsectors.

Similar treatment ought therefore to be accorded to the operators in the tourism transportation subsector. It is proposed that vehicles for this sub sector be allowed imported free of customs duties but continue to be subject to GCT and SCT. (Applause) The specific mechanism on this new regime has been agreed and awaits a decision by the Cabinet, to authorize appropriate changes to the Legislation.

Mr. Speaker, Section 5 of the Fiscal Incentives Act allows Tourism Entities that are beneficiaries under the Hotel Incentive Act, a six-month transition period to decide whether to adopt the provisions of the new incentive regime, or retain their hotel incentive status for the remaining period of the concession. The election under the Legislation is to be made by July 1, 2014.

I am aware, Mr. Speaker, that this deadline is a matter of concern to some investors who have been appealing for an

extension to complete their assessment and decision-making processes.

I want to stress, Mr. Speaker that I am mindful of this concern, and would urge that the discussions currently underway between the Incentive Working Group and the Tourism Sector, be completed expeditiously so that whatever decisions we need to take to meet these concerns will be arrived at before the stipulated deadline.

We recognize the concern of players in the industry that there should be certainty regarding the duration of the incentives provided by this Legislation. We are in discussions with Tax Administration Jamaica, the Attorney General's Chambers to provide a workable solution that would be satisfactory to the financial market. We understand that bankers need just what they are called, bankable assurances that the terms of any agreement will last for the period of a loan or an investment, or the period for the amortization of an investment. But even as we proceed with these discussions, I want to make it clear, Mr. Speaker, in all honesty and sincerity, that no one should expect that it can be business as usual.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: We have to step forward into this new world and thus - so we hope that the discussions will be speedily concluded; we are prepared to make adjustments but we hope that there is a willingness on both sides, to come to a conclusion. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I want to just say one more thing before I deal with what everybody has been waiting for, consideration of the financing.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I had made the point, Mr. Speaker, that we see taxation as a tool for helping to drive job creation, and helping to lift productivity in the economy as a whole. We have in the past, in relation to computers, reduced and removed duties, in order for people to use computers, not just to play computer games that some people do...

A MEMBER: Like Desmond.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I am not calling anybody's name... but really to have them use these items in the production process for the goods and services that they offer. An issue has arisen in relation to the categorization of tablets *versus* phablets. It was recognized that these...

Mr. CHUCK: (Inaudible) ...term, phablet.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: A phablet - we know we are in a rapidly changing sector - a phablet is a cross between a phone and a tablet. And when we are talking about tablet here, we are talking about a computer device, not a medicinal potion.

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, tablets were classified similarly with laptops under the tariff heading 8471, and therefore did not attract any customs duty. Given that phablets represented a cross between the tablet and the phone, and provided that the characteristic was indistinguishable as to whether it was a phone or a tablet, the classification was

interpreted as being classified as a phone under tariff heading 8517. Phablets would therefore attract Customs Duty of 20 per cent as set by CARICOM.

With the rapid changes in technology, it was felt that this classification was prejudicial, as many of the tablets had similar characteristics to phablets. It was therefore felt, in the interest of equity in classification, and in the interest of driving productivity improvements in our domestic economy...

Mr. CHUCK: (Inaudible) ...that information.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...that the classification for phablet should be the same as that for tablets. (Applause) It is expected that this change will provide greater access and widen the use of technology products for learning and productivity.

Against this background, the Ministry of Finance and Planning has advised the Customs Agency to classify the phablets under tariff heading 847130 with description

> '*portable automatic data processing machines, weighing not more than ten kilograms, consisting of at least a central processing unit, a key board and a display'*

under the World Customs Organization, provides a unique classification. The effective date of this, Mr. Speaker, is May 1, 2014. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: At this time, the impact on revenues cannot be estimated, but is not considered to be significant.

A MEMBER: What colour the phablet have - blue?

Another MEMBER: It comes in orange too, you know.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the 2014/2015 Expenditure Budget is estimated at $540.1 Billion. Revenues and grants are projected at $421.2 Billion, leaving a financing gap of $118.9 Billion. This will be financed by loan receipts of $110 Billion, utilization of balances in the banking system of $1.4 Billion, and inflows from new measures, totaling $6.7 Billion.

Tax revenue of $377.6 Billion for last year is nineteen - tax revenue projected at $377.6 Billion is 9.8 per cent of the out-turn for 2013/2014 and represents 23.4 per cent of GDP. Included in the Tax Revenue Forecast is an amount of $3.2 Billion already announced for the minimum business tax, Betting, Gaming and Lotteries, and tidying up of Customs Regulations. All of these were introduced last year. The Legislation to cover these taxes is already before the Parliament. The tax measures projections also include various small measures, designed to tighten administrative features of existing taxes and plug loopholes.

Non-tax revenue is estimated at $34.2 Billion, down from $41.1 Billion out-turn in the previous fiscal year. This includes payments for new licences, renewal of old licences applicable to the telecommunications sector, totaling $4.3 Billion and capital revenues of $1.5 Billion.

The projected grants for 2014/2015 is $8.6 Billion, down from $10.6 Billion received in 2013/2014. Loan receipts of $110.9 Billion comprised $54.6 Billion from external sources and $56.3 Billion from domestic sources. The external sources are some eight-tenths of one per cent above the inflows from last year's, and the domestic is 40.3 per cent above the out-turn for the last fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, you will note that the financing identified above is short of some $6.7 Billion to fully fund the 2014/2015 Budget. This amount must come from new taxes.

Mr. Speaker, no administration, and no Minister of Finance likes to impose new taxes...

Mr. SHAW: How you say there was no new taxes?

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...but this is required to allow us to meet our primary surplus target. The tax package being proposed is approximately 0.5 per cent of GDP.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Chuck)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Now, let me say, we made a commitment that - I noticed a headline this morning that urged - I don't know if it was urging - that we should remove the Special Consumption Tax on petrol and do it by GCT. We made a commitment that we were not going to do anything on petrol and in any event, we, the Government of Jamaica, is of the view that that would entail serious collection difficulties, getting it from up at Devon, and Prattville, and Askenish, and other places. It is a complicated issue. We also have sought in doing this, to protect the poorest to the greatest degree possible.

So, Mr. Speaker, the first issue relates to alcoholic beverages. All alcoholic beverages with the exception of White Overproof Rum are currently taxed at the rate of $1,120 per liter of pure alcohol. There is also a preferential regime for the tourism industry which is currently $700 per litre, of pure alcohol. Under the current reform programme, the policy is for the systematic unification of the rates. In light of this, the proposal, with respect to the taxation of alcoholic beverages, is to provide for one unified, specific rate per liter, pure alcohol on all alcoholic beverages across all sectors.

We have found that the differential rates increase the administrative costs in the system, and quite frankly, is cumbersome and difficult to administer, and allows for leakage of the revenues. The estimated revenue yield from this measure is approximately $844 Million and will be effective April 22, 2014.

There was a discussion earlier, Mr. Speaker, in the Taxation Committee and the proposals for the tidying up of the GCT which increases the age limit on which GCT is applicable on the second-hand sale of vehicles from eight years to ten years. This was extensively discussed, and was agreed by the Parliamentary Committee.

The proposal does not contemplate increasing fees but really extends the year on vehicles. The yield on this is $26 Million and it became effective April 1, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, we propose to introduce a

levy on deposit-taking institutions and encashments from securities dealers. This levy will be chargeable on all withdrawals from deposit-taking institutions by way of electronic banking, point of….

Mr. CHUCK: To withdraw yuh money. One dollar. Yuh mad to rahtid.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Electronic banking, point of sale transactions, cheques...

Mr. CHUCK: That's an exit tax.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...ABM, ATM, ETM or over-the-counter and internet transfers.

Mr. CHUCK: Stupidity!

Dr. PHILLIPS: The levy is charged on the banks...

Mr. CHUCK: It's a stupid tax.

Mr. SHAW: Bank gwine pass on the cost.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...and will be charged for encashments from security dealers, whether partial or full. It is being proposed that a minimum *ad valorem* levy, as detailed below, will be charged on the value of each withdrawal. Less than $1 Million, the levy rate is 0.1 per cent...

Mr. DALLEY: Less than $1 Million.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...which would mean, Mr. Speaker, that for transactions of $1,000, $5,000 or $10,000 the associated levy payable would be $1, $5, or $10 respectively.

(Cross talk)

On a withdrawal of $100,000, the levy would be a $100. Mr. Speaker, on transactions valued between $1 Million to $5 Million, the levy rate is 0.09 of a per cent.

A MEMBER: One dollar.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Greater than $5 Million, less than $20 Million, the transaction rate is 0.075 of a per cent. Greater than $20 Million, the transaction rate is 0.05 of a per cent.

(Cross talk)

Stamp Duty charged on CHEC transactions will be removed. The revenue yield from this measure is estimated at $2.3 Billion and will be effective as of June 1, 2014.

Insurance companies are currently subject to corporate income tax at a reduced rate of 15 per cent. This rate was left unchanged in the recent rate adjustments made under the Fiscal Incentives Regime. In addition to thej.5 per cent corporate tax, life insurance companies are required to pay a premium tax as per section 48 of the Income Tax Act at a rate of 5 per cent and 4 per cent of gross premiums per year earned by regional and non-regional companies respectively. It is proposed that the rate of tax on gross premiums be increased to a standard 5.5 per cent. The second change being proposed is to increase the 15 per cent income tax on net investment income to 20 per cent for all insurance companies. The new regime will be effective May 1, 2014 and the total revenue yield from the combined measures will be approximately $1 Billion.

The following increases are being proposed to the Asset Tax:

- For specified entities regulated by the BOJ and the FSC, the rate is to be increased from 0.14 per cent to 0.25 per cent;
- For other entities the new scale of rates will apply:

i) asset value of at least $50 Million, a flat tax of $200,000;
ii) asset tax of at least $5 Million, but less than $50 Million a flat tax of $150,00;
iii) Asset tax of at least $500,000, but less than $5 Million a flat tax of $100,000.

- Asset tax for all other categories remained unchanged. That is, for asset value of at least $50,000 but less than $500,000 and an asset value of less than $50,000.

This tax is due as usual on the 15th of March annually and the effective date is the 1st May and the revenue yield from this measure is estimated at $1,788 Billion.

Mr. Speaker, Ministry Paper No. 32 of 2012/2013 allowed for an increase in the CET rates on a select List C items by 10 percentage points. Based upon our commitment to rate reduction the following changes are proposed:

- a reduction of the customs duty for vehicles 2000cc and above - yeah, Common External Tariff, a reduction of the CET from 30 per cent to 20 per cent for 2000ccs and above; and
- a reduction of Special Consumption Tax rates by 10 percentage points for petrol or diesel vehicles over 3500cc and Hybrid vehicles.

The revenue yield expected from this measure is approximately $250 Million. By reducing the rates we expect greater inflows of revenues. (Applause)

Mr. SHAW: I told you that from 2010.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Nuh yuh put it down. That is the first....

Mr. DALLEY: He did it first.

Dr. PHILLIPS: But we agree with you. We agree you for the first time at last. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the percentage of the Special Consumption Tax on petrol, which currently goes to the Road Maintenance Fund, which was intended to satisfy the loan repayment on the US$340 Million guaranteed debt from the China EX-IM bank, given that the guarantee of the Government of Jamaica has had to be put in place and called, those resources will now be redirected from the Road Maintenance Fund to Central Government and the Consolidated Fund. This will provide to the Consolidated Fund an additional $1.2 Billion.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, this Administration has a firm commitment to relieving the pressure on the most vulnerable among us and those with the lowest income. In keeping with this commitment, we proposed to increase the threshold on Personal Income Tax by $49,920 from the present value of $507,312 to $557,232. It is anticipated that this increase in the threshold will remove an additional 13,000 persons approximately from the requirement to pay taxes under the PAYE persons.

Mr. DALLEY: 13,000.

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: The estimated revenue loss is at $650 Million and the effective date is January 1, 2015.

Mr. Speaker, history provides us with no example of an economy that has unperformed for as long as we have to be restored to financial health and sustained economic growth without sacrifice and challenge.

(Cross talk/the Speaker gavels)

Last year, all of us collectively took the decision to bring a stop to any further deterioration in the Jamaican economy. We took the decision to pay down the massive debt burden so as to be able to invest more over time in improving social services and maintaining our physical infrastructure. We took the decision to regain the respect and trust of the international financial community. We took the decision to reform the public bureaucracy in order to create a more business-friendly environment for investors and improve efficiency with which we provide service to our fellow Jamaicans. Above all, we took the decision to begin living within our means.

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: These decisions were backed up by the sacrifices of our pensioners, our bondholders, our public servants and Jamaican families that have had to learn to stretch each dollar to make ends meet. The Report that I have just given on the state of the Jamaican economy over the past year, Mr. Speaker, provides irrefutable evidence that these sacrifices have not been in vain. (Applause) All the indicators point to the fact that we are on the right track (Applause), that the economy is back to growth...

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...and that we are attracting investments. (Applause)

Against this background, my message today is that we're going this path until reach...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...our ultimate goals: sustained growth, increased employment, improved living standards. We are going to stay the course.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, while we are on this road I know only too well the burdens that Jamaican families and business enterprises are being called upon to bear. We live in a world, Mr. Speaker that is constantly changing and is increasingly competitive. The world has moved on and so must we. We are going to require a new thinking and innovation at every level to remain competitive even as we work to achieve sustained economic growth. We approach the future with confidence. The debt is being reduced. We have met all quantitative targets (Applause) in four quarterly tests under the IMF Programme and our economy is growing. The goals we have set ourselves are within our grasp.

Mr. DALLEY: As a people.

Dr. PHILLIPS: The new Jamaica we are designing and building is not a short term project. To bring this project to successful conclusion it will require from each of us commitment, industry and fixity of purpose.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Fixity.

Dr. PHILLIPS: We have a vision, Mr. Speaker that will have all our Jamaican students leaving high school and tertiary institutions eventually being able to move straight from school into the workplace. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: We have a vision of communitites where safety and harmony are the order of the day. We have a vision of families being to meet from their own resources the basic expenses for the education of their children. (Applause) We have a vision of a Jamaica with a vibrant industrial sector, vibrant agricultural sector driven by innovation. Mr. Speaker, we have proven in so many areas of life in the world: track and field, culture, scholarship, that we can do it.

Mr. Speaker, as we wish each other well for a happy and Holy Easter season, let us remember that the message of Easter is one of renewal, rebirth and resurrection. (Applause) That is what we seek for our country.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker. May God bless Jamaica and the Jamaican people.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the recommittal of item, Announcements.

The SPEAKER: The question is the recommittal of item, Announcements.

Put to the House and agreed to.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
(Recommitted)

- **Ministry Paper No, 44**
  Revenue Measures for the Financial year 2014/2015; Financial statements and revenue estimates 2014/2015 for the Financial year ending 31st March 2015.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAUWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business this afternoon. I, therefore, move for the adjournment of the Parliament until next Tuesday, April 22, 2014, at 2:00 p.m. when the Opposition spokesperson on Finance will participate in the Budget.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the adjournment of the Parliament until next Tuesday, the 22nd of April at 2:00 p.m.

This House stands adjourned. (Gavels)

The House accordingly adjourned at approximately 4:56 p.m.

TUESDAY, April 22, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:35 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM MCNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern

MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern

MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern

MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Clifford Warmington

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Papers No. 45**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Pesticides Control Authority for the Financial year 2010/2011
- **Ministry Papers No. 46**
  Annual Report of the Development Bank of Jamaica Limited for the Financial year ended March 31, 2013
- **Ministry Papers No. 47**
  Annual Report of the Private Security Regulation Authority for the period April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Warmington.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Two weeks ago during the Finance Committee Meeting, I asked question in relation to the budget for the Leader of Opposition's Office, and the Minister then gave a response not to be totally correct, where he was somewhat misled by those who advised him. But at the time I asked the question of the reduction of $2 Million in the salary of the Leader of Opposition's Office and the reduction of $700,000 for goods and services. At the time, there was no stationery in that office. And the other thing is that at that time when I asked the question the telephone to the Leader of Opposition's Office was disconnected and is still disconnected. What I want to ask is, why this happened because while the current Prime Minister occupied that office this type of disrespect was never shown to that office. And I am saying that this type of spitefulness, pettiness and vindictiveness must stop.

The SPEAKER: No, no, Mr. Warmington. Mr. Warmington, you know better than that, man. You are accusing people.

Mr. WARMINGTON: What I am saying is that this type of behaviour must stop. It should never have happened, never have happened. This is disrespectful and this is at the lowest level that we can descend in such regard. It is still disconnected. Two weeks now the telephone in that office is disconnected, the bill is not paid, it is totally disrespectful. And I said before while the current Prime Minister occupied that office this type of disrespect was never shown. An end must be put to this type of disrespect that is being shown to that office.

The SPEAKER: Okay, thank you. House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker that is a matter under the Heading of Parliament, so as the House Leader I undertake to sort it out.

Mr. WARMINGTON: And make sure it doesn't happen again.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE HOUSE FIRST OBTAINED

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I now move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled: "The Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment) Act, 2014".

Bill entitled:

"The Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment) Act, 2014,"

read a first time.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of second reading.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we intend to continue the debate which was started last Thursday. This afternoon the Opposition Spokesperson on Finance, the Member of Parliament for North East Manchester, will make his contribution.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

(Applause)

Mr. SHAW: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of this Budget Debate let me first of all thank you for your continued even-handed leadership in this House, and let me acknowledge the presence of my dear wife who is (Applause) along with Members of my constituency...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. SHAW: You know that you are to behave yourself… who are here, including councillors and councillor caretaker.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, this is my 21st year of service as a MP (Applause) and I know that it is also your 21st year of service as Member of Parliament. (Applause) I want to also express my appreciation to my colleagues in all of the support that they have given to me and in particular, to say to my Leader and Leader of the Opposition and to thank him for taking a chance with me one more time. (Applause)

(Mr. Shaw shook hands with Mr. Holness)

(HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

(MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

(MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, in my presentation today intend to give a brief overview of what I consider to be the state of the nation. I will then look at the expenditure budget and some critical matters that have to do with that expenditure budget. I will take a

look at the tax package that has been proposed by the Honourable Minister of Finance and then to have a brief discussion on the macroeconomic programme of the Government with the International Monetary Fund and to discuss as - accept the invitation of the Minister of Finance to talk about exchange rate and the question of devaluation, and to discuss the issue of debt briefly before I end my presentation with some prescriptions for economic growth. So that is, Mr. Speaker, by way of the framework for my presentation.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Wheatley)

(HON ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, a British Army officer was assigned the arduous task of visiting a battlefield to check on reports of heavy troop losses. Upon his return, he reported to his superiors: "Gentlemen, I am afraid the situation is so grave" because he had found a lot of carnage. He says, "I am afraid the situation is so grave that it is virtually impossible for me to exaggerate but I will try."

Today, in reporting to this Parliament on the State of the Nation, there is absolutely no need for me, Mr. Speaker, to exaggerate. Honourable Members can be assured that whatever observations I make will be well grounded in the incontrovertible truth. It will be supported by facts, by real life, everyday experiences. Listeners will be obliged to receive the information either in loud or quiet agreement. Any denial to the contrary will be a contrivance, Mr. Speaker, a fabrication by persons either in self-denial or with their heads buried in the proverbial sand of political expediency. (Applause/Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, what is the state of the Nation today? As I participate in this budget debate today, the question must be asked, what is the true state of the nation? Because when I listened last week Thursday -I thought the only thing that was left to flow was milk and honey.

Over the past two years and four months of the administration of this Government, the conditions of the lives of the citizens of Jamaica has sharply worsened. The overall annual unemployment rate is at 12 year high at 15.3 per cent for 2013. Unemployment among young people age 20 to 24 is 35.2 per cent, but among young women at the same age it is even higher at 44.1 per cent at October 2013, Mr. Speaker. The cost of living has sharply increased due to a 27 per cent

devaluation of the Jamaican Dollar against the United States Dollar moving from $86.60 to US$1 at the end of 2011, to $109.96 easy to just round it off at $110 now to US$1.

The price of chicken back and basic foods, Mr. Speaker, has flown to unreachable heights, while oxtail and stake are now delicacies, no longer promised in the public square. And it was not promised by us. The fact is, by even the most conservative assessment of prices of basic foods one will find that the prices have increased, Mr. Speaker, at least twice the rate of the official inflation. This is certainly not balancing the people's lives as is the passion of the Honourable Prime Minister.

The cost of electricity continues to increase a pace, closing down some businesses, putting more people out of work, causing more disconnections of service, sending families to steal electricity or resort to the 'Home Sweet Home' lamp. In March our light bills have been further increased by another 10 per cent, one lick. And as we speak, the JPS has applied to the OUR for a 21 per cent increase, and even as they promised a 2 to 8 per cent reduction to large industrial users in return, small businesses, Mr. Speaker, will be called upon to pay 15 per cent more for electricity further eroding their fragile competitiveness. And even as our manufacturers and exporters put up a brave face, and went to the National Arena to display their goods, many of them worried privately and not so privately that they just don't know how much longer they can survive in business with a sliding dollar, increased cost of electricity, decline in consumer demand due to the severe contraction in the economy and its negative impact on people's purchasing power.

Mr. Speaker, we must look at the statistics, the volume of total cargo at our ports is at a 5 year low, at 22 million tons per year. When the JLP left office, our ports were handling some thirty plus million tons per year. At the end of 2013, volumes were 25 per cent lower; that is not progress, Minister. The Economic and Social Survey of 2013 showed that the household poverty rate increased; household poverty, Mr. Speaker, has increased by 2 per cent, moving from 12.4 per cent in 2010 to 14.4 per cent in 2012. My guess is that it is even worse if you factor in the figures for 2013.

Jamaica has slipped seven places, Mr. Speaker, on the United Nations Development Programme Human Development Index, from 79th place to 86th place, showing our worsening poverty.

Mr. Speaker, you can feel the poverty, you can see it as you travel the length and breadth of Jamaica; it is palpable. One social scientist has recently declared that 1.1 million Jamaicans are below the poverty line. One point one (1.1) million people. Meanwhile - it is not the first time we have heard that figure. The World Bank has used that figure before referring to how marginal we are. Meanwhile, there has been no publication of the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions for over three years.

Mr. Speaker, the feeling of increasing poverty is becoming quite pervasive, and is

amplified in a recent statement by the Reverend Lenworth Anglin, President of the Jamaica Umbrella Group of Churches representing 99 per cent of the Christian Community in Jamaica. Here is what he had to say. I quote;

> **'***Basically, people are fearful, people are suffering financially, and the cost of living is too high, people are not earning and then there is the loss of jobs. The unemployment rate is just too high; and so there is a general suffering around which is evident.*

He continued,

> *The Minister is trying to appease our minds, but we are feeling it on the ground.*

He then said,

> *I have never seen so many needy people, in all of my life, and they are coming to the church.'*

That is the President of the Umbrella Group of Churches.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the rich are no longer getting richer, the middle class is rapidly becoming the lower-class, the lower-class is becoming the poor, and the poor is no longer getting poorer, they are getting poor-ra-ra. (Laughter)

Honourable Prime Minister, I am sorry, but you are not balancing the people's lives. Vital drugs needed by people who can't afford it are increasingly unavailable at public hospitals. One patient recently came to me with one item unfilled from three prescriptions given at the hospital; it turned out, Mr. Speaker, to be by far the most expensive of the three items of drugs vitally needed.

Additionally, an increase number of patients with chronic illnesses like renal failure and cancer await the mercy of the Government, the IMF and the expenditure. And even as we claimed to meet our expenditure targets to pass another IMF test, vital services such as repairs and sanitations in schools are cut, help for the disabled is cut, trucking of water and new supplies systems are cut, while raw sewage runs where we sell food in Downtown Kingston and where our people live and children play in the inner cities including Tawes Pen in Spanish Town. Thousands of people are keeping their children out of school, some for days, others for weeks because they can't afford the lunch and the transport money, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, despite the best efforts of the PATH Programme parents are having it very tough out there. Madam Prime Minister, we are not balancing our people's lives. All across the land Jamaicans are stressed out, the worker is stressed out to make ends meet, the businessman is stressed to try and cope with the hostile business climate. The transport operator is stressed out as he is called upon to find an extra three quarter three-million dollars for licence and to duco his bus while his income stream is declining. Many people across Jamaica are now buying bread by the half, the quarter or the slice; they are buying one egg, Mr. Speaker, many people...

(Heckling by Members)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what about that that excited some people like that. But let me say again, many people across

Jamaica are now buying bread by the half, by the quarter and by the slice. Some people are buying egg Mr. Speaker, by the one.

(Heckling by Members)

Mr. Speaker, go Downtown, they are buying eggs by the one, they are buying a frankfurter by the one, and they are buying a squeeze of toothpaste by the one.

Mr. Speaker, due to the - you know, Mr. Speaker, some people don't believe about the squeeze of toothpaste, you know. But some time ago it used to be 'beg you a squeeze of toothpaste nuh'. Now it is not beg you a squeeze, it is, 'sell me a squeeze of toothpaste' due to the gross mismanagement of this Government....

(Heckling of Members)

Mr. Speaker, due to the gross mismanagement of this Government those of us who have jobs are stressed out to make ends meet between the food, the light bill, the transportation, school, the cost of daily survival, we are between the rock and some very hard places. This Government is not balancing people's lives.

One man told me, at the OUR consultation in Mandeville last week at the JPS application for a rate increase, that the light bill, he is said to the entire audience, that the light bill now is costing more than the food bill. And it is not the churches alone people turn to, Mr. Speaker, let's be totally honest. Members of Parliament, councilors, and the caretakers, the representatives of the people are stressed out, trying to cope with the ever increasing cry for the needy for assistance in our constituencies. (Applause) I dare anyone to deny that.

Mr. Speaker, it goes beyond that, for micro and small enterprises, the numbers are not thriving. And I take note of the initiatives announced by the Minister last week. '*Every little mickle will make a muckle*', but small businesses, Minister are not thriving. There were 267 fewer small businesses operating in Jamaica at the end of December 2013 than when the Jamaica left office. Sales for the sector according to the Planning Institute of Jamaica have dropped by 15.4 per cent or some $9 Billion since the JLP left office; that is not progress, Minister; that is moving in the wrong direction.

Imports, Mr. Speaker, at 44.1 per cent of GDP at the end of 2013 is higher than where it was at the end of 2012 at 42.9 per cent despite the massive devaluation in the currency - that is moving in the wrong direction.

Exports at 11.1 per cent of GDP at the end of 2013 is lower than where it was at the end of 2012 at 11.7 per cent - that's moving in the wrong direction. If you drill down into exports in the manufacturing sector you will see, Mr. Speaker, an 18 per cent decline in 2013 when compared with 2012 across traditional and nontraditional exports, putting some five thousand people out of work. Mr. Speaker. This is a sector that employs approximately two times more males than females; imagine the impact on households from the job losses. And inflation, at nine and half per cent at the end of 2013 is higher than where the JLP left it at the end of 2011 – that is moving in the wrong direction.

Net International Reserves at $1.3 Billion. And it is interesting how the Minister, when

he speaks, very selective in how he does benchmarking, he decides when he benchmarks to 2011 and when he benchmarks otherwise. Because last week he said that NIR is now at $1.3 Billion up from $800 Million last year. But, on a broader perspective, at the end of March 2014, the NIR is $700 Million less than the approximately $2 Billion that the JLP handed to the PNP at December 2011. Moving in the wrong direction. (Applause)

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, the.... Oh, you come!

(Laughter by all)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker.... (Laughter) Mr. Speaker, the Jamaica Stock Exchange has lost approximately 21% of its market value since the JLP left office. That is moving in the wrong direction.

Ask the question boldly of most Jamaicans, except perhaps the array of Consultants to this Government. Are you better off today than two years and four months ago?

Mr. DALLEY: Yes.

Dr. DAVIES: ….says yes!

Mr. SHAW: You will get a resounding, no! Has this Government kept its solemn promise to balance your lives while they balance the books?

Opposition MEMBER: No!

Mr. SHAW: You will get another big, no.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has passed IMF Tests and that is good. But they have dismally failed the test of effective governance and they have failed miserably the people's test. They have failed the supermarket test. They have failed the test of ensuring all our children are in school on a consistent basis. They have failed the small and medium enterprises' test. They have failed the import test. They have failed the export test. They have failed the inflation test, the NIR test and the Stock Market test. They have failed the test to balance the lives of our people.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this is the background against which I address this Honourable House today; I now turn to the Budget, the matter at hand.

(Inaudible comments by Government Members)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, on the expenditure side of the Budget, the Minister has put forward a Budget totaling $539.4 Billion, that's in the book, we know about the additional that is related to the appropriations to date. And this is almost 19% of which of this is debt that needs to be repaid this fiscal year, and which the Minister has to ask the holders to roll over or the multilaterals to lend new money to take out that debt. We will return to the matter of the debt, because there are a few things I want to say on that.

I first want to focus on the recurrent and capital expenditure. The $438 Billion segment of the Budget, Mr. Speaker - it is the part of the Budget that the hard earned tax dollars of the people of Jamaica support.

As such, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Government of the day owes it to the taxpayers. In fact, it should be considered the Government's sacred duty to report honestly,

accurately and completely to the people of Jamaica.

And so, Mr. Speaker, as I reflect on the sacrifices of the Jamaican taxpayers, I'm saddened by the inaccurate picture that this Budget presents of the state of affairs of Government and the country, and take this opportunity to call for greater transparency, so all Jamaicans can understand, even parliamentarians can better understand, to have a clearer picture of the financial state of the nation. One such area that has been utterly abused in terms of lack of transparency is the question of arrears, arrears in payment.

Mr. Speaker, the expenditure budget is increasingly put together while ignoring the buildup of every years or late payment which keeps worsening every year. I asked the Government to tell me how much are the arrears and they said, $25.51 Billion. An extremely high figure, which still does not include withholding tax on interest owed. Here are the estimates for the arrears:

- We have withholding tax on interest of $20.46 Billion.
- Statutory deductions to statutory bodies.
- The National Housing Trust.
- The National Insurance Scheme,
- The Jamaica Public Service Company, some $2.9 Billion.

It is not clear to me, however, whether all of that information is contained in a Report that I did not receive until very late last night is when I finally got the Report, Mr. Speaker, and I can report to you now that the detailed information by Ministry, by Department and by Agencies finally came to me just literally a few hours ago.

With a nominal increase of 30....The point I want to make first of all is that when you add up these items that I mention awhile ago, $15 Billion for Statutory deductions, $20.46 Billion for withholding tax on interest, and the total of the withholding tax is - the total of the arrears that has been presented to us is $25.51 Billion, you add all of that together with JPS and you come up with a total of $47.87 Billion that is outstanding for - in terms of arrears.

With a nominal increase of $39 Billion in this Budget, when compared with last year, and most of that is really for interest payments and wage settlements, it is clear that the Government has no plan to extricate itself from the stranglehold of persistent and growing arrears for a range of things as I have already enumerated.

In addition to the outstanding liabilities for withholding tax on interest totaling $20.46 Billion, there are $25.51 Billion of arrears, most of which are in chronic arrears of $21.38 Billion. In excess of 90 dates totaling a whopping 47.87 Billion.

While the NHT and the NIS arrears of $15.85 Billion and $1.15 Billion respectively are listed as part of these arrears, it is not clear whether arrears to the JPS for the street lights of $2.9 Billion are included. It's not in this list, that's for sure.

How credible does this make this Budget with the Minister bragging that he has met all his IMF targets? And why is the IMF turning a

blind eye to this ever worsening situation?

This failure which is now in many cases in excess of 365 days Mr. Speaker is wreaking havoc on the ability of many small businesses to be able to afford to remain as suppliers to the government. (Applause) The JDF and the Ministry of Health are big-time culprits in this regard, in terms of paying their arrears, persistent arrears in excess of 90 days.

Indeed, many companies are laying off workers, closing down their businesses, cutting supplies to government; even as the MDA's simply open new lines of credit with other suppliers to rack up some more payables. These large and ever increasing levels of arrears left unattended, calls into sharp question the very credibility of this Budget as the arrears are not included in the Budget, not even reported as a footnote in the in the Budget. And I had to be like pulling teeth to get this information.

Beyond the issue of the outstanding payments is also the question of the accuracy of the information being provided. I don't know Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a stubborn reluctance to come clean and transparent on the arrears. Where are the details? Why is it such a reluctance to provide it in all its dimension? Because, even as I have this now, I don't see the NIS arrears on it, it's not on this list. And I don't see the Jamaica Public Service street light arrears, which is almost $3 Billion, that's just for streetlights. Then there's another $1 Billion or $2 Billion for electricity owed by MDAs in the system.

I don't know if that roughly $5 Billion is included in this document? So, we are gonna have to use Parliament to continue to prosecute this case, because we must get the truth and we must get all of the truth and nothing but the truth.

Mr. Speaker, if we were to add the JPS and the NIS and others that I feel are missing from here, we'd be looking at a total of about $52 Billion, $52 Billion of arrears for which the Budget makes no mention, there is no accounting in the Budget to pay any of it.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired. '

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the member's time be extended sufficient to allow him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the Member's time to be extended sufficiently for him to complete his presentation?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, let me give some clarity here. I thank the Honourable Members for the extension. Let me give some clarity as to why we need the details across Ministries, Departments and Agencies. We have to bring it, we have to micro-manage it; we have to bring it down to the nitty-gritty because people's lives are affected.

As the Opposition Spokesman on Finance Honourable Prime Minister, I can tell you. I drive into a parking lot, going about me business, and people want to tell me about the problems they are having getting their pay from the Government. And some of them are in real genuine need, some of them cry, they literally cry.

Mr. DALLEY: Cry to you?

Mr. SHAW: They cry!

Mr. DALLEY: They wept?

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Because their very livelihood and lives are being affected. It's not a joke business. Not a joke business. Okay. And I feel it for them and that's why I bring it to Parliament. I feel it for them, is a serious thing, it's not a joke business.

Mr. CHARLES: ...hungry.

Mr. SHAW: In an example I give now, Mr. Speaker, there are people working with the South East Regional Health Authority, one of the senior culprits in this problem of arrears - a not pointing fingers anywhere.... (Laughter) …who have not seen - some workers Mr. Speaker, very serious, have not seen their deductions for insurance on loans that are due to be paid to insurance companies, credit unions and other financial institutions. This is a serious business, because statutory deductions are one thing and that's bad; it is not being paid over, but I think the Government, starting from some time ago, has started to deduct the statutory deductions at source. But, what about these deductions now for - to assist our workers in their normal, routine, day-to-day activities? The Ministry deducts the money or the department deducts the money and don't pass it on.

So from October of last year a number of persons in this region, Minister have not gotten these payments made. Some of them have said the institutions have called to say, they have not received payments since last October. So this is almost six months' arrears for those people, placing their credit and their welfare on the line. Can you imagine if your insurance premium is among those not paid? Another example are reports that some members of the medical profession only received part-payment of their salaries in March, last month, part payment of their salaries. Yes. And in respect of gratuities that are due for over one year now, has not been paid at all.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Report just received reveals that next to large sums owed for withholding tax on interest and statutory deductions to the National Housing Trust. The next largest delinquent is the Ministry of Health with a whopping arrears build-up of $6,731 Billion with $4,472 Billion in chronic arrears in excess of 90 days. Now, you can imagine what is happening to the suppliers across the island who are providing goods and services to this department. That is just one example of what is happening.

That is just one example of what is happening when the Administration - this Government, stuffs the bills into the arrears bag, pretends that it is living within its means and brags about it, too, and gives the IMF the assurance that the arrears are not getting any worse.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Minister said last week, the amount of arrears over ninety days - and I don't want to be misleading but I thought I heard him say, as of this same time last year, the chronic arrears was Twenty-One point Three Eight Billion Dollars ($21.38B). Well the Report I just got from the Financial Secretary says that this year the chronic arrears is still Twenty-One point Three Eight

Billion Dollars ($21.38B). The figure not moving at all, it is a lay-down figure. The figure is a chronic.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: What an amazing coincidence, the same figure, the same figure.

So, when the Minister says, and I quote:

"*By living within our means, the country maintained a primary surplus of 7.5 per cent, but was also able to achieve a fiscal surplus. Our revenues covered all recurrent expenditure, including interest costs."*

No, Minister, revenues do not cover all recurrent expenditure, not when this Government has arrears of Forty-seven point Eight Seven Billion ($47.87B) or possibly more, possibly Fifty-one point Nine Two Billion ($51.92B) and counting, owing to businesses and individuals. By your own figures, Four point One Billion Dollars ($4.IB) occurred in the last thirty days, not the last ninety days - well, yes, in the last ninety days, in the last ninety days.

Mr. Speaker, I must remind this Honourable House that under the JLP Government we started a payment plan - in respect of Withholding Taxes now, Minister - we started a payment plan to pay down the Twenty Billion Dollars ($20B), because that was the figure - when I came in that was the figure that was there, Twenty Billion ($20B). And we started a payment plan to pay down the Twenty Billion Dollars ($20B) Withholding Tax on interest liability, and brought the arrears we inherited, down. On the time of my departing from that office it was down to about Fifteen Billion Dollars ($15B), Fifteen Billion, we were paying it down. And while we were paying it down we were paying current obligations on time.

Now, the Government has apparently scuttled that plan and the arrears are now back to Twenty point Four Six Billion Dollars ($20.46B). Minister, you better take this one in hand.

I want to turn briefly to the issue - a concern I have about how the Budget is constructed, Minister. It has to do with the transparency in the Budget and it has to do with how we are able to competently evaluate the Budget and able to compare the Estimates, one period to the next.

Let's take the Ministry of Health. Because when the Budget is tabled the media is out there, and everybody says, oh, this department gets cut and this ministry gets cut and all cut left, right and centre. But what is the truth? Because we need the information when you are analyzing the thing.

At the Ministry of Health - let's look at the Budget that was presented in this Budget - approved Estimates 2013/14, Thirty-two Billion Dollars ($32B), Revised Estimates, Thirty-six point Three Billion ($36.3B). Estimates for 2014/15, Thirty-four point Seven Billion Dollars ($34.7B). So, Prime Minister, this gives the impression that the budget for the Ministry of Health is down almost Two Billion Dollars ($2B). But that is misleading, because the budget that is presented for the Ministry of Health does not include the Two point Three-three Billion Dollars ($2.33B) for reclassification; the

Government knows it. It doesn't include roughly One point Five Billion Dollars ($1.5B) for arrears in wages, the 7 per cent; the Government knows it - and the second year of another one-off payment of Twenty-five Thousand ($25,000); the Government knows it. That amount is approximately Seven Hundred Million Dollars ($700M).

So, when you add all of these, Mr. Speaker, the Budget for the Ministry of Health is a total of Thirty-nine point Three Billion Dollars ($39.3B) - not Thirty-four point Seven Billion Dollars ($34.7B) - which will not be reflected until the tabling of the Supplementary Estimates when it comes.

The same misleading information applies to the Ministry of Education, because we can jump up and it might be politically good to jump up and say, my God, the Ministry of Education's Budget has been cut, look how much cut it cut by. But Minister, when you add back the money - when you add back the money from - I see you were distracted - but when you add back the money from the 7 per cent that is now in Contingency, and one-off payments of the Twenty-five Thousand ($25,000) you will find that certainly, the compensation side of the Budget is in fact likely to be more than last year and not less.

So it is time, I believe, high time to present the Budget in a way that gives an accurate presentation to the people of Jamaica, to the journalists, to Parliament, on how the actual Estimates are. If you already know this information, I can't see any good reason why it should be pumped up into an amount called Contingency. You have the information already, put it into the Budget, and let us be able...

(*Sotto voce* comment from Dr. Davies)

Mr. SHAW: Yes, well, whatever, you are better at cricket than most other things, I mean - anyway, anyway, it's all right, yes. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to Interest Expense. Interest Expense, Mr. Speaker, took a rather large jump in the Budget this fiscal year, to One Hundred and Thirty-two point Seven Billion Dollars ($132.7B) up from a Hundred and Nine point Nine Billion Dollars ($109.9B) last year. That is an increase of some Twenty-three Billion Dollars ($23B). If the Government were paying down the debt like the Minister said, you would expect the interest expense to decline or certainly not to be up by Twenty-three Billion Dollars ($23B), a worse situation this fiscal year, and after having done a second debt exchange to bring the interest cost down.

The truth Mr. Speaker is that the nominal stock of debt is up, not down. The Government closed the fiscal year 13/14 with a Central Government debt of One point Nine Four Six Trillion Dollars ($1.946T), up from One point Eight One Two Trillion Dollars ($1.812T) the previous year, that is, One Hundred and Thirty-four Dollars (sic) roughly, more.

I fully understand the importance of using the debt to GDP ratio, rather than the nominal stock of debt. And I will get to debt in a moment. But what I want Jamaicans to understand is that the thing called exchange rate, it is wreaking havoc with the interest cost

in the Budget. The Minister did not touch that in his speech last week.

What we therefore must understand is the umbilical linkage between the increase in the debt stock, not from borrowing only, but from devaluation, which then causes higher interest cost, which requires more taxation and other measures as we are experiencing now, with the additional Twenty-three Billion ($23 B) of interest cost.

Let everyone understand Mr. Speaker, when 47.2 per cent of the total stock of debt is in foreign currency, the exchange rate matters. When 21.5 per cent of the local debt is indexed to United States dollars, the exchange rate matters. And so we can't just willy-nilly continue to talk about devaluation. There are real fundamental costs to devaluation. (Applause) And here is a big example in the Budget. It's not just a cost to the man on the street; it's a cost on the fiscal accounts that eventually reaches its way back to the man on the street, the taxpayer of Jamaica. We have to find that money.

And what is even sadder is that the benefits of the lower interest costs from the National Debt Exchange are gone. Those benefits have already been wiped out by the continued devaluation of the currency. What was the sacrifice all about, Mr. Speaker? The truth is, when a country is as highly indebted as Jamaica is, with massive amounts of foreign debt, the best strategy is a stable currency. If the country had none or very little foreign exchange debt, and its singular focus was on stimulating exports, then maybe, only maybe I would concede the devaluation argument. I will return to the exchange rate discussion because there are few things as important to discussing the way forward right now, as the question of the exchange rate. And a gwine spen' time on it today.

(*Sotto voce* comments from Dr. Davies)

Dr. DAVIES: No, no, no, no! Especially you, I will spend plenty time explaining it to you.

Dr. DAVIES: Okay.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: Yes.

Mr. Speaker, on Capital Expenditure, the segment of the Budget that goes to building, improving and maintaining the country's infrastructure, the Capital Budget, has been cut from an approved Thirty-eight Billion Dollars ($38B) down to Thirty-three Billion Dollars ($33B). That's a Four point Seven Billion Dollar ($4.7B) reduction.

But I here acknowledge the fact that an accounting measure has apparently changed in the Budget, where certain types of recurrent maintenance are no longer referred to as Capital, but rather as Recurrent.

But as I explained in the Standing Finance Committee - and I don't think the Minister of Finance was there at the time, but in the case of the Ministry of Education, where we saw an amount for Capital A was there in the previous Budget, an amount for Recurrent, both for maintenance in schools, and we are told that Capital A has now been collapsed into the Recurrent side. But the problem is that in this Budget, Minister, I have not seen the

incremental increase on the Recurrent side that would make up for what has been lost is no longer in Capital A, right.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: Well, Capital B is not maintenance, sir. With all due respect, Capital B is to build new schools, it is new capital works, IDB funded, this and that. We are talking about sanitation, fixing up the schools, cleaning up the place, painting it up, stop the leaking roofs, that's not Capital B, so don't bring that to me. The Budget cut, Minister, the Budget cut. A trying to help you. The Budget cut.

Interestingly though, in the BoJ Annual Report, 2013, on page 47, it gives us an explanation for the lower than budgeted Capital Expenditure outturn in 2013. The Bank of Jamaica's Report said that:

> "*Budgeted Capital Expenditure outturn primarily reflected slower than anticipated execution of Capital projects*."

Capital Projects, another problem. The Minister of Education has mentioned Capital Projects and he knows too the delays we have had in new schools being constructed and sometimes the unnecessary delays in this. I think something - quite frankly, I was there - something has to be done about this thing.

We programmed Capital B to be spent under this heading, IDB, World Bank, OPEC Fund, Kuwaiti Fund and sometimes we put it in there and we seem to already know before we put it in there that it won't be spent, and then it appears as a major cut by the end of the year.

Mr. Speaker, in Agriculture, on the expenditure side - I just mentioned Education - while we celebrate recent growth trends in agriculture - and I got a kind letter from the Minister who apologized for his absence, and I am grateful for that letter. While we celebrate recent growth trends in agriculture...

(*Sotto voce* remarks from Mr. Dalley)

Mr. SHAW: Don't forget - oh, yes, it's happening there, oh, yes. No, no, we planting...

Mr. DALLEY: Real growth in Irish potatoes.

Mr. SHAW: Real growth, oh, yes. We planting lots of Irish potato, plenty Irish potato, some of the most beautiful sweet peppers, Prime Minister, a gwine carry some for you, yes... (Laughter) So, some of the nicest sweet peppers, Mr. Speaker, bright and yellow, nice and green, there is even some orange coloured ones too, right. (Laughter) And thank God, the rain is falling now so they are coming up nice and plump and they are gaining weight and they are looking pretty and they taste even better. So we have to give God thanks for whatever growth we are seeing in agriculture now.

But, it's one thing for the Minister to pick the last quarter of growth and say that was 13 per cent, and then annualize it and say, annualized, you know, this will look good, true. But the Economic and Social - hold the applause, because the Economic and Social Survey says that real value added for Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry declined by 0.5 per cent in 2013, reflecting contraction in three to five sub-industries.

I mean, we want to see growth, you know, but for now, we have a little ways to go, okay.

Mr. Speaker, I also have concerns about the implementation of a portion of the housing development in Springfield in Clarendon under the Social Economic Development of Sugar Dependent Areas, specifically, infrastructure work, which includes road, water, electricity for 88 housing units, which was supposed to cost $166 Million in Springfield, Clarendon, while being only 60 per cent complete, have already racked up a variation - an over-run of $50 Million. This requires explanation.

In addition, the contract for the actual construction of the houses which was recently cancelled from one main contractor, and awarded to a second contractor who is reportedly now paying labourers $1,600 per day, when the approved master builders rate for compensation of that work is $2,068 per day. Incidentally, the proper rate is being paid by the infrastructure contractor, but is not being paid by the housing developer.

Mr. Speaker, not only are the workers being underpaid in that very poor - Prime Minister, very poor area of Southwest Clarendon, but they are being paid late, reportedly due to slow payment from the Government. I am asking the Minister to investigate that case.

Mr. Speaker, in tourism, the other pillar of growth that we speak about along with agriculture, on which the Government is relying, growth has slowed down. After healthy growth in 2007 to 2011, the percentage of growth in real value added for hotels and restaurants is in decline again, and stopover arrivals that grew by 120,000 visitors between 2009 and 2011 has now fallen to a mere 20,000 people between 2011 and 2012.

Mr. CHARLES: What!

Mr. SHAW: Tourism is a very important industry for us, and we must not fool with it, because give credit to the former Tourism Minister, he grew the industry by three per cent per year during the worst global economic crisis we have seen in eight years.

(Applause by Opposition Members)

Mr. BUCHANAN: So Andrew make a mistake.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, let me turn now to Revenue. The Minister has announced the need for additional revenue. The Minister - as a matter of fact, let me drink a little water on this one - this Revenue one here.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Applause)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, the Minister has announced the need for additional revenue measures, in order to fill a financing gap of some $6,685 Billion. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, had the Government kept the exchange rate stable, we would not have had to have additional tax measures. In fact, you can see where there is an additional $23 Billion, as I said, for interest payment, most of which is a result of exchange rate movement. This could have easily gone to increasing Capital Expenditure, reducing arrears and not require any tax measures at all.

So then I ask, are we on the right path? In all of these aspects, is this current economic programme of the IMF Agreement the right one for Jamaica? Is there another economic

programme that the Government could have crafted? Are we headed to the Promised Land as the Honourable Minister promised in his Budget presentation?

So, the essential point to be made, Mr. Speaker, and I am quoting from the Minister now, the essential point to be made is that in order to reach that promised land of sustained economic growth, we have to enter through the gates of fiscal consolidation - sound good, boy - which will lead to low interest rates and, over time, generate more investment and more revenue. All of these form part of the current economic programme of the IMF Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, we are not seeing lower interest rates. Treasury Bill yields have trended up. We are not seeing more tax revenues. Most of last fiscal year tax revenues were running behind projections. The Government got to the primary surplus figure in 13/14 because Minister Paulwell had the telecoms companies pay their license fees that were not due for two years.

Mr. CHARLES: What!

Mr. SHAW: Yes, Minister, all of this forms part of the current economic programme of the IMF Agreement, but is not leading to the Promise Land. I want this House to note that shortfall in tax revenues were across the board. Special Consumption Tax on imports, Customs Duty, PAYE, GCT on imports, companies corporate taxes, stamp duties on transfer tax of significance, are the reasons the Government gave for the shortfall: significantly lower than budgeted collections for administrative compliance activities; faster than programmes declining imports; reduced employment in some sectors of the economy. Hear this now, Mr. Speaker... lower than programmed inflation. (Laughter) You are programming high inflation so you can earn more money. What is this? Underperformance of some of the new measures implemented in March and April, some of which I warn the Minister about, and among them, he has had to reverse himself. And I am going to advise him to reverse himself even further today.

Mr. Speaker, let me turn to the Tax Package. Mr. Speaker, once again, we are witnessing deception, rather than straight talk. You may recall, Mr. Speaker, the front page reports, January 8th with the headline - Mr. Speaker, the headline shouted - it frightened me the day – '*Big Relief*...

Mr. DALLEY: You frighten easily.

Mr. SHAW: '*No New Taxes'*, says Phillips – '*Reform Cutting Debt on Main Agenda'*. (Displaying Newspaper page)

Mr. CHUCK: Promise made, promise kept.

Mr. SHAW: Big relief.

Mr. CHUCK: Promise made, promise unkept.

Mr. SHAW: The PNP political machinery went into high gear *via* Facebook on the same day and reported:

> "Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Dr. Peter Phillips has asserted that he harbors no intention of imposing new taxes on Jamaicans in 2014 – "*No New Taxes,"*

the Facebook report said. Read my lips.

Mr. CHUCK: Jamaica's George Bush.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, the Minister, in introducing the tax package was so smooth; he was so smooth that it appeared that honey was flowing from his lips.

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. BUCHANAN: What, what... you, careful; you careful.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker... Mr. Speaker... you are a countryman, my mother would a say, "mind ants catch up your mouth". (Laughter) And without any reference whatsoever to his earlier reported commitment to "*No New Taxes"* - no reference, no little apology, no little contriteness, no little piousness...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: All right... no little sincerity. Is that better? No little sincerity... just glibly announced, never bat an eyelid, just glibly announced a tax package of $6,685 Billion. And in fact, shortly after the announcement, he reminded us of the Holy Season as a time for renewal and resurrection. But, Mr. Speaker, I was wondering, he ought to also have reminded us that Easter is a time that we must remember a thing called betrayal. (Laughter) Yes, there was betrayal in this story.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: How many times did the cock crow again?

Mr. BUCHANAN: That is why Andrew always so close to you.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker... Mr. Speaker...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Why that country boy don't shut his mouth across there.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I turn briefly to the tax on alcohol. The proposed tax on alcohol which moves the Special Consumption Tax from alcoholic beverages from $700 per litre of alcohol to $1,120 per litre of alcohol for the tourism sector and specifically for White Overproof Rum, the rate would be moved from $960 per litre of pure alcohol, to $1,120 per litre of pure alcohol.

The net effect of this decision will mitigate against the competitiveness of the tourism industry, Minister, which will be very hard hit from these additional taxes. I don't know how much analysis has been done; I don't know how much analysis has been presented to you. What I do know is that this is one of the taxes that, when I was Minister, it was presented to me and I sat down very carefully and listened very carefully to the analysis because figures don't lie, and the world - the real world in which we are operating is a real world where there are consequences to the decisions that we take.

We must bear in mind that the tourism industry, hotel trade in Jamaica, as it is with so many destinations, is highly competitive, and this sharp increase in the cost of alcoholic beverages to the trade will drive a further blow to the industry's ability to be competitive. Remember what I said a while ago. We bragging about two million arrivals; is that it, two million arrivals? Jamaica needs to start talking about four million arrivals –

bout two million arrivals. We need to double that to four million arrivals, but we are not going to go to that Promised Land if we are going to kill the goose that lays the golden egg.

The tourism Minister is seated behind you. He knows - I know that from the time you announced this tax last Thursday, I knew that you had already been advised, Minister of Tourism, about the dire consequences that the industry will face with this decision. One company alone will see a crushing US$2 Million hit on its ability to remain competitive. This is serious; this is serious.

In terms of White Rum sales - it is another side of the business now - White Rum sales. In 2010, as Minister, while alcoholic taxation was amended from an *ad valorem* rate of thirty per cent to a specific rate per litre of pure alcohol of $960 I deliberately, Mr. Speaker, exempted White Rum from this regime in order to protect the local White Rum industry. Our White Rum industry is legendary...

Mr. CHARLES: Employment.

Mr. SHAW: ...and the vertical integration in it...

Dr. DAVIES: (Inaudible) ...disagree with you.

Mr. SHAW: ...the vertical integration of the industry, down to the small man working in the cane field, the thousands of people who rely on the sugar industry, and the rum industry, is very important for the economy. (Applause)

And so, I exempted White Rum. This Government in 2012 amended the regime to provide for Overproof White Rum to be taxed at $960 per litre of pure alcohol. They moved it up. Mr. Speaker, this move has led to the reduction of sales of White Rum. This move in 2012 led to a 230 to 260 per cent increase in the tax intake to the Government on White Rum and virtually doubled the price of a drink of rum.

Mr. CHARLES: Poor man work, poor man drink.

Mr. SHAW: But, at one company - and I'll state the company because the entrepreneur didn't mind if I called the name of the company - Worthy Park Estates, Rum Bar White Rum sales have been cut by 50 per cent - 50 per cent, and 50 employees have lost their jobs since the imposition of that tax on White Rum that was imposed.

This new tax now is adding on to that. So 50 per cent of the sales of that particular product at that particular company have already gone. Fifty people lost their jobs, but the Minister come and slap another tax on it now. This new tax will further militate against the local white rum industry of which there are seven different brands and will open the doors for greater competition from imported liquor, produced in foreign lands, using foreign wheat, foreign corn, foreign potatoes, using foreign labour for products such as vodka, gin and whisky that will now compete in price against our white rum.

Mr. CHARLES: Poor man drink.

Mr. CHUCK: Madness.

Mr. SHAW: Gwine be cheaper to buy a drink of vodka now...

Mr. CHUCK: And whisky.

Mr. SHAW: ...than to drink Jamaican white rum. So when you drink the vodka under this new taxation regime, Minister might get a little more money in taxes but more people gwine be unemployed out there.

Mr. CHARLES: Yes and dem foreigner working.

Mr. SHAW: More people be unemployed. And it is the suppliers of corn, and wheat and potato in foreign lands - they are going to benefit from the lickle pittance that will be going to buy more vodka now, than to buy more rum.

Mr. Speaker, this decision needs to be reviewed both in relation to the tourism sector, the impact on it and in relation to the protection of local industry. It cannot be that we are on such a reckless path to collect taxes that we would endanger such an industry that has such a critical economic importance to this country. It cannot be! (Applause by Opposition Members) The decision needs to be reviewed because it relates to the protection of our local industry, local jobs, local production of sugar cane produced by many small farmers too. Worthy Park deals with a lot of small farmers - that Member of Parliament (Referring to Member Dalley) who is chatting and won't even listen - he has small farmers in North Clarendon who supply Worthy Park, and when the largest suppliers of small farmers to Worthy Park Estate, but this is wiping out their industry. So when they lose their jobs in your constituency see what you tell the Minister of Finance then, running up your mouth.

Mr. DALLEY: ...you are misleading the House. Fifty persons have lost their jobs at Worthy Park.

Mr. SHAW: Serious business.

Mr. DALLEY: It's not true.

Mr. CHARLES: Call them. Name them.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker it's not true. It's not true. The head of Worthy Park Estate told me this himself. Mr. Peter McConnell has said that fifty people have lost their jobs already because of this ruinous decision that has been taken by the Government.

Mr. DALLEY: And what?

Mr. CHARLES: And you suppose to....

Mr. SHAW: I'm not talking any further to you. (Laughter)

Listen, listen to me.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Dr. DAVIES: Change don't agree with you, Audley. Change does not agree with you, Audley.

(Laughter)

A MEMBER: What are you doing, reading my mind?

(Cross talk)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, the Minister's decision to impose a special tax on motor vehicles in 2012-13 was ill-advised and he has now realized that the consequence has been lost revenue. And I take note of his decision to reverse the decision by removing the 10 per cent largely that he had increased motor vehicles by.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I turn to the issue of the tax on withdrawal of money from financial institutions.

Opposition MEMBERS: Uh, oh! Uh, oh!

Mr. CHUCK: Stupidity! Stupid!

Mr. SHAW: We come, Mr. Speaker, to that issue and we have to state first of all that in addition to the bank charges that now exist, there is a general perception that the Minister has joined the banks in raiding the depositors, raiding the depositors and there is a trail to this - you know the printer's devil says the typist put - I want to look at the pathological trail, but I saw pathological trial. But you not on trial Minister, because I know that good sense is going to prevail on this issue. What did we see on this pathological trail? You pass a law restricting cash transactions. Your colleague, Minister of National Security...

Mr. CHUCK: Under Peter...

Mr. SHAW: ...passed a law restricting cash transactions. You establish a payment system for public sector workers that require everyone to have an account at a financial institution. Everybody who never used to have account, dem betta go learn fi open account...

(Cross talk)

...and bring out yuh ID, and sign up yuh paper, and have yuh account, otherwise you can't get your money - your pay can't come by electronic transfer.

Mr. CHARLES: You can't get no credit.

(Cross talk)

Mr. SHAW: And you have to have your account so that when you go to your ATM machine....

Mr. CHARLES: You get credit.

Mr. SHAW: ...you can tek out yuh money. Of course, this is a little side bar, you know, usually when you going to the ATM machine, the Ministry of National Security would warn yuh, take look around your surroundings (Laughter) before you go into the machine room, but little do we know, that now, you look around we don't see anybody, you go into the machine room and the Minister of Finance waiting for you in there! (Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: Anywhere yuh go turn macca jook yuh. Anywhere yuh turn.

Mr. SHAW: So you establish a payment system that forces everybody to collect their pay at the bank or some other institution. You even now have a parliamentary Committee chaired by the experienced former Minister, the man who used to publish bank charges, mek dem public, is now the Chairman of the parliamentary Committee reviewing bank charges.

Mr. CHARLES: You embarrass him.

Mr. SHAW: But alas, the Minister has not allowed the Committee to even report the findings of the Committee on bank charges before he has come with the tax axe to hijack the depositors with this new tax. (Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: Hijack.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, there is no question in my mind that it's going to discourage formal savings. I know the Government is trying to push that, trying to encourage formal savings. This will discourage it, Prime Minister. It will send dollars under the mattress again and elsewhere. It is, in my view, inappropriate to impose this tax when you're trying to encourage the use of the formal banking system. But beyond that let us look a little

more carefully. Let's really be objective. After paying 33 1/3 per cent of income in payroll taxes, I hear a lot of people talking about 25 per cent. It's not 25 per cent.

Mr. DALLEY: NHT, NIS...

Mr. SHAW: Is 33 1/3 per cent, because is NHT, is NIS, is Education Tax...

Dr. DAVIES: NHT and NIS are not...

Mr. CHARLES: And GCT nuh come in yet.

Mr. SHAW: Taxes and deductions, taxes and deductions.

Dr. DAVIES: These are savings.

Mr. SHAW: Taxes and deductions. Not anymore. All the savings gone. $11.4 Billion a year. After the 33 1/3 per cent of income tax and payroll deductions, Jamaicans now have to pay GCT Mr. Speaker on purchases, pay GCT on electricity, pay the bank a fee to collect the money, pay GCT on telephone calls, pay tax on fuel, pay property taxes, pay motor vehicle fitness and insurance, if you do property transfers, you pay stamp duty and transfer tax.

Mr. CHARLES: Money done, money done.

Mr. SHAW: Pay on interest earned in savings accounts, and of what precious little that remains to purchase food at higher and higher prices due to devaluation and inflation. Instead of restraining financial institutions with these charges, the Minister has come with a tax of his own, to tax withdrawals. Shame!

Mr. CHARLES: Wicked!

Mr. SHAW: Shame!

Mr. CHARLES: Poor people.

Mr. SHAW: Will the financial institutions now charge an administrative cess, Mr. Minister? Have you, in your due diligence before introducing this tax, did you have a discussion with the financial institutions to find out whether they are going to carry out the task of collecting $2.25 Billion on your behalf, from individual workers and customers across this land and give you that money without charging someone for it?

Mr. CHARLES: You betta don't touch mine.

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Who is the bank going to charge for it?

Opposition MEMBER: Omar Davies.

Mr. SHAW: So you draw out the tax and you ask the bank to do it and guess what, the bank gwine turn around and jook yuh wid another administrative fee again.

Mr. VAZ: And GCT on top of it.

Mr. SHAW: Because it requires additional persons, additional computer technology, programmes to deduct these taxes and pass them onto Government. What will those additional charges be? On whose backs will those charges be placed? Is it the consumer again? Of course, it is consumer. This provides yet another opportunity for the financial institutions to further enhance their income by charging this administrative fee.

You know, Mr. Speaker, just as a little sidebar, would you believe, Mr. Speaker, that in an examination of the financial statements of the two major commercial banks, we note that for every one dollar collected by the banks as fees and commission, only 20 to 30

cents out of the dollar go to cover the actual cost of providing the service.

Opposition MEMBER: What!

Mr. SHAW: Yes, let me repeat that, let me repeat that.

Opposition MEMBER: Give him the figures.

Mr. SHAW: Check the balance sheet. They're publicly listed companies. Check the reports. For every dollar collected by the banks as fees and Commissions, only 20 to 30 cents out of the dollar go to cover the actual cost of providing the service. The other 70 to 80 cents is profit for this line of business. No doubt to either subsidize other areas of their operations, or just go into the raw profit line. The raw profit line.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, in addition, this tax will contribute to inflation. Don't be naive. And Mr. Speaker, I don't want anybody come talk about, is just a small amount of money. Oh, is just a little point this and point that. It is the principle, and it also adds up because don't be naive to believe that business of every type, many of whom transfer funds in accounts in different financial institutions. We have noticed where you have said that if you're transferring an account from one, within the branch, from one account to the next, no charge. What about a business that operates in more than one bank? What about a business that has their credit card collected through one bank and he has to transfer from the credit card account over to the other bank from which he does other business. He has to pay a withdrawal charge for that.

Opposition MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. SHAW: Who is going to pay that? You think that the businessman dem going to absorb that cost. It's going to be passed on. You have to pass it on.

Mr. CHARLES: Away with that.

Mr. SHAW: When a lawyer who manage his clients' accounts and he has to pay fee on that. It's going to be passed on. All the time. Nobody, No lawyer, no businessman, nobody gwine tek this extra cost sitting down. They're going to pass on the cost.

Mr. VAZ: Delroy start charge Thursday. Delroy starts charge that from Thursday.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I call today on the Minister of Finance...

Mr. CHUCK: To withdraw it.

Mr. SHAW: ...to find $2.25 Billion of fat and inefficiency in the bloated bureaucracy, and leave people's hard-earned money alone. (Applause)

Opposition MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. SHAW: In fact...

Mr. CHARLES: Or else!

Mr. SHAW: ...some people are always saying if you criticize you must always tell us how we're going to get the money. Hah-ah, the Minister of Finance, he disposes. He has the experts. He can do the analysis.

Mr. CHARLES: Yes, him tek the job. Him tek it weh from that one.

(Cross talk)

Mr. SHAW: But...

Mr. CHARLES: Him tek it weh from you.

Mr. SHAW: ....I will just give the Minister an idea, Mr. Speaker, of some areas

that he could cut. The government should seek to identify areas of expenditure that can be tightened up. These include foreign travel and smaller delegations on these visits. A smaller budget at the JIS with the advent of public broadcasting and live parliamentary coverage, this should no longer require large sums. Cut down on the army of consultants in ministries, departments and agencies. (Applause) There is a lot of fat there. Equally, the programme of developing competence in tax compliance has to be driven more aggressively, as there continues to be high levels of tax avoidance and tax evasion in this country. We know it, we know it.

And by the way, Mr. Speaker, just in passing, just curious, why are we expending funds in this Budget destroying marijuana, otherwise known as ganja field, when Colorado Canada want us to export it to them? Why? Why? Money is in the budget for the eradication of ganja. Cut it out, chop down *di* tree *dem* one by one and chop *dem* up fine, fine. (Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: Fine, fine, fine!

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Government Members)

Mr. SHAW: No, no, I am not supporting the 'hand middle business' Prime Minister. But if an export market is there and we need to earn foreign exchange, sell *dem* and collect the money.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, I can advise this Honourable House that when I was Minister of Finance this tax was brought to me and I rejected it outright. In the circumstances, Minister, when you come to close this Budget Debate we are demanding that you withdraw this tax.

Minister, this dog just won't hunt. It is cruel, it is iniquitous and this tax must go. (Applause)

Mr. CLARKE: Must withdraw it.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, the state of public bodies has been a major plank of my presentations for some time, and there are always issues related to public expenditure, the most serious ones sometimes have been public bodies, the debt losses and the unplanned absorption by Central Government. Public bodies have created more challenges to the budgetary process than other activities, including natural disasters. Historically, the Central Government has had to absorb the losses and debt of some of the public bodies resulting in higher debt to GDP ratios and unplanned expenditure. We remember well Air Jamaica. We remember well the Sugar Company of Jamaica when I was Minister of Finance.

But, Mr. Speaker, on the horizon we have more problems coming up with public sector bodies. The National Water Commission is projected to make a loss of $3.5 Billion for this fiscal year. Happily, it's trending down from $6 Billion last year. The reduction in loss is projected on increase revenue, however, of $3.5 Billion. So the question to be asked is, has the NWC requested an increase from the OUR and, if so, what is that level of increase from the OUR? Does that level of increase approximate the expected $3.5 Billion of additional revenue? But what concerns me most is the debt of the Commission and its

implication for the budgetary process. Long-term liabilities, Mr. Speaker, $33 Billion, pension liabilities of $19 Billion and in last year alone pension liabilities increased by $2 Billion. And there are trade payables at the National Water Commission of $6.2 Billion, Mr. Speaker.

The JUTC, contrary to the perception created by the many grand public relations statement made by the JUTC recently, it is projected to make a loss of $3.3 Billion this year. Last year the loss was $2.8 Billion. The main problem is that their cost, Mr. Speaker, is increasing much faster than their revenue; cost is increasing much faster than revenue. Yet the Government is seeking to take over many of the existing private operators' operations.

Last year the Government injected $6.5 Billion into JUTC and this year's projection of $1.1 Billion isn't sufficient to cover operating losses of $3.3 Billion and trade payables of $7.2 Billion. So it is not just Central Government racking up the arrears - NWC and JUTC alone owe in trade payables $6.2 Billion and $7 Billion respectively, Mr. Speaker, just those two companies, $7.2 Billion, that's $13.4 Billion for trade payables. Add that to the $50 Billion that Central Government owes. People are suffering out there for their money.

Mr. CHARLES: What!

Mr. SHAW: NROCC, some years ago I called her 'the new debt queen', more like a debt king now. The projected loss is $7.8 Billion this year alone which includes projected foreign exchange losses. Listen, Mr. Speaker, I have noticed throughout, it's running like a virus throughout this budget, a constant reference to foreign exchange losses, a constant impediment of exchange rate, changes that is causing a disequilibrium in the economy. It's affecting interest charges. Now it is affecting public bodies, Madam Prime Minister. Imagine this, foreign exchange losses of $2.5 Billion and finance cost of $4.2 Billion, not done yet. The long-term liability of this entity is a massive $71.2 Billion. That is the long-term liability of NROCC.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let the public and the Parliament be clear and understand this. The Minister of Transport and Works, I know why he is happy about why I went to China a little bit before he became Minister.

I know why he is happy. Because let it be clear on NROCC...

Dr. DAVIES: I was hoping you would have stayed.

Mr. SHAW: ...that this $71.2 Billion does not relate, in any way to the North-South Highway which is being funded entirely by the Chinese through debt and equity. And I remember when I met with the Minister of Finance in China, I told him we can't borrow the money and we can't afford to guarantee the loan either. And that is the basis on which we were able to negotiate and get them to agree to do the North-South Highway without any monetary commitment from the Government of Jamaica at all. So let us understand.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SHAW: Is alright, circumstances alter cases.

Dr. DAVIES: I don't understand that one.

Mr. SHAW: Is alright come a country and *mi wi* tell *yuh.*

Let's understand that expansion - this $71 Billion is Highway 2000, Highway 2000. But to compound matters, Madam Prime Minister, and I appreciate your indulgence, over a three year period NROCC has suffered a foreign exchange loss of $10 Billion.

Mr. CHARLES: What?

Mr. SHAW: All because of an exchange rate that is out of control.

Mr. CHARLES: And sliding.

Mr. SHAW: Three years - $10 Billion racking up the debt. I am going to have a forensic examination detailing every striking dollar that we are losing from this reckless polity of devaluation that's taking place.

The privatization of the Port Authority continues at a very slow pace and this is of concern, and the government must be concerned because we can't put all our eggs, Madam Prime Minister, into the basket of Goat Islands. If and when Goat Islands comes everybody will be happy or some alternative to Goat Islands, whatever is the final decision. Whatever comes, whenever it comes, everybody will be happy. Until such time we have a thing called Port Bustamante. There are lanes there that need to be dredged. We need to open those lanes and get them ready for those big liners that are going to come through the Panama Canal. If we don't hurry up and do it Mr. Speaker, if we don't hurry up and do it - well, Miami is doing it, Trinidad is doing it, the Dominican Republic is doing it, Cuba is doing it. Listen, we better get our act together. We have to get our act together. And *mi* mother would *seh* , 'hold on to what you have first until you get what you want'. So *mek wi* find a way to deal with the divestment of the Kingston Container Terminal. Let's find a way, get the money, maybe even if we have to get some out of the MIDP programme. Let us not wait on a divestment to dredge the harbour. The dredging of the harbour is primarily a duty and a responsibility of the Government of Jamaica, if we want to be serious about transshipment when the Panama Canal opens. (Applause)

But, Mr. Speaker, the Port Authority in the meantime has racked up a foreign exchange loss of $9.5 Billion. The company presently has debt of over $38 Billion.

Understand between NROCC and the Port Authority of Jamaica that do a lot of business in foreign exchange, it's almost $20 Billion of losses they have racked up as a result of the ruinous slipping exchange rate.

Mr. VAZ: Unsustainable!

Mr. SHAW: Unsustainable! It is madness! No prescription from Washington can have something like this continue on us, can't. This is something, Madam Prime Minister; we are going to have to have some consensus around stability in this economy. It *nuh gwine* come from Washington. It *nuh gwine* come from the Head of the European Union. It's not coming from the IDB. It's not coming from the World Bank. It is going to come from us right here in Jamaica. Nobody can stabilize the dollar for us. We in Jamaica have to stabilize the dollar. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the special drawdown of funds of $45.6 Billion over four years from the National Housing Trust, I have received documents from the Ministry and I quote one section. It says, "Having regard to the maturity profile of its investment portfolio and the need to maintain minimum cash balances, it will be necessary to sell $6 Billion of its joint-finance portfolio in 2014 and another $6 Billion by 2016.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this observation has been made to ensure that the NHT maintains healthy cash balances in view of the significant payouts being made. However, I am advised that the mortgage finance institutions that have the joint-finance portfolio are resisting taking over these mortgages as they consider them to be high risk. My question therefore is, if this is so, what is the alternative plan that the Housing Trust will have to ensure the maintenance of the appropriate level of cash in the system so that its core programmes will not be affected after the substantial payout of $11 Billion to the Government each year? I take note that while the Housing Trust refers loosely to annual housing expenditure of $22 Billion, this expenditure, unlike several years ago in the previous administration, is now heavily weighted in the provision of funds for mortgages in the open-market.

Last year some $19.6 Billion was used for this purpose with less emphasis on the Housing Trust directly building more and less expensive and affordable housing units. For example, the houses at Luana, $2.8 Million; houses at Portmore, $3 Million, equally with nothing much happening at the Housing Agency of Jamaica, which was a vibrant partner with the Housing Trust in building out low cost housing solutions. This objective is further compromised.

Madam Prime Minister, this needs to be looked into, it needs to be looked into. The Housing Trust needs to have a dynamic portfolio where they involve the private sector, of course, partnerships, public/private partnerships but some low income houses, lower income houses for contributors still, need to be built, more of them need to be built by the Housing Trust itself because they have a way of providing economies of scale to keep the cost down in building those houses. And basically what the Housing Trust does too is to pass on or forego a lot of the profit and even subsidized the housing for people of very modest and limited means; that need to be looked at.

Finally, especially in view of the reduction of low cost housing units being built by the Trust, and the provision of mortgages for the acquisition of houses in the open-market, I believe it is time now for the Housing Trust to lift the ceiling on the amount of money loan to depositors to purchase their homes. The present limit of $4.5 Million I believe in the circumstances should be lifted to at least $6 Million Prime Minister which would also make $12 Million available for joint purchase mortgages. It will also assist in stimulating the economy in terms of house construction.

On the macroeconomic programme, Mr. Speaker, within the context of that

macroeconomic framework. and the Extended Fund Facility Programme with the IMF, and in that context to spend - I want to spend just a little time on discussion of the exchange rate on which the Minister has invited a debate, the national debate, which requires a debate, and to conclude with what I considered to be a critical pulse point to drive rapid economic growth in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, it was the JLP that started the reforms that are now much talked about. We established...

Dr. DALLEY: JLP?

Mr. SHAW: Yes, you know that, go look in the files of the Ministry, you are up there. We established and entrenched the principles of fiscal responsibility in Government, as a platform for private sector led growth and development. We passed Fiscal Responsibility Framework Law, as an amendment to the Financial Amendment Administration and Audit Act. We introduced the concept of fiscal rules legislation which has now been passed and reintroduced major Green Papers and comments Parliamentary consultations on tax, pension and public sector reform.

Indeed Mr. Speaker, in this context many of the pieces of legislation to which the Minister has made reference were conceived and were in various stages of development while I was Minister of Finance. I don't think the Honourable Minister will deny that. Ironically, while the IMF reviews broke down due to alleged slow implementation of the reform agenda, the IMF has given this Government - the IMF has given this Government a bligh, a bligh by allowing tax reform at a pretty slow pace and no reform whatsoever in the public sector and pension reform until 2016. Bwoy donkey seh the world nuh level. IMF was not willing to give me that bligh, but them giving you that bligh.

(Heckling by Members)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, mouth mek fi seh anything, you know.

Let it be clear, we have no broken relationships with the multilaterals; that is why, Mr. Speaker, in November of 2011 Jamaica borrowed US$330 Million from the IDB and the World Bank with the blessings of the IMF. The IMF had to sit at the board room table. And you know Minister how it works, they work together. So when the IDB is approving a loan there is a representative from the IMF at the Boardroom, same thing with the World Bank; and when they approved those loans they approved it with the knowledge and consent of the International Monetary Fund. So let's cut out the foolishness about broken down relationships and what and what didn't happen and all that. But let's understand; let me make my position very clear, because I see where even the newspaper is trying to write a speech for me and all that sort of thing, right. Some of them are on a permanent campaign, but they are trying to write my speech for me, okay. Trying to write my speech for me.

Let me say this, while I want to be very explicit about this, while we are in generous support of the Extended Fund Facility

Programme with the IMF, we are not in support of the reckless and ruinous path of the devaluation which has the potential to do damage to the economy that is reminiscent of the FINSAC crises in this country… (Applause) …not going to support it. So they can run up their mouths; that is our position. And I am now going to deal specifically with exchange rates debt and growth before I wrap up this presentation.

Mr. Speaker, on the matter of the exchange rate, I listened carefully to the Minister. His belief is that the adjustments that have been made to the Jamaican dollar will allow what we produce to be more competitive in the external markets and at the same time, allow us to develop what we can produce in Jamaica, therefore, having a competitive exchange rate is one of the keys to economic expansion and growth in the jobs as we see it. What you said Minister would be genuine if you could say - Mr. Speaker, what you said there Minister, would be genuine if you can say what the competitive exchange rate is. We have gone from $86.60 to almost $110.00 now, 27 per cent depreciation, and we don't have the evidence yet, that what we produce is more competitive in the external market.

Exports, Mr. Speaker, are down. Minister in 2013 over 2012 by a lot, exports are down over 10% or United States $165 Million, Mr. Speaker, that is how much exports are down since we are on this devaluation spiral. During 2010/11 when the JLP administration kept the currency stable, exports Mr. Speaker went up by 21.6 per cent, between 2010 and 2011. Minister, whoever it is, whoever it is...

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. SHAW: Yes it is. They are leading you astray because to make matters worse it is the non-traditional exports that have cratered, dropping by 17.4 per cent or US$147.2 Million, so don't tell me it is about, it's not - this is not bauxite and alumina, this is non-traditional exports that has dropped so precipitously.

So Mr. Speaker, not only will the Minister not tell us what is a competitive rate, he wouldn't even give a target of exports to GDP that Jamaica can reach and that his Government is prepared to stand by. So far, the experience is not bearing you out - let's get back to a stable foreign exchange rate, for the budget's sake, for the manufacturer's sake, for the poor consumers' sake that see it in their food and electricity bill every month, for the transportation sector. A continuously devalued currency is a sure way to pauperism, not the promised land.

During the administration of the PNP, in 18 years prior to '07, the dollar moved from $5.77, to $69.06 by 2007, a 1097 per cent depreciation. Let us not repeat that experience. Jamaica has too much foreign currency debt in the debt portfolio, some 58.7 per cent. Mr. Speaker, let me be very blunt with you. Let me be very blunt with you, in the 18 years of the PNP Government prior to 2007, the annual average rate of depreciation of the exchange rate was 61 per cent, 61 per cent....

(*Sotto voce* comments by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SHAW: Poverty drop, bang belly economy you were running. You were running a bang belly economy.

Mr. Speaker, the exchange rate, the exchange range under his watch declined 61% per cent per year...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SHAW: Average, now we are 27 per cent. If you continue on this ruinous path, we are heading for 61 per cent average, that is where we are headed Minister and, we are very, very concerned about it. By devaluing constantly you are pushing the interest expense in the budget back into the stratosphere. There are many arguments in favour, Mr. Minister, of a fixed exchange rate policy, as there are for a floating exchange rate or a carefully managed floating exchange rate. Even among researchers at the multilateral institutions, there are deferring views though. One recent paper by Inderjit Ruprah of the Country Department Caribbean Group of the IDB issued a policy paper in October of 2013. We are not talking about any long time paper - just written a few months ago. In it, Mr. Ruprah discussed the traditional argument that favours devaluation, but issued the following caution for Caribbean countries like Jamaica that are considered to be small open economies that have a high import dependency. I quote now from Mr. Ruprah, and it is a good size quote because it is a very serious subject:

"It is argued that expenditure cannot be switch from tradable goods to non-tradable goods in countries such as those in the Caribbean. There is no switching effect of devaluation, either in expenditure or production, therefore, a real exchange rate devaluation only depresses real income. Worse, a devaluation could result in stagnation, reduced economic growth and increased inflation, that is what taxation is. There is a high pass-through effect, example, the effect of a nominal devaluation on domestic inflation, the pass- through effect is higher in instant where the portion of imported goods in the consumer price index, and the imported input is greater and the monetary policy is more accommodative.

He goes on.

In addition, an unexpected external devaluation adversely affects a balance sheet… "

And I want you to listen to this carefully because we are coming back to it, balance sheet.

"...if debts are denominated in dollars while firms' revenue is in local currency. This deterioration has two consequences, it limits the firm's ability to borrow and borrowing becomes more expensive as the risk premium increases, thus the balance sheet effects has a dampening impact on economic growth.

I am coming back to that because our balance sheets are getting more and more US oriented. He concludes:

Another downside of external devaluation is that, if an external devaluation is perceived as a sign of economic weakness,

the credit worthiness of the country might be jeopardized."

You know 'bout dat', because you want to go to the Capital Market this year, and you don't know if you can go yet.

"Thus, devaluation might reduce investor confidence and hence, the country's ability both to secure foreign investment and to roll over public debt without worsening terms".

Now, sounds a little technical, but it is serious stuff, very, very serious and convincing stuff. And the burden of his presentation, Minister, was that the postulation and the thesis around which he put this paper together is in reference to the small, open economy of the Caribbean. And the argument is that the orthodox theory that devaluation will lead to foreign exchange earnings and runaway exports and runaway production, how come that not happening to Jamaica from the time of the 1970s when we devaluing the dollar? Let us be clear on something.

The only two periods since the 1970s Mr. Speaker that we have had a stable period of 6% economic rates of growth was in the period 1986 to 1990 - that was one period. Of course, in the period in the 60s, the exchange was stable too, but we stabilized it for three years at $5.50 cents to One and the economy grew by 6% per year again. It has not happened since that.

Jamaica has never really had a fixed exchange rate system in its purest form, but we have had a few periods of stability in the exchange rate as I mentioned. Since that time, we have seen the exchange rate slipped from when we were stronger than the US Dollar. Lots of young people in this Chamber don't even know that we had a dollar that was stronger than the United States Dollar in 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972. Yes, we had a stable exchange rate, even in a few years of the PNP administration of the 1970s in the early part. But then, we know the history.

And I must say to you that when we stabilized the exchange rate in the 1980s - I must say this to you, Mr. Speaker, because a likkle history - when you reach, I guess my age and involvement - you can remember a little history. (Chuckles) and I remember when I went to, I was in Washington, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Mr. Seaga was in Washington, and I was there because I was working with an Investment Promotion Company, JNIP, the JAMPRO Company.

A MEMBER: Never. Never.

Mr. SHAW: And at that time, at that time there was disagreement.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, at that time, there was disagreement between the IMF and the then Minister of Finance, they didn't want a managed float. Mr. Seaga insisted on the auction system, which was a managed float. It worked for three years and the economy grew by 6% per year between 1986 and 1990. We must not forget that.

A MEMBER: That's right.

Mr. SHAW: Then it followed a period of sharp declines in the value of the currency as I have mentioned before. And in the four years of our administration, the exchange rate did decline from $69 to $86, it did, during the

worse world crisis we have seen in 80 years. And it led to a severe contraction in revenue, but what happened after that? It was stabilized for almost two years, largely due to the implementation of a series of policies that worked together to build confidence, including a re-engagement with the multilaterals on an aggressive scale. We started to borrow money cheaper. That is one of the reasons why the interest cost, though rising now, would have been much worse if we were still in the International Capital Market, borrowing money at 8, 9, 10 and 11%. Thank God, we are now borrowing money - every time you hear World Bank and IDB cut a cheque down here, it's coming down here at 2%, it might even be coming at less. So that is something that I am proud that I broke the back of expensive money on the International Capital market.

(Applause)

But after - Mr. Speaker, let it be known where we left the NIR and where we left growth at 1.5% and what followed was a failure to continue to generate the confidence that we had gained. The NIR fell to $800 Million, a negative growth returned for five consecutive quarters. Where are we today? What is the competitive rate of exchange for the Jamaican dollar today?

Is it $110 or $120 as implied by the IMF? Others have even suggested $150!!! What is this? Madness!

The answer is that the structural deformities in our economy, at this time combined with lack of confidence, militate against the possibility of achieving a stable economy and a stable exchange rate within an orthodox free floating exchange rate, Minister. We must call a halt to this madness of devaluation! (Applause) It is leading us nowhere but to more and more despair. Research of the experience of devaluation in Jamaica shows that this overused strategy has failed miserably to stimulate exports, contain growth in imports and to significantly reduce balance of payments deficits. It is not any different at this time. A stable currency is an essential prerequisite for businesses to succeed within that stable macroeconomic environment.

But Mr. Speaker, there is more to come because the IMF is quoted in the Gleaner, April 16, and it's coming from the Article for Report for last year. We know what that is, where it's coming from. But it's reminding everybody that the - it is the view of the IMF, that the Jamaican dollar is overvalued by between 8 and 22%, noting - the Article noted that the devaluation of 11% in the last fiscal year was "at the low end of the estimate". You hear what a sey?

A MEMBER: Yeah!

Mr. SHAW: "At the low end of the estimate". So, in other words, the 22% is the high end. Eleven percent (11%) is the low end. That means you have more room now fe go reck the dollar some more. Mek a tell yu something.

The clear inference to be drawn is that the further devaluation can be expected until the exchange rate reaches at least J$120 to 1 US dollar.

A MEMBER: What?

Mr. SHAW: The question is, if and when the exchange rate reaches J$120, what magic, Mr. Speaker, in that figure would have made the Jamaican economy suddenly, if not miraculously more competitive? What fundamental change would have occurred to guarantee no further devaluation and speed up runaway investment, growth and job creation?

Bear in mind Mr. Speaker, that history will show that the periods of significant economic growth have always been characterized by a stable currency. You cannot achieve it without it!

And I mentioned the stability of the 60s and in the 80, 60/90 period. And while we accept that some progress has been made, the million dollar question is, are we doing all the things that are necessary and sufficient to achieve game-changing and paradigm shifts in the economy to achieve meaningful and sustainable growth?

Former Prime Minister, Bruce Golding has asked the question in public fora. Yes, we agree with an IMF Programme, but we are going to have to go far and beyond the parameters of the Extended Fund Facility programme if we are going to achieve real and genuine and lasting success.

The answer to that question is no, we are not doing enough! And under the present dispensation it will be anyone's guess where the exchange rate will end. God help all of us. The exchange rate, Minister, will be like the dog chasing its tail. And you know what happens with a dog chasing its tail.

Well, Mr. Speaker, before I speak on debt, there's an issue - I don't want to call it dollarization because I don't want any mischief to be made. So I deliberately coined an appropriate subhead called 'Currency Substitution'.

But, Prime Minister, this is very important, because I'm using now some relatively new, a sort of a new phenomena that is emerging in the financial system in Jamaica. And we better understand it. We better tek sleep and mark death and understand where we are and understand why we need a stable exchange rate.

A discussion of exchange rate cannot end without a discussion of currency substitution. This Honourable House needs to be aware that the Jamaican economy is silently on a path to currency substitution. Foreign assets at commercial banks are the highest in 6 years, having increased 33 percent to $153 Billion, denominated, of course, in Jamaican dollars from $115 Billion in December 2011.

The institutions that are licensed under the Financial Institutions Act, the securities dealers showed the same pattern. Foreign Assets moved up 42 percent at the end of December 2013. And when the JLP left government in December 2011, has moved up 42%. That is not confidence in the Jamaican dollar. It even assign confidence in the government now.That's not confidence in our exchange arrangements in our currency. Even the building societies who are as local as you can get, saw their foreign assets jump 37% at the end of December 2013 compared with when the JLP handed over the government in

'11. That's not confidence in the government that - that is a march to currency substitution and it must be examined very carefully.

More and more landlords quote rents in US dollars. Our hotels have always priced their products in US dollars. Our monthly electric bill adjusts for the movement in the currency. Petrojam adjusts for the movements in the currency as well.

Merchants adjust for the currency movements. Just this past Sunday, I read that more and more companies are choosing the US dollar as their functional currency. They can't take the uncertainty and the vagaries of the Jamaican dollar.

Mr. Speaker, the lesson to be learned from this aggressive currency substitution is the rapidly declining confidence in our local currency and this is spurred by the aimless devaluation that is taking us nowhere but to despair.

Now I speak briefly on the issue of debt, and it will be brief. I'd like to underscore the significance of having accurate information on the debt ratio, particularly the debt to GDP ratio as that is one of the major targets against which this government's performance is measured. Mr. Speaker, it muddies the waters and obfuscates the truth and the true state of the nation when the debt to GDP ratio is different depending on who says it, depending on which of the government's publications you read.

Can we just settle on one consistent methodology, so that when the Minister speaks about the debt to GDP his administration inherited and compares it against where the ratio was now, we know that he is comparing apples with apples, not apples with bananas? This debt so absorbs our energies that it is a must that it is represented truthfully, not sometimes this and sometimes that depending on what political points the administration wants to make.

Mr. Speaker, it pains me to have to say that the Honourable Minister is misleading the country. He said on Thursday that the government inherited a debt to GDP ratio of upwards - in his words - upwards of 146% and that that ratio had now declined to 139%.

I carefully wrote it down, Mr. Speaker, because I had heard the Minister with that before, and I knew that I never left a debt at 146 per cent, I never left a debt at 147 per cent, I never left a debt at 148 per cent, I left the debt at 141.5 per cent. The Minister is misleading the country, because on both counts the Minister is wrong. The fact is the debt to GDP ratio at the end of 2011/12 - that's gone into March now, you know - was 141.5 per cent, not upwards of 146 per cent as stated by the Minister. And that same ratio now, at the end of March, 2014, is not 139 per cent as mentioned by you, Minister, in which I asked you if PetroCaribé funds were in it and you said, yes. The true figure is 144.9 per cent. Not my figures, your figures, in your books, that's where the information is to be found. Look in the Debt Management Strategy and you will see it.

Now, this is the measurement of debt under the Extended Fund Facility of the IMF. Just so everybody understands, Mr. Speaker, there are two types of measurement of debt,

one is the measurement by the IMF, which I believe is the most accurate measurement, because what the IMF does is that it includes not just Central Government debt, but net PetroCaribé debt and External and Domestic Guaranteed debt. That is the higher figure presented by the EFF.

The other common measurement of debt is the Central Government stock of debt - that's what most of us hear about every day - which stood at One point Six-six Two Trillion Dollars ($1.662T) or 131 per cent of GDP at the end of March, 2012. By the way, at the end of December, 2011, it stood at One point Six Three Zero ($1.630T). So they added another Thirty Billion Dollars ($30B) by the time March came around in 2012 - and which now stands at One point Nine Four Six Trillion ($1.946T), Three Hundred Billion Dollars ($300B) and counting, have been increased, putting it at 131.9 per cent of GDP at the end of March, 2014.

So, Mr. Speaker, we hear that the Minister has reduced the debt since taking over from the previous Government, and any measurement, whether under the Extended Fund Facility or under the Central Government stock of debt, there has been no real progress. The Central Government stock of debt is up not down, and the debt to GDP ratio, whether you use EFF or Central Government measure, is up not down. On both cases the debt as measured in a standard way was lower when I handed it over in December, 2011.

(Opposition Members Applaud)

Enough of the propaganda that when you inherited this you have now brought it down.

Mr. Speaker, one thing is for sure, the persistent and unchecked devaluation of the Jamaican dollar is a major cause in the accumulation of the Central Government stock of debt.

You know, you must ask questions a lot because that's what a democracy is for, and that is - and we must be grateful that we have a democracy too and that we have the honour and that we respect the system and we answer the questions. Because I asked the Government, Mr. Speaker, the following questions in relation to last year's Budget: What percentage of the debt stock increase is due to the devaluation?

The answer, I will read it word for word now, no amendment. The answer:

> "The change in the debt stock amounted to One Thirty-three point Four Billion Dollars (S133.4B), an increase of 7.4 per cent for the outturn for end March, 2013. Of this, depreciation of the Jamaican dollar accounted..."

Out of the One Thirty-three Billion ($133B) you know -

> "...depreciation of the Jamaican dollar accounted for One Hundred and Eight point Five Billion Jamaican Dollars (J$108.5B) or 6 per cent change to the total stock of debt. Depreciation of the Jamaican dollar, accounted..."

Mr. Speaker -

> "...for 81.5 per cent of the change in the debt stock during the fiscal year."

Mr. CHARLES: What!? Omar, you don't know that and you are a former Minister?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, therein lies the direct cause of sharp increases in interest cost that taxpayers now have to pay for as a result of the steep rise in the stock of debt, due not in the main to more borrowing. And I am not going to play the politics that you played when you were on this side, because I am going to be very blunt with you. You were all merciless in attacking me for increasing the debt, without recognizing that the devaluation we faced because of the global economic crisis was a major reason in the increase in the debt! But you attacked me mercilessly! I won't return the favour, Minister. I won't return the favour.

(Laughter)

Dr. DAVIES: I like how you... (Inaudible) Attack him now! Go into it, Audley!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: Chuck it pon him without warning! Drop it pon him without warning!

(Heckling)

Mr. SHAW: Now Mr. Speaker, ironically imagine, look at this contrast. Your debt caused an increase of a Hundred and Eight Billion Dollars ($108B) in one year and guess what? The Minister is going to have to borrow One Hundred and Ten Billion Dollars ($110B), just Two Billion Dollars ($2B) more in one year. If the dollar was stable last year we would only borrow Two Billion Dollars ($2B) Minister, Two Billion ($2B), not One Hundred and Ten Billion Dollars ($110B), because you would not have had the need to borrow a Hundred and Ten Billion Dollars ($110B) to cover this cost of this increase from devaluation.

Mr. CHARLES: Teach them, teacher!

Mr. SHAW: Well, you know, a done wid it now, a done de argument, a done wid it.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: Madam Prime Minister, take my foolish advice. You are the Chairman of the Cabinet, take a read of this and you will see footnotes put in here; you will see articles by IDB representatives, World Bank representatives, IMF representatives. There is a book which I will send to you which I got when I was Minister of Finance in Washington, marked, *Caribbean Economies*, and it was referring to exchange rate. I am going to send it to you, Honourable Prime Minister. Because it hurts me to think that you have some of the technocrats at the IMF who come and sit down and tell us that we must have an orthodox floating exchange rate system to keep the agreement going, when they have papers, studies being done at their institutions that are saying otherwise.

Mr. SAMUDA: Double standards!

Mr. SHAW: Double standard! And it wicked, it reckless, and it is mashing up poor people's lives in this country!

(Opposition Members applaud)

Mr. CHARLES: And the PNP tekking instructions from dem!

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I turn briefly to the growth imperative. IMF alone can't grow

the economy! EFF programme alone can't grow the economy! That's why we must not mash up wi tourism industry fe suit dem! Don't mash up wi little White Rum industry fe suit dem either, okay.

Now, real job creators are consumers whose rising wages and incomes generate jobs and growth. That is classic economic theory, you know that, Minister. If average people don't have decent wages there can be no real recovery and no real growth. (Applause)

But Mr. Speaker, hear this, if you think our country not in crisis you living somewhere else. Hear this! Over the past two years real wages have declined 4.7 per cent in 2013 and 4.8 per cent in 2012. Real wages have declined. That means purchasing power gone down, that means people are getting poorer, and poorer and 'poorer-er' in this country.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: Here are some suggestions for growth.

- Stabilize the exchange rate.
- Ramp up education and training at all levels.
- Remake JAMPRO into a well-oiled machine.
- Fast track new and cheaper sources of energy for the economy.
- Engineer greater access to credit.
- Recapitalize and expand the EX-IM Bank of Jamaica.
- Reduce Transfer Tax and Stamp Duty.
- Increase NHT lending ceiling.
- Fast track the divestment of the Kingston Container Terminal.

I don't have to say more about the exchange rate, I have said enough on the exchange rate.

But here is what I will say in the final position, and I am saying it because I respect the fact that we have engaged on this so important and so fundamental an issue. Because my goodness, my goodness, I don't - listen, in our democracy I could become the Minister again, I don't want to inherit an economy that plunges down into 120, 130, 140, 150 dollar exchange rate. Inheriting what? A wreck? We can't continue like this.

Within the context of an IMF Agreement, in which three tests have been passed, and a fourth test is likely to be passed, and Two Billion US Dollars (US$2B) - listen to this, I want the Minister to hear this, you know - Two Billion US Dollars (US$2B) inflows are guaranteed from the multilaterals, this is an ideal time to consider fixing the exchange rate for a period of time, after which the regime can then be morphed into a managed, floating system. Jamaica just cannot take any more devaluation at this time, we are too high-cost and import dependent.

One manufacturer of sauces told me at the Arena at the Expo, 67 per cent of everything he produces is import dependent, 67 per cent.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: Of course we need to wean the economy off of imports, but it's gonna take time.

In Jamaica today we need to build consensus, Prime Minister, around many things, one of these is the need to settle down to a stable exchange rate while we work on the

other structural impediments that can sap investor confidence.

And give credit to the Minister for what he is doing. The structural reforms that are being carried out are important, the laws that are being passed are important. But in the meantime, every day we hear the dollar gone again, more people are suffering more in Jamaica because of that decline. (Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: We love the poor!

Mr. SHAW: Why do I say ramp up education? Minister gone lef mi - but you know my position. Early Childhood Education, Prime Minister, it is the passion of the former Minister of Education. But, Prime Minister, there are 2,000 trained teachers in Jamaica today that are without jobs. We need to retrain them into Early Childhood technology and get them to go help teach our children in Infant Schools. We have to rescue our future. The only way to rescue our future is to rescue our little children. (Applause)

Prime Minister, you know the greatest thing we can do for our children, give them a good education. Thank God for my father and my mother, they never had silver and gold. The house they raised us in is still there in Christiana, my niece lives in the house. We will never sell that house; we will never sell the five acres of land. But they wanted to make sure that we all had a good education. My little five year old - about to be five year old, Christiana, she is watching me at home on television right now as - I tell her, you know Prime Minister, because you always send love for Christiana, right.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: But at five years old she is already so alert and...

A Government MEMBER: Tek after har madda! (Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Tek after har madda! Tek after har madda, right. (Laughter)

And the things that she says... the things she comes out with, it is just an absolute joy and delight to see it happening. And I would like to see it happen to every child in this country. We have a duty to give every child a chance. (Applause)

And we need remedial programmes. We must rescue our children at primary school. We must rescue them at high school. We need reading and comprehension programmes. Doctor... the Member of Parliament... the Minister of Transport and Works has had for many years, a very enlightened programme of reading and comprehension in his constituency.

(Applause by Government members)

I had started one in mine. (Applause) I have started one in mine, where we are working with our primary schools. We are trying to get at least one teacher, trained in reading skills, getting whiteboard and smart sticks, and all that sort of thing, we want to get into the system. It helps in the teaching process. No man, we have some serious work to do.

A MEMBER: Conception.

Mr. SHAW: And, Mr. Speaker... Mr. Speaker, I want to just say - former Prime Minister Edward Seaga said it; former Prime Minister PJ Patterson said it; values and attitude was what Mr. Patterson said. Mr.

Seaga said, *"we need a curriculum of character education"* - character education. It needs to be introduced among every cohort in the education system. We must be united in facing the urgent task of tackling the crisis of human underdevelopment in our country. (Applause) We have to tackle it.

Mr. Speaker, we have to re-make JAMPRO. JAMPRO needs to become more aggressive, work along with DBJ and EX-IM Bank, get active again, get really alive, promote foreign and local investments, get around the corners, cut the red tape, get the thing done, along with the fast track approvals process that the Leader of the Opposition and I, and others, have recommend.

Mr. VAZ: (Inaudible) ...says he soon come.

Mr. SHAW: We need to fast track energy solutions. My God, we have been talking about it for so long - twelve years - twelve years planning. You, then we, then you - twelve years later...

Mr. DALLEY: We are going to do it.

Mr. SHAW: ...and we are still fooling around about alternative energy. The Liquid Natural Gas Project must be given national priority, Prime Minister, to ensure that the financing is put in place expeditiously. The Government should help to target funding from the multilateral institutions as part of the drive to get the project on a fast track, once it is satisfied that the technical capabilities for the winning bidders are in place. We have to arrange more access to low cost credit for the productive sector.

When you look at credit, the climb of credit in the productive activities is very, very mild, almost negligible - flat. Credit for production... Credit for consumption is up, about $30 Billion, credit for consumption is up, but when you look at line items like manufacturing and other things like that, you see, maybe a $5 Billion or $6 Billion, not enough. You have to find a way, Minister, to engineer more credit into the productive sectors of the economy.

Of interest, Claude Clarke, a former Minister of Industry on your side, recently noted in an article that less than 10 per cent of Jamaican firms that are less than five years old have actual and benchmark access to credit - less than five per cent - less than ten per cent. But, in Trinidad and Tobago, 50 per cent of Trinidadian firms that are less than five years old, they have access to credit; 10 per cent for us - access to credit; 50 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Clarke went on that in Singapore and Barbados, their deposits and outstanding loans are 292 per cent, and 197 per cent of their respective GDPs, deposit on outstanding loans. The figures for Jamaica is 57 per cent.

Mr. CHARLES: What!

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, what are deposits on outstanding loans? These are active capital assets that are at work to build muscle in the economy, to create jobs and to create economic growth. The 57 per cent figure for Jamaica reveals, once again, the malnourished, bang belly status of the Jamaican economy.

Then, Mr. Speaker, let us re-capitalize the EX-IM Bank. It is commendable what you have proposed in relation to the Student Loan Bureau, and I feel like I am a co-daddy in that one, because when I became Minister...

Dr. PHILLIPS: No such thing as a co-daddy.

Mr. SHAW: Well, then I am the daddy then, be careful. But what I am saying is that when I started as Minister, there were 6,000 loans - 6,000 loans to students. It went to 14,000 by the time I left as Minister of Finance. So, I am happy about what is planned for the Student Loan Bureau. But, let us re-capitalize the EX-IM Bank, so that it can literally double or triple its portfolio in supporting the drive for exports, Minister.

And then I want to say to you Minister, you have reduced the taxes on motor vehicles, you *gwine* start collecting more money now. If you want to collect even more money, take off back the one per cent that you had put on transfer taxes and stamp duties.

Mr. CHUCK: Exactly, more taxation, less taxes.

Mr. SHAW: Remove that, you *gwine* collect more money...

Mr. CHUCK: Absolutely.

Mr. SHAW: ...because your own Paper has said - your own document said: the projected yield of $2 Billion from the one percentage point increase in the Stamp Duty and Transfer Tax did not materialize.

Mr. CHUCK: They collected less.

Mr. SHAW: If it *doan* materialize, just like the car one never materialize...

Mr. VAZ: Go back.

Mr. SHAW: ...take it off. Allow the money to come from volume transactions.

Mr. CHUCK: Chinaman principle.

Mr. SHAW: That is the Chinaman principle.

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. SHAW: I have already mentioned the suggestion of increasing the ceiling on the lending for housing loan, and I have already mentioned the fast track of the Kingston Container Terminal. So, now, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, I can head swiftly to my conclusion.

Mr. Speaker, in the context of the IMF Agreement, if we are to achieve sustainable gains, we must take firm and aggressive steps to support the Extended Fund Facility programme. We have no time to lose - no more time. Can we stabilize the exchange rate and give our people a chance? Yes, we can. Can we, together, ramp up education and rescue our people from a crisis of human underdevelopment? Yes, we can.

Mr. CHARLES: We must.

Mr. SHAW: Can we start to promote investment with missionary zeal once again? Yes, of course, we can. Can we fast track energy diversification after 12 years of talk? Yes, we can. Can we arrange greater access to funds in commercial banks and the EX-IM Bank? Yes, we can. Can we provide a stable environment that encourages investment and

develop our people? Yes, we can.

A Government MEMBER: Can you pass the IMF test?

Mr. SHAW: Can we change course by giving people opportunities to work our way out of poverty and lift our standards of living and our standard of conduct? Yes, we can. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker may God guide us all as we continue on our journey, and may He inspire us with hope in our hearts. I am of the firm belief that we can, and we will overcome.

May God bless you all and may God bless Jamaica. (Applause)

(Standing ovation by Opposition Members)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business this afternoon, so I move for the adjournment of the Parliament until tomorrow the 23rd April at 2:00 p.m.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do adjourn until tomorrow the 23rd April at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) House stands adjourned.

The House accordingly adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, April 23, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:18 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central

MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Dr. Dayton Campbell.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Before we get down to today's business, let us welcome our visitors today especially those from the Ministry of Agriculture and our former parliamentarians on my left, Delano Franklyn, Phyllis Mitchell, Trevor Ruddock and Derrick Heaven. Welcome. (Applause)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, We don't have a statement, but I just wanted to respond to the Member from South West St. Catherine who had asked for urgent attention to the disconnection of the Leader of the Opposition's telephone. I am advised - firstly let me state categorically there was no ill-will, ill-motive or malice. It was disconnected due to inadvertence.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Non-payment of bills.

Mr. PAULWELL: Yes, non-payment of bills. And, Mr. Speaker, I have, with the assistance of the Clerk, put the matter as top priority to be cleared today and to ensure that it is never, ever repeated. So that we intend to ensure that those bills are settled promptly in the future.

Mr. WARMINGTON: The other thing is stationery....

(Inaudible comment follows)

(REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education, entered and took his seat.)

(MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

(DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD (JLP), Clarendon, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House, a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Papers No. 48 - 60**
  Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries:

- Agro Park Development Programme;
- Strengthening Agriculture Education and Research;
- Aquaculture Development Initiatives;
- Food Safety Initiatives;
- Ginger Industry Expansion Programme;
- Irish Potato Production Programme;
- Jamaica Dairy Development Board;
- Report on activities in furtherance of the proper management of the Pedro Cays;
- Praedial Larceny;
- Interventions in the School Feeding Programme;
- Small Stock Industry;
- Report on the Achievements of the Sugar Transformation Unit (STU) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries for the Financial year 2013/2014;
- Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Divestment of the Wallenford Coffee Company and also the Commercial Assets of the Cocoa Industry Board;

- **Ministry Paper No. 61**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Cocoa Industry Board for the year ended September 30, 2010

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BUDGET DEBATE

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we continue with the Budget Debates. We have two speakers: firstly, the Minister of Agriculture, the Member from Central Westmoreland will be the first speaker and then the Member from North West St. James will be the second speaker in that order, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Minister Clarke, your time.

(HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security, entered and took his seat.)

(Applause)

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, as I begin my contribution to this Budget Debate I must pay recognition and due recognition to some persons. Let me begin by thanking the Prime Minister, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller, for her continuing confidence in me.

A MEMBER: What!

Mr. CLARKE: Everyone knows the relationship that we do have, but I don't take that for granted.

A MEMBER: What!

Mr. CLARKE: I really conscientiously work as hard as I can to enhance your position as Prime Minister of this country. (Applause) Thanks to my ministerial colleagues for the support they give to me; an encouraging word helps when you are down. Let me congratulate

the Minister of Finance for having presented a credible budget for the ensuing financial year. Thanks to all my colleagues in Parliament, both sides of the House, regardless of the banter and all that, we do have a good relationship. Thanks to the staff at the Ministry led by the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Donovan Stanberry. Thanks to Chairmen and members of all the Boards which fall under the aegis of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Thanks to you Mr. Speaker and your Deputy for the able way you have been guiding these deliberations. And I must confess your Deputy is growing in the job.

(Applause)

Mr. KELLIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: I think you have something to do with that. Thanks to the staff at Gordon House led by the Clerk of the Houses of Parliament, Mrs. Heather Cooke. Thanks to my constituency executive, my five councillors and all the people in Central Westmoreland who have enabled me to be here as their representative. (Applause) And finally, finally, let me express profound thanks to my family and especially to my wife of thirty-seven years (Applause) plus a four-year probationary period.

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: You were on probation? You were on probation?

Mr. CLARKE: I was. I was put on probation for four years before I was able to say I do.

(MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, this Government was elected on the mandate of people power.

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: For us, this is not merely a slogan, but a summons to a greater level of accountability. It is within this context, therefore, that I intend to present my score card to this Honourable House, in respect to the commitments I made in the House last year in the Sectoral Debate. It is my intention to further utilize this moment to outline the critical programmes and strategies that the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries will employ in the current financial year to move the sector forward.

Mr. Speaker, given the amount of work covered by the Ministry in the last financial year, the number of new initiatives and our many successes, it would be difficult to speak to everything in this presentation. I have, therefore, tabled today thirteen Ministry Papers, detailing our activities and successes. Mr. Speaker, I am pleading and begging Members to read those Ministry Papers and the wider Jamaica also to do so, and the journalist also to do. It will enable them to be enlightened about the workings of the

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

(MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, entered and took his seat.)

(HON IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, entered and took his seat.)

(Cross talk)

PERFORMANCE OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AFTER HURRICANE SANDY

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, before I go on to the specifics, allow me to present an overview of the performance of the agricultural sector. Mr. Speaker, it is well known that Hurricane Sandy impacted the country in October 2012, and this affected production performance for both the third quarter of 2012 and the first quarter of 2013. It is also a matter of record that severe drought conditions affected the entire island for the first six months of 2013. It is therefore not surprising that in the first two quarters of 2013, the overall agricultural sector declined by 11.3 and 6.3 per cent, respectively. The decline in the domestic food crop sector was correspondingly 12.1 and 5.5 per cent, respectively.

(DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

But, Mr. Speaker, the resilience of the farmers of this country is remarkable.

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: Undaunted by the ravages of Sandy and the devastating impact of the prolonged drought, our farmers soldiered on, and I am proud to report that by the third quarter of 2013 the sector returned to its positive growth trajectory, with the overall sector growing by 5.9 per cent and 13.1 per cent, respectively, in the third and fourth quarters of 2013.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear! Tell dem bout dem quarters. Hutchie, yuh a listen?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Shut yuh mouth bwoy.

A **Government MEMBER:** Listen man.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: I going to keep quiet mek yuh listen.

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the corresponding figures for the domestic food crop sector are 8.4% and 14% respectively.

Mr. Speaker, I have more news. Our preliminary estimates for the first quarter of 2014 are indicating approximately 18.7% growth in the domestic food crop sector. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance in his delivery spoke to the fact that the last quarter of 2013 the figures indicate that annualized agriculture would grow by some 13%. I saw the trauma, I saw the trauma on the face of the Member from North Central St. Andrew, he was ill at ease, he was flabbergasted. And then the Member from North West, St. Elizabeth...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hutchie, go slow so him can understand.

Mr. CLARKE: ...he was writhing in pain, how can one speak about growth?

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. L. Buchanan)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Try and get a vision. You don't see longer than your nose bridge. You have not a thing to contribute in here. From you come to Parliament what you contribute?

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, what the Minister said wasn't logarithm, it wasn't geometry, it wasn't equation.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CLARKE: Is just simple arithmetic that I learnt at the Bagavante Basic School and Teacher Maud Elementary School. We used to call it 'sums'. (Laughter)

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Opposition Member)

Mr. CLARKE: Sums.

The University of Ottawa, that notable institution that you attended, Cornell University that you attended...

Mr. HUTCHINSON: That's right, and we learned agriculture.

Mr. CLARKE: Oh, God, they would tell you man. It's just sums.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: And we learned agriculture.

Mr. CLARKE: Just sums, nothing.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: And I will tell you about it later.

Mr. CLARKE: And I want to say further, Mr. Speaker, there is no extension officer in the Ministry of Agriculture who can tell you that I have ever told them what figure they must bring to me. Whatever they bring - there is no extension officer or parish manager that can say to you, when they brought the figure to me I say carry it back, it's not the right figure. Whatever figure you see here, what you see is what you get. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, agriculture's contribution to GDP in 2013 was 6.7%. (Applause) This nominal contribution however, does not encompass the significant linkage between agriculture, manufacturing and tourism. Our manufacturing sector is significantly based on the processing of agricultural raw material and our sugar industry, for instance, is the most vertically integrated industry in Jamaica.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I don't want anybody to tell me whether we growing or not. It is there for everybody to see. A year ago you couldn't get a ripe banana to eat, every street corner in Jamaica now people in uniforms selling ripe banana left, right and centre.

And as I mentioned, the Opposition Spokesperson on Finance...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Audley, listen and learn.

Mr. CLARKE: When I went to visit him...

Mr. SHAW: Who me?

Mr. CLARKE: Yes.

Mr. SHAW: Okay.

Mr. CLARKE: The day I came to look for you.

Mr. SHAW: You are telling everybody mi business now.

Mr. CLARKE: Of course. I want them to know that we are good friends.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Is after Andrew beat him or before.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Oh shut your mouth, Buchanan. (Laughter) You read, country man, bushman, cane piece man. You don't speak about the Leader like that, which Andrew, is your friend.

Mr. CLARKE: My good friend said to me, I born and grow in Christiana, come just look 'round the back a mi house, look at Irish potato. I have never seen Irish potato like that.

Mr. CHARLES: That's why they made you Minister, you must look up to that, don't let down the Prime Minister.

Mr. CLARKE: And when I was leaving, when I was leaving he said before you have this last drink come and get another last look at the Irish potato, potato growing through your ears.

Mr. CHARLES: Thank God there was no hurricane last year.

Mr. VAZ: You grow any cassava?

Mr. SHAW: You don't remember I said nutten 'bout Tufton...

Mr. CLARKE: What you said.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. CLARKE: You said he was the Moravian who brought Irish potato here.

(Laughter/Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, apart from the direct economic contribution, agriculture is the bedrock of rural life, contributing to social stability and arresting the rural-urban drift. So the real contribution of agriculture to GDP is therefore much greater than the 6.7% being recorded. It would be unwise for any Government to ignore this critical sector in its strategic national development and growth programme.

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the weather-related challenges I highlighted earlier, I am happy to report to this Honourable House that non-traditional food exports increased by 5% to US$152.7 Million (Applause) thanks to increased yam exports which grew by 13.3%, ackee by 12%, sauces by 3.2%, conch and lobster by 23.3%, sweet potato by 25% and pumpkin by 33%.

Mr. SAMUDA: The figures are too low.

Mr. CLARKE: And these figures are from STATIN.

Mr. SAMUDA: Not quantity, growth.

Mr. CLARKE: Growth. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, notwithstanding the commendable performance of the non-traditional export sector, overall agricultural exports decreased by 12% due mainly to the 43.5% decline in sugar exports, as reported by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica. This

decline in sugar exports, however, must be juxtaposed against the increased consumption of locally produced sugar last year, replacing a significant portion of the imports. We used much of it locally rather than importing.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of imports, preliminary figures from STATIN show that food imports increased marginally by 1.5% from the revised figure of US$948 Million in 2012 to US$962 Million in 2013.

I would have been happier, Mr. Speaker, if food imports had moved down. However, what we are seeing instead is a stabilization of imports as the increase over the period 2012-2013 was just a marginal 1%. So there is stabilization as far as imports go.

The truth is Mr. Speaker, we will only begin to see substantial decline in the import bill when we would have significantly restructured the sector. For example, cereals for animal feeds, which constitute 30% of our import bill, can only be reduced when we make significant breakthrough in developing indigenous feeds and producing some of that animal feeds right here in Jamaica. There were also other factors. The sustained drought in 2013 significantly affected local forage production and increased our reliance on concentrate to sustain the livestock sector. And you would have known that you had to top it up with grains, imported grains.

Within the context of the structural challenge, the agro-park initiative becomes even more imperative as we seek to restructure the sector to be the major driver of social and economic transformation in Jamaica through import substitution, increased exports, greater linkages with the tourism sector, increased rural incomes and stronger and more prosperous communities.

(DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, North, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern, entered and took her seat.)

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing, entered and took his seat.)

I sincerely appreciate, Mr. Speaker, the contribution of our small farmers who, for decades, have fed us and have been driving force in the sector. (Applause) However, Mr. Speaker, our development challenges dictate that we must make a quantum leap in agricultural production and productivity. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, the agro-parks are intended to attract larger farmers with the capital, expertise and technological savvy to engage best practices in order to significantly increase production and productivity so as to enhance agricultural competitiveness. We have to pursue this goal with the greatest vigour whilst maintaining support to our small farmers. Simply put, Mr. Speaker, the agro-parks must be a game-changer.

A Government MEMBER: That's right.

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker...

(The Orderly gives a glass of water to Mr. Clarke)

Mr. CLARKE: What is that?

Mr. VAZ: Is the glass with the rum.

Mr. CLARKE: This is Vodka, Vodka. (Referring to the water given to him)

Mr. Speaker, last year I highlighted the phenomenal performance of this subsector which moved production - and this is ginger - from 444 tonnes in 2011 to 1,082 tonnes in 2012 (Applause) by increasing the area under production from 162 hectares to 219 hectares. In that report, I indicated that in 2013 we would have established some 283 hectares. Mr. Speaker, we had in fact established, last year, 248, but this was sufficient to cause a 10% increase in production.

The 2014 crop, Mr. Speaker, is now being reaped and projected to yield some 3,000 tonnes, the largest production of ginger in 25 years. (Applause) And St. James can take a bow; they have moved up significantly and contributed significantly to the ginger production.

We have now, Mr. Speaker, become the victims of our own success, as the current levels of production are challenging the handling capacity of our Export Division.

Mr. Speaker, this is a revolution, a promise kept, delivered and Government exceeded, ginger. (Applause) I spoke about Irish potato and it is the same. Last year, we reached 79% in self-sufficiency, and I was saying that we would be about that this year or a little better. We surpassed that, 86% self-sufficiency in tabled Irish potato last year.

(Applause)

Another promise kept, delivered and exceeded.

(Applause)

AGRO-PARKS

I highlighted in some detail, Mr. Speaker, the activities of the agro-parks, I am reporting today that seven out of the nine agro-parks are up and running.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

(Applause)

Mr. CLARKE: Over the last few months great interest is being displayed in the agro-parks. It is saying that people are beginning to understand that agriculture must play a critical role in national development.

You know, the....

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. CLARKE: Yes, great concept. Wonderful concept.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Properly.

Mr. CLARKE: The Member from North West St. Elizabeth, great concept. Seven, eight years ago, he had a concept.

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Government Member)

Mr. CLARKE: The concept of making Holland Bamboo the real agro-park. Well, Mr. Speaker, I pass through Holland almost on a daily basis and if that is the realization of a concept, don't give me any agro-park, because even the bamboos are dying because they heard something was coming and it never came.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: It started under…

Mr. CLARKE: But the concept is good.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: It started under our….

Mr. CLARKE: But you didn't know.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Of course!

(Laughter)

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the Plantain Garden became a great talking point. The Leader of the Opposition led a motorcade out there to look at the agro-park and then, after having gone, he sent his emissary the spokesperson on agriculture and he went, he took some hand tools....

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, we had gone together.

Mr. CLARKE: And they asked me, they asked me to remind you about the knapsack blower that you promised.

(Laughter)

Mr. CLARKE: You have sent it?

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Hutchinson)

Mr. CLARKE: You have sent it?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Long ago.

Mr. CLARKE: When? When?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Long ago.

Mr. CLARKE: Long, long, long ago. They want a new one now. They want a new one.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the 220,000 farmers, every farmer in Jamaica finds himself or herself in a situation where they have crop failure. They just get up, brush off and move ahead again. The agro-park in Yallahs is moving by leaps and bounds.

(Applause)

The agro-park at Plantain Garden, the agro-park at Plantain Garden because of the exuberance, they went ahead and they planted, planted the onions even before the irrigation system was completed and they had a setback. But, Mr. Speaker, what we did as a Ministry, having seen their situation, the Credit Union

went and worked with these farmers without any collateral whatsoever and loan them up to $12 Million. When we found that there was a problem, we at the Ministry put $7 1/2 Million into the credit union to allow them to work their way through.

And for some unknown reason they abandoned that project, although the Credit Union went out and prepared lands, secured markets for ginger, for pepper, for callaloo; if they had stuck to that programme, right now they would be reaping up to $20-odd Million worth of produce, but they abandoned that. But even that, they are today reaping ginger, pumpkin, even Irish potato they are planting there and they are back on track. I can't be mad with them they are farmers, but we will work with them.

Right now as we speak, there is an investor there who has taken on 35 acres to have the mother farm concept for these farmers to put up a packing-house, *et cetera, et cetera*, to help them with their marketing and to let them become efficient farmers. And I want to thank Mr. Green for having done that. (Applause)

I want Mr. Speaker to tell you and this House the progress by these Agro-parks. We have so far leased 1,115 hectares of the 2,267 hectares owned by the Agro-Investment Corporation and we have engaged another 543 hectares of private lands in our agro-parks. Go down to Duff House, the constituency of you, Mr. Speaker - and you can bow because you cyaan talk.

(Laughter)

Just indicate, just indicate to this Honourable House how successful, how successful, how successful....

(The Speaker bows)

....how successful…

A MEMBER: Him nod him head.

Mr. CLARKE: ....how successful it is in that general area.

Mr. SHAW: All right, how much time you want him to bow?

(Laughter)

Mr. CLARKE: I don't want him to bow like you.

(Laughter) (The Speaker gavels)

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, as we speak, we are now in the process of putting in irrigation systems in Amity Hall, Ebony Park, and Spring Plain. We have decided, and we said last year that we were going to engage young people in agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, we will only achieve renewal and continuity in the sector to the extent that we can engage young people. Within this context, we have to be deliberate in attracting and retaining youths.

Last year I announced that we would reserve on a pilot basis some 40 hectares of land in our agro-parks exclusively for young people with knowledge in agriculture. I am pleased to announce that we have selected some 20 young people, and we have allocated to each of them five acres in the Ebony Park Agro-park. (Applause) The only thing that is holding them back now, Mr. Speaker, is for the implementation of the irrigation programme. And as we speak, we have out to

tender some $620 Million to implement an irrigation programme in both Ebony Park and Spring Plains to enable us to engage those young people.

We have further secured from the private sector and the University of the West Indies commitments to provide working capital to these young entrepreneurs, who will be producing various crops under secured marketing arrangements, and they will commence production as soon as we roll out the irrigation infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, in the meantime, we have sought to deliberately engage our young people in our Irish potato programme. Some 40 hectares have been reserved for women and youth, including some 176 beneficiaries.

(Applause)

So far, Mr. Speaker, we have planted the Irish. A quarter of the area has been reaped yielding over 150 tonnes of Irish potato, young people in that project and we are moving ahead.

We would like to place on record our gratitude to the participating private sector firms, Newport Fersan, Agro Grace, Glastonbury Potato, St. Jago Farm Store and T. Geddes Grant; they have come on board to assist these young people to help them get off the ground and I really and sincerely want to thank them.

(Applause)

The intent, Mr. Speaker, is that from this modest start, those young people will be able to continue their farming enterprise in a sustainable manner. Another promise kept, signed, sealed and delivered.

(Applause)

SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME

School Feeding Programme. And again, we are all sold in this House on the critical importance of including more locally produced food in our School Feeding Programme to increase nutritional levels in our children and enhance the livelihood of our farmers.

I'm happy to report that since October 2013, Nutrition Products has been using liquid eggs in their solid snacks as partial substitution for imported margarine and vegetable oil. This egg is being supplied by the Jamaica Egg Processors Limited, which has since supplied some 2,150 kgs of liquid eggs, valued at $1.3 Million, and used in the production of some 476,000 bullas.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. CLARKE: Four hundred and seventy-six thousand - plenty bullas.

Additionally, NPL has considerably diversified its solid snack offerings, to include banana, carrot cakes and banana muffins. Minister of Education, you are on the path to making sure that we have a sustainable School-Feeding Programme based significantly on the products from our local farmers. (Applause)

And we hope Mr. Speaker in the Agro-parks when we maximize production, more products will go to the School-Feeding Programme on a more affordable basis. And that is what we intend to do.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels - 3:06 p.m.) The Minister's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended sufficient to allow him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Minister's time be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Minister Clarke.

Mr. CLARKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thanks, colleagues.

SUGAR

Mr. Speaker, I turn to Sugar. Sugar production in 2012/2013 was 126,000 tonnes. I indicated last year that the relatively poor performance of Pan Caribbean Sugar Limited, which is responsible for 70 per cent of the industry's capacity, resulted in this low production.

I was sufficiently concerned, Mr. Speaker, about the issues, that having led a delegation to China, management was changed. And as I look across, straight before me I see new man, Mr. Wu. (Applause) Mr. Wu has replaced Mr. He. (Laughter) Mr. Wu has replaced Mr. He and they are moving substantially to make sure that something happens. (Applause) Thank you very much, Mr. Wu. (Applause)

Given the level of replanting, we see substantial improvement, and we expect this year that sugar production will be approximately 20,000 or nearly 20,000 tonnes more than last year. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CLARKE: Growth in agriculture. (Applause) Growth.

Dr. BAUGH: What's the total now?

Mr. CLARKE: We hope to do 145,000 tonnes this year.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CLARKE: Stale, stale, but we are moving on.

Not only has Pan Caribbean stepped up to the investment that I indicated last year, but it has stepped up to its own obligation to do whatever is possible to make sure that the industry moves from strength to strength.

Now, we have lived up to our obligation. As I said last year, there were some problems where workers were extracting electricity from Pan Caribbean, the company. We have now substantially separated them and they are on their own now, to free up Mr. Wu to do whatever he wants to do, Mr. Wu. (Laughter)

We, however, Mr. Speaker, have been doing some substantial work in the social aspect of the industry. And I will leave that in the capable hands of the Prime Minister, especially to speak about the barracks relocation, which is something near and dear to her heart. (Applause) And, PM, I know you will do that. Every key that we handed out to those new householders I can see tears in your eyes. Don't cry next Tuesday when you speak, I know how emotional you are about this barracks relocation.

I am confident that with all the investments that we have made the industry will rebound.

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CLARKE: We must, however, Mr. Speaker, not lose sight of the critical imperative to step up our diversification

efforts into the many co-products that sugar can produce, refined sugar co-generation, ethanol, *et cetera*.

We must also look at our regional markets in light of the cessation of guaranteed prices in the European market after 2017. Many of our lower-cost competitors are now gaining the same duty free quote-free access we now have with the EU market. Our salvation rests in satisfying the demand of our local and regional markets. The region, for instance, Mr. Speaker, consumes over 300,000 tonnes of refined sugar, all supplied from external sources when in fact, we have the capacity to produce that very same amount here in Jamaica.

(HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took his seat.)

COFFEE

Mr. Speaker, Coffee. Last year I indicated that the Government intended to divest its holding in the coffee industry, through the sale of the assets of Wallenford Coffee.

I am pleased to announce that further to Cabinet's decision in August, 2013, the Government executed a Memorandum of Understanding between Portland Private Equity/AIC Caribbean Fund, and on September 12 the said company assumed possession of Wallenford Coffee Company. (Applause)

With this transaction, the Government of Jamaica is no longer in the business of coffee production. Our role will be to facilitate production through effective regulations to ensure the maintenance of quality standards, as well as to protect our invaluable brand.

Although we are out of the production business, we have a keen interest in the continued development of the sector. It is in this regard I wish to highlight the continued threat of the Coffee Leaf Rust disease, which is a clear and present danger.

After consultations with the coffee industry, it has been confirmed that the coffee market is now rebounding and there is again a huge demand for Jamaican coffee at premium prices.

Mr. Speaker, this year is the highest price that has been paid for coffee any time in Jamaica's history. (Applause) People want it, people running it down.

And I am happy to hear again that the new entity is in the process of doing financing for the small farmers, to help them grow their coffee at very, very, very low interest rate. (Applause) We shall see coffee rebounding once again. (Applause)

(HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

A problem we face though, Mr. Speaker, is that we have been importing a substantial amount of coffee. What we intend to do is to put a cess on imported coffee, to use that money to help to develop our local coffee

production. (Applause) Locally we collect cess. So if our producers are paying cess, those who are importing must also pay the cess.

(Applause)

COCOA

Cocoa, Mr. Speaker. It is projected that cocoa production for the current crop will be in the region of some 750 tonnes. This falls below the 850 tonnes that we projected. But, Mr. Speaker, it is much more than the 400 tonnes a year or so ago.

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CLARKE: We had the problem again with hurricane. But great interest is now being displayed in cocoa. And, in the divestment process, Mr. Speaker, we are getting substantial enquiries; everybody wants to get into the Jamaican cocoa because of its quality, world-standard quality of our cocoa. (Applause)

BANANAS

Bananas, Mr. Speaker, bananas. There was a decline, understandably so, because of the hurricane. But, banana has rebounded, and I tell you, the Banana-Accompanying Measures Resources from the European Union, in the amount of Five Million Euros (€5M) is now available to the Ministry. And we are working with the AIBJ to make sure that that money is spent wisely, as we move to expand banana production once more.

(Applause)

MILK PRODUCTION

Mr. Speaker, milk production is almost static, but we have to deal with that. Production in 2013, 12.34 million litres. We didn't achieve the 10 per cent increase that we anticipated. The decline must however be viewed in light of the crippling drought in the first half of the year, which severely affected fodder production. We, however, remain determined to increase production as this is an important source of protein. And as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, we are consuming less than the World Health Organization's recommended daily amount.

Notwithstanding the above, we are pressing on with initiatives to increase milk production and structurally change the production base. In this regard, the Jamaica Dairy Development Board, from its cess resources, has allocated some Twenty-eight Million Dollars ($28M), which has supported the expansion of fodder production by 40 hectares, including 24 hectares in our Bodles/Hounslow Research Stations that will be used as a model.

Additionally, we have procured and made available to dairy farmers critical equipment valued at approximately Seventeen Million ($17M) for the preparation of fodder. Some Twenty Million Dollars ($20M) has been used to purchase some 300 dairy animals which were slated to be slaughtered, and the objective of this is to distribute these heifers to tertiary institutions and select farmers to support an increase in milk production.

With respect to the institutions, the Jamaica Dairy Development Board is committed to work with the College of Agriculture, Science and Education, Ebony Park HEART Academy, Knockalva and Sydney Pagon Schools, to revamp and upgrade their dairy programme with equipment, technical support and stock. We must return our agricultural tertiary institutions to a state where they not only train competent and functional agricultural specialists, but expose them to entrepreneurship.

(Applause)

This is poignant to the dairy industry which is experiencing an alarming attrition of older farmers with no replacement in sight.

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

One of the problems with my friend from North Central St. Andrew, he is an expert on everything. And you know, I once was told - and somebody described to me who is an expert. And it fits very well; *x* is an unknown quantity; *spurt* is a drip under pressure. So this kind of expert is an unknown quantity of drip under pressure. (Laughter)

FISHERIES

Mr. Speaker, Fisheries - the biggest disappointment is our failure to enact a new Fisheries Bill that has been in the making for several years. Whilst I appreciate and commend this Honourable House for passing a record 42 Bills in the last Parliament, we have to bring the Fisheries Bill to the Parliament this year. This Bill will provide the framework for the proper regulation of the sector, and efficient and effective management of our fisheries resources.

The challenge to our marine resources, Mr. Speaker, is due to over-exploitation. We therefore, continue to support the maintenance of our 14 declared sanctuaries, and I am advised that already we are seeing a rejuvenation of the stock in these protected areas.

In an effort to bolster our surveillance and monitoring of our vast marine space, to ensure an increased safety at sea, the Ministry is in consultation with the Jamaica Defence Force Coast Guard and the Maritime Police to acquire two drones. (Applause) These drones will be fitted - not the one that was going around Tivoli at that time...

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CLARKE: ...a different type. You remember the drones that were going around?

A MEMBER: No, we don't remember them.

Mr. McKENZIE: You no have no sea down *deh.*

Mr. CLARKE: We don’t have that one. You can't recall. (Laughter) The drones will be fitted with cameras and will be deployed as necessary, and will have the capacity to transmit data back to base, which will assist in detecting and deterring poachers, as well as to assist with search and rescue at sea. (Applause) And the private sector has come on board to help us in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, as important - it is so important to the management of our resources that even as we await our Fisheries Bill, we are forced to seek Cabinet's approval for amendments to the current Fisheries Act to significantly increase fines and deal with other urgent matters related to the management of our fisheries resources. We cannot continue to allow poachers to come into our waters and rob our country of all those resources while our people...

Mr. SHAW: That is what the drones going to do?

Mr. CLARKE: They are going to help in that regard, working with the Coast Guard, yes. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I want to report as follows: The Aquaculture Development Strategy, as promised, has been completed. Consistent with this strategy, we have obtained the approval of the Ministry of Finance and Planning to suspend for one year, the duties applicable to floating fish feed.

(Applause by Government Members)

MEMBERS: Good... good, good.

Mr. CLARKE: We are also taking concrete steps to introduce more productive species into the sector. We sent a team to Vietnam to look at the basa fish, and we want to see how we can develop that specie here. We are currently engaged in the procurement process, in relation to restoration of some 12 ponds in our Aquaculture Branch, as well as increasing the capacity to produce fingerlings to satisfy the needs of the industry.

The Ministry is also working closely with Rainforest Seafoods to expand the marketing outlets for our inland fish farmers. They have acquired some equipment where they can display the fish in its live form, where you can go - and you know, it's really exciting to go and see the fish swimming around and you can buy it just there in its live form.

I refer you, Mr. Speaker, to our Ministry Paper on Agro-Parks, which details the fulfillment of our commitment to introduce aquaculture in the Hill Run and Meylersfield Agro-Parks.

I turn now, Mr. Speaker, to the vexing issue of the Pedro Cays. This Honourable House is well aware of the furor that was created in the public domain as a result of some exposure in the media about conditions and the cays. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries immediately moved to provide some $34.5 Million from the Fisheries Management Development Fund to deal with the management of the cays, including some $16.6 Million, allocated for solid waste management of which some $4 Million has already been spent.

Mr. Speaker, working in conjunction with the Jamaica Defence Force Coast Guard and the Marine Police, the Fisheries Division has stepped up considerably its enforcement and monitoring activities on the cays resulting in the removal of a number of unlicensed persons.

Significantly, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry has commissioned a census and a Carrying Capacity Study to determine the optimum number of persons that the cays can accommodate, as well as the infrastructure required to support such. I am happy to report

that this study has been completed by the University and we are now in the process of submitting the findings and recommendations to Cabinet.

The intention is that an Inter-Ministerial Committee will use this study as the basis for formulating more, once and for all, a sustainable management plan for the cays with the role and responsibilities of all relevant agencies clearly defined. A promise made, a promise kept, signed, sealed and delivered. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is critical that we maintain support to our 220,000 farmers in order to sustain the growth momentum. It is therefore, heartening that even with the overall reduction in the Ministry's Budget, this Government has been able to increase allocation to the Rural Agricultural Development Authority from $936 Million in 2013/2014, to just over $1 Billion in the current year. This, Mr. Speaker, is a significant statement of our commitment to the farmers of this country. (Applause)

Mr. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CLARKE: We are re-inventing the concept of extension by infusing a greater level of technology in the provision of extension services. Last year, for instance, I reported on the provision of Tablets to all our extension officers. We have advanced further with the use of technology in 2013. I know you have an interest in the Tablets but not this one. (Laughter)

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Samuda)

A MEMBER: The blue one. (Laughter)

Mr. CLARKE: We have created...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. CLARKE: Our age. We have created, in partnership with the Mona School of Business and Management, two apps: the CLIP App and the Harvest API App. The Harvest API App will enhance the information exchange among players in the agriculture value chain. With respect to farm-gate prices and volumes, this will increase transparency, empower our farmers, and provide the kind of information that will improve the management of the marketing of goods.

In relation to the CLIP app, this will enable the police to have instant and mobile access to RADA's Farmer Registration database via cellular phones. This will make a difference in our capacity to combat praedial larceny. (Applause)

We have developed, Mr. Speaker, the framework for open participatory technology development. That is, our databases are now open to allow for the development of other information technology solutions to solve concrete problems in the sector.

Mr. Speaker, last year, we updated this Honourable House on the progress in relation to the rationalization of the regulatory function of the Coffee, Cocoa and Coconut Boards, as well as the Export Division. I am happy to report this year that we have made significant progress with this initiative. The consultation has devised a new structure for the amalgamated Body which is to be nomenclatured, the Agriculture Commodities Regulatory Agency. Drafting instructions have already been prepared, and as we speak, are *en route* to Cabinet, and we will endeavor to bring the new Bill to Parliament this year; that

is the amalgamation of all those Statutory Bodies.

In relation to the restructuring of the Sugar Industry Authority and the Sugar Industry Research Institute, I am to announce that the Cabinet has signed off on the recommendations of PricewaterhouseCoopers, and we are now implementing the recommendations. The SIA will have a new structure; post of Executive Chairman abolished, and a post for non-executive Chairman and a Chief Executive Officer is established. Significantly, the extension arm of SIRI is to be transferred to the All Island Jamaica Cane Farmers Association leaving SIRI to focus exclusively on research. Another promise kept.

Mr. Speaker, given our paucity of resources and our small size, I indicated last year that our agricultural research is only going to be effective through strategic alliances with academia and the private sector, to undertake collaborative research. I, therefore, charge the Ministry last year to immediately accelerate the formation of such partnerships. Mr. Speaker, I draw your attention to the Ministry Paper entitled: Strengthening Agriculture through Education and Research that outlines fairly comprehensively, the number of such partnerships established.

In the interest of time, I will only highlight our current partnership with the UWI, University of the West Indies, and CLAYUCA of Colombia to conduct research on cassava production and processing. As part of this arrangement, the Government of Colombia has donated a cassava processing plant to Jamaica which is being constructed right now at Elim Agricultural School, which will be managed by the University of the West Indies. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CLARKE: This plant will produce cassava and sweet potato flour for sale to the baking industry which has committed to purchase these products to mix with wheat flour in the formulation of a range of baking goods.

(Applause/*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. CLARKE: And you will tell me that there was somebody who thought about cassava before me.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CLARKE: The Caribs and the Arawaks.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. CLARKE: Yes.

Mr. Speaker, how can I fail to mention our cooperation with Diageo to use locally grown cassava in their beer formulation thus replacing imported barley? Mr. Speaker, as we speak the first twenty-six acres of cassava have been planted and we are working with Diageo to establish best practices to obtain maximum yields before the project is rolled out to our farmers. As we increase our collaboration with academia, we must also recognize the fact that the various curricula in our agricultural tertiary institutions are not aligned with the needs of the sector. In that regard, I am working closely with my colleague Minister of Education to totally revamp the content and offering of these

institutions and to position them to make a significant contribution to our food security objectives given their land resources. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PRAEDIAL LARCENY

Mr. CLARKE: Praedial Larceny. Mr. Speaker, praedial larceny continues to be a vexing issue. Given the interest of a wide range of stakeholders in this issue, we convened a Stakeholders' Strategy Workshop to look holistically at this issue. The attendance at the workshop was overwhelming and the participation was excellent. On the basis of those consultations, we emerged with a four-pronged approach to the treatment of this matter. We have identified and agreed on a comprehensive slew of amendments to the Agricultural Produce Act and the Praedial Larceny (Prevention) Act to directly place penalties for praedial larceny under this principal legislation, to simplify the procedures for licensing all actors along the food chain as well as to impose stiffer fines. The necessary drafting instructions are being finalized to be presented to Cabinet for approval of the issuing of drafting instructions. In terms of institutional support, I am happy to report that for the first time, at last, the Ministry now has a dedicated allocation in its budget to set up a praedial larceny unit.

Mr. BUCHANAN: For the first time at last.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CLARKE: The necessary job descriptions have been formulated and dispatched to the Cabinet Office, so that these posts can be established and filled with dispatch. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner of Police has advised that he's also putting in place a dedicated unit within the force to provide the concentrated focus required to deal with this matter.

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: A key responsibility of the Praedial Larceny Coordinator in this Ministry will be to work closely with the proposed operational unit in the Jamaica Constabulary Force as well as our Veterinary Services Division, the Ministry of Health and the Trade Board to coordinate and accelerate compliance efforts with special emphasis on end users.

I know that the Member from North West St. Elizabeth is very, very concerned to the extent that he brought a motion here and, Mr. Speaker, whatever has come out of that or those deliberations, the Government is prepared to work with that. Suffice it to say though that the Member had it under his purview for four years.

Government MEMBERS: Whole heap of time.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CLARKE: That was your main responsibility. I will rely upon you...

Mr. DALLEY: The only thing he had.

Mr. CLARKE: ...for the expertise you gained when you were in office, (Laughter) but what is interesting is that when you are in

Opposition it concentrates the mind wondrously...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Hutchinson)

Mr. CLARKE: ...and I want you to be there to give me continuing advice for many, many years to come.

(Applause/Laughter)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Until we come, until we come.

Mr. CLARKE: You are the conceptualizer and you are the adviser. I am the implementer.

(Applause/Laughter)

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, the most potent weapon against praedial larceny is a foolproof traceability system, which has the additional benefit of facilitating and enhancing agriculture, trade and food safety. It is in this regard that I am pleased to announce the rolling out of an exciting and game-changing programme relating to the tagging of our entire cattle population.

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: Under this programme, every single head of cattle will be tagged...

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: ...and virtually issued with a passport.

Government MEMBERS: Hutchie, Hutchie.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Initially where did that come from? Where did that come - initiate from?

Mrs. NEITA-HEADELY: Chill, chill.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CLARKE: The passport will contain critical information about the animal and will be mandatory for movement of the animal. Concomitant with this is the development of a DNA database...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Mr. CLARKE: ...of all tagged animals.

Mr. DALLEY: Action.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Progress, progress.

Mr. DALLEY: Implementer, implementer.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CLARKE: Tag to put in your ears with a passport. (Laughter)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Send it guh show Hutchie.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: You need to go further than that. You need to go further than that.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CLARKE: Yes.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: And I will advise you.

Mr. CLARKE: Please. Please.

(Applause/Laughter)

A Government MEMBER: You will implement.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You will implement. Hutchie advise, you implement.

Mr. CLARKE: Give me some more, give me some more.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I will.

Mr. CLARKE: I will implement. (Laughter) I will implement.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Hutchinson)

(Cross talk)

I will prove at a particular point in time that the pilot programme to deal with the tagging of animals preceded you and I will show you. So don't worry. Don't tell me that everything started with you. As a matter of fact…

Mr. HUTCHINSON: At an advanced stage?

Mr. CLARKE: Advanced stage. It started with me and I tell you.

Mr. DALLEY: Roger, send the tag guh show him.

Mr. CLARKE: We are in the process, Mr. Speaker, of procuring the tags and these will arrive in time to facilitate the commencement of the tagging in the second quarter of this year.

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I further draw your attention to the Ministry Paper on the agro-parks that details our initiative to partner with a private entity to establish a first class multi-specie abattoir in western Jamaica.

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: That abattoir is currently under construction and the Ministry proposes to fund specific elements of this initiative. We are currently processing, consistent with the public private partnership procurement requirements established by the Government. Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding all the above initiatives to combat praedial larceny, we cannot emphasize enough that in the final analysis, farmers have to watch out for each other. We have to be our brother's keeper...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Absolutely.

Mr. CLARKE: ...as some of the activities of these praedial thieves could not have gone unnoticed given the scale and magnitude of the operation. (Applause) Given the economic impact of praedial larceny, we feel that it is important that we have a better understanding of the nature and scope of this phenomenon and how it impacts rural livelihoods. Against this background, the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean has agreed to fund a study on the socio-economic impact of praedial larceny in Jamaica. This work has already begun, and will be concluded in June. (Applause)

I now shift my attention to the strategic direction towards which the Ministry will be moving in this financial year. We are determined that the growth momentum will be maintained and even accelerated.

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: I spoke earlier about the tremendous success we have achieved in our ginger and Irish potato programmes. The truth is we could not have achieved those levels of production without the active intervention in providing planting material and other inputs, as well as providing an enabling environment through our extension and marketing support. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, as proud as we are of these interventions, we cannot sustain them on account of our fiscal challenges. The policy environment we have created in giving pre-eminence to local production over imports, the strong extension support that we offer, and the market guarantees that we provide in respect to ginger should provide the necessary

stimulus to the private sector to come on board to provide willing farmers with the working capital support they so desperately desire.

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: For instance, in our ginger programme, from the surplus that the Export Division makes on processing and trading ginger, we provided some $150M in the last two years in pre-financing farmers through the provision of clean planting material and other inputs. Apart from working capital, the Ministry invested substantially in building out the infrastructure to provide the infrastructure (sic) [industry] with clean planting material. Our capacity to provide this material is way below the demand for such, and this has been the major limiting factor to an even more rapid expansion in ginger production. On the processing side, the scale of production this year has seriously challenged the export division to wash and dry the volume ginger produced. We therefore had to out-source a portion of the washing.

Mr. Speaker, we are speaking about a commodity that is of the best quality in the world that can be marketed effortlessly at premium prices. We have willing farmers. Why does the Government have to be so involved? Mr. Speaker, if we are going to realize the full potential of the ginger industry, including value-added and utilize this to create wealth for our farmers and our people, it is time for the private sector to get on board.

Mr. KELLIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLARKE: We have to accept the reality. Our farmers will never be able to access financing from our traditional financial institutions with the kind of ease that is required for efficient production. I am therefore indicating to this Parliament that the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, working with JAMPRO, is in the middle of discussions with a major private investor out of Switzerland that is extremely fascinated by the model of small farmers working in contractual relationships with a guaranteed market. It is our expectation that we will soon wrap up an agreement with the investor to provide venture capital support to this industry.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, with an export market potential of some 21,000 tonnes of ginger, valuing US$105 Million, there is room for many, many more such investors.

The situation with Irish potatoes is analogous. It is the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries that created the environment for local production to flourish and we have championed the campaign to get our consumers to choose locally [grown] Irish potatoes.

I want to publicly congratulate and thank the erstwhile importers who have now been fully converted into growers, buyers and distributors of local Irish. But, Mr. Speaker, even though the model has proven to be workable over the last four to five years, we still have challenges with financing the farmers, necessitating the Ministry's intervention in providing import support. This model is viable and sustainable without the Ministry's intervention and we need further

participation of the private sector. Mr. Speaker, this is a call to action. (Applause)

The same could be said of a range of strategically selected crops: onions, sweet yams, sweet potato, yam, hot pepper, honey and small ruminants, to name a few. The agro-park model that we are perfecting provides the critical framework to link market opportunities with production, reduce the risk of failure through proper infrastructure to ensure consistent production and to champion best practices through concentrated technical support. This mechanism will not only ensure higher levels of productivity but ought to cause a re-evaluation of the risk associated with financing participating farmers. Therefore, the private sector can be reasonably comforted in coming on board.

I use this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to quote Mr. Richard Byles, Co-Chairman of the Economic Programme Oversight Committee, who only last week asserted that:

> "*...both the private sector and the Government need to work together in a conscious, organized, collaborative effort to try to get some significant growth this year".*

He further asserted:

> ". . . *that whilst the market conditions are better for growth, it needs much more than just the magical hand of the market to drive growth. "*

Mr. Speaker, given our collaboration with Diageo, Mr. Byles knows what he is talking about and he is currently walking the walk. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we have done well with our Import Substitution Programme in many areas such as Irish potato, onion, pork, poultry, *et cetera.*

Mr. SHAW: The passport going to have a photograph on it?

Dr. PHILLIPS: And Visa.

Mr. CLARKE: However, Mr. Speaker, we are nearing - I want the Members to listen to this - we are nearing the point where any further quantum increase in the production of certain commodities can only be channelled into export in order to obviate a crisis. Separate and apart from avoiding gluts and crises, export-oriented agriculture is something to be pursued with as much vigour as import substitution.

Mr. Speaker, a number of our commodities have serious potential for export - dasheen, yam, sweet potato, pepper, pumpkin, Irish potato, herbs and spices, ginger, poultry products, Vienna sausages, *et cetera.*

Dr. WHEATLEY: What about the weed?

Mr. CLARKE: Whoever is proposing to send the weed to Colorado had better be prepared to go in the plane with it to Colorado. I don't want anybody to set up my poor people and tell them, yes, send ganja to Colorado. I want him to be in the plane with the weed that is going to Colorado. I want him to help load the weed in the plane to go to Colorado, and if you believe they are not going to lock up red man *gwane* to Colorado in the plane. (Applause/Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Cut it up fine, fine!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hutchie, don't go.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I am going to send you.

Mr. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, we must not forget that even our traditional export such as coffee, cocoa, even bananas, still have potential for expansion.

Export of non-traditional produce and products has proceeded for years without any defined supporting structure from the State. We commend our exporters who have built an infrastructure to purchase produce from farmers at farm gate, consolidate, and ship principally to a diaspora market. However, in many instances, this effort has been like shooting in the dark. Usually, the importer on the other side is similarly a consolidator who buys products from all over and sells to a distributor. The dynamics of the diaspora market has now shifted, as most of our products are no longer positioned in ethnic markets, but also in the mainstream, because when tourists come here and taste our food when they go back they want it up there, too.

Our exporters faced considerable risk of non-payments and have no control most times over the fate of their shipment once it arrives at its destination. The end result is that we have been operating sub-optimally to our export potential.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to providing the facilitation of our Health Certification System and our Pre-Clearance Facility, the State must now create an export platform to facilitate substantial and sustained expansion in exports.

An export platform is a framework that facilitates exchange between suppliers and buyers and is underpinned by the three critical components of training and exposure to international business practices, training in marketing and negotiation skills and product validation through participation in trade fairs and missions.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in collaborating with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture under the Agricultural Competitiveness Programme to create this platform that other countries have successfully used to promote and expand their exports. Within weeks we will roll out this programme with IICA personnel visiting Jamaica to identify and train farmers, existing and potential exporters, and thereafter, taking them into the marketplace to liaise directly with buyers and distributors. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, given the huge potential to expand current non-traditional exports, it might even be beneficial for the State or the Jamaica Exporters' Association to put personnel in our main markets to coordinate all the logistics, ensure payment and trace the goods from port to distributors. The arrangement is similar to what existed in the Banana Export Company in our heyday of banana export.

Mr. Speaker, given the potential for increasing the exports of yam and sweet potato to North America and the United Kingdom, based on concrete interest in these products, even whilst we are setting up the export platform, we are immediately linking buyers and distributors in the export markets with exporters and farmers in Jamaica. In fact,

Mr. Speaker, we are following strong interests from the Fresh Produce Consortium of the UK, whose representatives were here in Jamaica two weeks ago to explore the possibilities of acquiring supplies of sweet potato. When they told us the volume of sweet potato that they want, a minimum of 200 acres has to be put in now. Strange enough they said to me, Minister, we want the orange colour sweet potato. (Laugher)

Mr. CHARLES: *Dem* have a long wait.

Mr. CLARKE: The Fresh Produce Consortium is an association of fresh produce importers based in Britain with a current membership of over 700 businesses including retailers, distributors, importers, wholesalers, processors, packers and food service companies.

Mr. Speaker, when we went on our 50th Anniversary to London when they said we were - gallivanting is the word?

Mr. SHAW: Shell down.

Mr. CLARKE: He was shelling down and you gallivanting. We visited these people and it has borne fruit.

Mr. SHAW: Palav.

Mr. CLARKE: Palav. They have come and already we have identified some larger farmers in our agro-parks who are now negotiating contracts with those buyers to supply sweet potato.

Mr. McKENZIE: Orange sweet potato.

Mr. CLARKE: We have gone further... Yes, when you cut it, it has a mild orange colour. You could call it slightly green to, you know, it has a greenish - greenish orange, but when it is really ripe it is real orange.

We have gone further to secure planting material for that variety required by the consortium. Our pledge is to work with these farmers to ensure that they conform to good agricultural practices so critical for exports to the UK.

Mr. Speaker our tourism industry is, in fact, an export industry. We have been speaking *ad nauseam* about moving more Jamaican products into the hotel trade.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time at last we now have a mechanism in the form of the Tourism Linkage Programme to accurately define the needs of the hotel sector and align these needs with our production. (Applause) I want to commend my colleague Minister of Tourism and Entertainment for his tremendous insight, vision and leadership in this regard. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CLARKE: We have set up this Linkage Programme and the Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Agriculture, joined-up Government working together. (Applause) We are prepared and we are talking with each other. We are going to make things happen.

Our agro-parks, Mr. Speaker, are sufficiently equipped with lands, farmers and the necessary infrastructure such as packing houses to make this happen. Government has provided facilitation. Private investors must now step up to the plate.

Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to complete this presentation without addressing the matter of climate change. The latest projections from

the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change is absolutely frightening but, unfortunately, credible. Impending rising temperatures portend disasters for the agricultural sector if we do nothing. If we doubt it, recall that in recent years we have been having annual droughts of nearly half year duration, not to mention the frequency and intensity of hurricanes in the last decade or so.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Speaker, this Government simply does not have the luxury of doing nothing. The agricultural sector has lost directly nearly $30 Billion to hurricanes in the last 25 years. In fact, major development agencies are now discounting their growth projection for the Caribbean to account for the impact of climate change.

Mr. Speaker, within this context the Honourable Prime Minister should be congratulated for her vision in singling out climate change as a subject within her portfolio arrangements. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Government in response to climate change has spent over $5 Billion to install new irrigation systems in the last 10 years, to ensure sustainable agriculture through the reduction of our dependence on rainfall. Two of these schemes were commissioned only last year, New Forest and Yallahs, around which we have created two agro-parks. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, under the Government of Jamaica Adaptation Fund Programme, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is implementing a number of activities in our effort to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

These activities include the setting up of Rainwater Harvesting Systems, the training in climate smart agriculture, proper water and land management and promoting more efficient use of water through drip irrigation systems. Our allocation for this project is $64 Million in this financial year. (Applause)

Under the Cane Expansion Fund we have to date provided grants totalling $40 Million to 15 farmers for the installation of drip irrigation systems. We continue even with our limited budget to provide resources to the National Irrigation Commission for the lining of earthen canals in a bid to lessen water loss.

Mr. Speaker, the great challenge is to mainstream climate change adaptation and mitigation in all our farming practices. We commit to work with the Planning Institute of Jamaica and the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, to mobilize more resources for climate change adaptation in the sector. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I have presented the scorecard for this Ministry indicating areas of success. I have presented the areas of shortcomings. I have outlined a path for the future indicating the strategies to be employed. There is no gainsaying that there are challenges ahead but Mr. Speaker, ours is the task to overcome those challenges.

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CLARKE: The private sector is now called upon to come to the table and capitalize on the opportunities that abound. There is

land. The Government has put in infrastructure. We are establishing an export platform in Miami to penetrate not only the Diaspora, but also mainstream America. We have established a relationship with one of the largest distributors of fresh produce in Jamaica. And excitingly, Mr. Speaker, a new entity is being established in Jamaica to both store and distribute fresh produce here in Jamaica and throughout the Caribbean. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CLARKE: And this is at Lydford.

What is going to be coming out of that, Mr. Speaker, just as how you can call in to Domino Pizza, and say supply me pizza, the housewife can call and say, *I need a basket that has some pumpkin, sweet potato*…. The basket delivered at your house... by the distributor...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. CLARKE: Probably a drone, if you want.

Mr. Speaker, exciting times are ahead for the agricultural sector. (Applause) There are opportunities for further processing, tapping into all the innovations that we see of our 4-H Clubites, our HEART institutions, the JAS branches and individuals who have established links with the Scientific Research Council. The time, Mr. Speaker, is now to move from samples into real mass productions of these things. (Applause) The markets are there. We should be able to do it.

I know, Mr. Speaker, when some people hear about the growth they might want to feel bad. Some might even want to go down in sackcloth and ashes and beg the Lord to send some hurricane, but I am praying that we don't have any. And the fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much. So, I believe we *gwine* have good weather because, Mr. Speaker, you see this…

(Mr. Clarke lifted a basket of ground provisions in his hand)

Man! …agro-park production... agro-park... And when you go outside you will believe it is a farmer's market out there.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Hutchinson)

Mr. CLARKE: And to… again you discovered farmers market. The two buildings up at Hope, you constructed them between '07 and when you left - the two big buildings *dem up deh.* Mr. Speaker, every Member of this House will have a little food to take home, thanks to the farmers of this country. (Applause) With good weather and with God's help, I believe the agricultural sector will grow.

May God continue to bless the farmers of this land. May God bless Jamaica, land we love.

(Standing ovation by Government Members) (Applause)

(Members left their seats to shake Mr. Clarke's hand)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Member from North West St. James will do his presentation at this time, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Chang. Dr. Chang, you may proceed. (Applause)

Dr. CHANG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, before I begin, recently I had a discussion with a young politician and he said

to me, 'You know, Roger has a particular style with people, you know, General Secretary, one has to be careful'.

Coming after Roger Clarke of course, in one sense is a privilege... (Laughter) …and on the other hand one is not seeking anyway to compete either in style or volume or fortunately, we are not doing the same subject. (Laughter) Good presentation, Roger.

Mr. FAGAN: Then just move you...

(Inaudible comments/Laughter)

Dr. CHANG: You have any Diplomatic Passport for the special types?

Mr. Speaker it is appropriate that as I speak in this section of the Budget Debate, the fiscal section, I express my appreciation to the Leader of the Opposition, the confidence he has shown in me and to my colleagues, the privilege of participating in this section.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Dr. CHANG: And may I also acknowledge the Member of Parliament from Eastern Westmoreland where I have some roots. (Laughter) He is trying to follow in a very big shoes and sometimes he - and sometimes he is not, but I'm not… (Laughter) And to my colleagues for the support they have given me over the years in here.

It is of some note, Mr. Speaker, for me that this is my 21st year in Parliament. Not unbroken I regret, but it was always by election and not by appointment.

To my constituents who have shown faith - kept the faith with me throughout good times and bad times. In fact, my third term in North West St. James is of significance. This is a seat that many would have thought was recognized once as the legacy seat for the People's National Party from the late AGS Coombs and my friend and outstanding parliamentarian, Sir Howard Cooke.

But, to my support team, the Election Day workers, management team, supervisors, contributors and the many faithful supporters have combined almost to form an invincible political team in this constituency on behalf of the Jamaica Labour Party, which was a party founded from the struggles of the working people of this country; to my family who have made the sacrifices and have allowed me to remain active in political life. Mr. Speaker, it is fair to say - and this applies to pretty much all of us, if we do not have supportive families, political life would become quite untenable, a fact that we often overlook. I thank my wife and my two kids for their support throughout these years.

Mr. Speaker, a presentation in this section allows some flexibility in delivery in the fiscal side; however, I will focus on the areas for which I have some primary responsibility, namely, housing, water, infrastructure, transport, in all its facets and forms.

I focus on them because these are subject areas that if managed with appropriate policies and programmes have the capacity to establish a platform for sustainable growth, increased wealth and an improved quality of life for all our people.

The challenge, Mr. Speaker, is to find the right mix of policies, the legislative framework and the programmes that will achieve growth in a timely manner without impairing our fiscal balance.

The need to maintain macroeconomic stability and a satisfactory fiscal balance is agreed by all but, Mr. Speaker, on the details of the People's National Party's Economic Programme we do differ and the Member for North East Manchester has already detailed the critical areas of concern for Jamaicans.

Mr. Speaker, classical monetary policies with a focus on precipitous devaluation cannot achieve the objectives of development and prosperity for our people. We have been there before and we have seen it elsewhere, it will not and cannot work. What is more likely is continued contraction and stagflation, a growth due to devaluation/inflation is not sustainable economic policy.

If The People's National Party Government continues on this trajectory there could be significant social upheaval and rejection. We must find policies to grow the real economy now. It cannot be inflation/devaluation-driven growth. It may help to balance the accounts but it is creating even further imbalance in the lives of our people. The Government speaks of balancing people's lives, but what is happening is only an attempt to balance the books.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, at this time while we can commend our people for their tolerance in what is a most difficult economic time for all Jamaicans, we in this House must be careful how we interpret this tolerance. If the Government continues in this programme, there could be at some point in time a rebound demand for services and expectations.

Mr. Speaker, I put it to this Honourable House that the current so-called tolerance is really an understanding - is really a sense of apathy and hopelessness. And we are committed on this side, to indicating new ways and effective ways to break the cycle. Indeed, what I sense among our people is an ever declining level of expectations by the larger number of the population.

I have listened to our Minister of Finance, and I did not see any hope, vision or plan to bring about sustained growth and development. What we heard was more of the same, some piecemeal measures aimed at the poor without being transformative and without the capacity to change their circumstances. The vision that our Minister speaks of in his presentation would appear to be a nightmare for many Jamaicans.

The way we have been operating in the last 25 years has not worked, and only a quantum shift in government's operation and governance can change Jamaica at this time.

This Government has proven that they lack the mettle to bring about the change. They are proving to be good bookkeepers for a change, but extremely bad managers. We need good managers and financial controllers who understand the debt-management process, growth and change management, not just good bookkeeping. We on this side intend to lead the charge for transformed changes and solutions. The country needs and demands it.

Mr. Speaker, for the last 25 years we have failed to satisfy the need for change and growth and development in the area of infrastructure. It is important to note that for the last 25 years, the party on that side has served for 21, as government, hence the

significant burden of failure rests at the feet of this Government.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Horace, you are not convinced of what you are saying!

Dr. CHANG: It is important to note that in 25 years - the last 25 years, 25 years of government, your party has sat in the seat of government for 21.

Dr. DAVIES: It's a mistake why it is not 25.

Dr. CHANG: And indeed, I will repeat, the significant burden of failure rests at the feet of the party that formed the Government.

In the 21 years of your tenure, Mr. Speaker, mismanagement, lack of direction and leadership, but more importantly, you' have shattered the hopes and dreams and aspirations of our people. These have been crushed by the failures of the day, and the growing apathy and hopelessness continue to stalk the land.

HOUSING SECTOR

I will take first, Mr. Speaker, a look at the housing sector. Mr. Speaker, housing starts in a modern economy, is one of the key indices of economic activity, and in our own society it is a good indicator of how we are impacting on the quality of life of our workers.

For some time now we have spoken of the need for at least 10,000 housing solutions per annum. In 2011 a major effort by the Housing Agency of Jamaica, and in collaboration with the private sector, we achieved housing starts of some 6,405, and laid out a trajectory to achieve the 10,000 solutions by 2013. However, statistics now show that starts are a measly 2,896 in 2013. The Housing Agency of Jamaica has imploded; the National Housing Trust is in turmoil, drained of resources to cover the debts that we have invoked over many years.

Mr. Speaker, housing demand is significant. The quality of housing stock, especially in the inner-city communities and informal settlements is deplorable. And you, as a Member of Central St. James, is fully aware of the quality of housing stock in many of the communities that you seek to represent. It needs serious and urgent attention.

Historically of course, Mr. Speaker, housing construction by government as formulated, has been a victim of controversy for various reasons. But history, Mr. Speaker, must not become a millstone around our necks; rather, experience should teach us how to do it in better ways.

The challenge we face is to design a housing policy, a regulatory framework and a programme that will stimulate development in this sector without burdening the taxpayers and impairing our fiscal balance. Indeed, we need some transformative programmes and thinking. Not just transformative in terms of systems and physical resources, but also the transformed thinking of policymakers and stakeholders who must change their approach if we are ever to develop a modern housing stock in vibrant communities.

I want to look at a number of areas, Mr. Speaker, that offer development along these lines. First, Minister, I think we need to promulgate a comprehensive housing policy. Much work was done in this area, and several

of the professionals who worked on this particular programme happened to be from that side. The University of the West Indies and the University of Technology Building Department combined to start the work. I urge the Minister to look at what we have; it is now stuck at the Ministry of Finance. Complete what can be done and bring it to this House. I think this country now needs a comprehensive housing policy, a policy that must ensure there is a framework for sustainable development in the sector that will satisfy existing demand and reverse urban decay.

Some of the programmes I would like to put on the Table, Mr. Speaker - a critical programme that can begin the process of increasing the stock and availability, is a Private/Public Partnership Programme. Such a policy was studied, documented and approved by the Cabinet of the last Jamaica Labour Party Administration, which merrily concluded what was started by the previous Administration.

The Private/Public Partnership offers the opportunity to bring major investment in the housing sector, combining public land with private capital, taking pressure off the taxpayers and delivering houses to working people. This, Mr. Speaker, is a solution without the spending of any public dollars.

Having completed the Policy, we initiated at least two projects which currently face serious administrative problems, Green Pond in Central St. James, and the Bernard Lodge programme in St. Catherine. Both areas have a high demand - a high level of unmet demand for housing. These programmes would have brought on stream about 2,000 new units. Work started. In terms of marketing for Bernard Lodge, we still await when anyone can receive any of those units.

I accept, Mr. Speaker, that they are having administrative challenges. They can be resolved and they should be resolved, as this kind of activity is required to grow the sector and provide housing, and by extension, grow the economy. It is clear that the Housing Agency bungled the activity in these two, and the cost is now going to go beyond what was affordable by many of the workers.

Mr. Speaker, let me say very clearly, like any new programme, Private/Public Partnership Programmes need intensive focused monitoring in its early stages in order to ensure that an efficient system evolves which can inspire confidence from the investment community, and promote further development in the medium term. So far we have failed in the implementation. We need to go again and examine how we can proceed.

There are many private sector entities that will invest in housing if these are managed with integrity and transparency. There is no room - I am not saying it happened - but there is no room for petty partisan politics. If we find the will to be objective rather than be partisan we have the people to deliver affordable housing under this programme.

The second item I would like us to look at, Mr. Speaker, and commend to the Ministry - which can be a major growth initiative in the housing sector - is the development of a secondary mortgage market. It is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that some Eleven point Four Billion

Dollars ($11.4B) has been extracted from the National Housing Trust, that is not in dispute. But if we are thinking in a holistic manner we should look at ways and means of restoring capital to the housing market.

It's therefore important that we seek to develop the regulatory framework that would foster the development of a strong secondary market, which may very well restore to the housing sector more than Eleven Million Dollars ($11B) in capital, which has been extracted from the Housing Trust.

And I take the opportunity to remind the Honourable House that it was the initiation of such a programme by the Jamaica Mortgage Bank, under my Administration, back in 2009/2010, that resulted in the dramatic and yet welcome fall in mortgage rates from an average of 14.6 per cent to 9.6 per cent. That's a historical fact. A small secondary market was initiated with the credit unions, and immediately after the credit unions announced their fall in mortgage rates, the commercial banks followed. The secondary market has the potential to bring capital and initiate development in the housing sector.

We are fully aware on this side, of what happened in North America with the secondary markets, and led to an international financial crisis. But we can ensure with the regulatory framework we put in place, that this will not happen in our situation, as we can avoid these well- understood and established pitfalls that happened in North America and affected Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the AIG.

Mr. Speaker, if mortgages can be converted into financial instruments, even sections of the National Housing Trust portfolio could become valuable instruments and increase the capital in the Housing Trust. At the upper end of their quality mortgages, 7 per cent, and their joint markets, if these can be included in financial instruments it will provide the opportunity for long-term investors, like pension funds, to buy into mortgages and expand the capital available for housing.

The National Housing Trust and other mortgage companies have valuable capital that can be reinvested in housing. Mr. Speaker, this, of course, is very dependent on maintaining a stable, macro-economic framework, including a relatively stable currency.

Our failure to think of creative financial programmes to generate investments would appear to be because of a long-standing infatuation of this Government with high interest rates, devaluation and inflation. Now that they have adopted the bookkeeping techniques of the IMF, we are still at a loss for growth. Time for new thinking and transformative changes. It requires some new people.

The third component of what I think would provide a suite of activities for housing development, Mr. Speaker, is the concept of reverse mortgages. I believe the time is right for such development, the development of legislation and regulations to facilitate a reverse mortgage regime. There are thousands

of formally middle-income, successful professionals, especially those who served in the public sector, whose pension benefits have condemned them in the rest of their life to poverty and marginalization. Yet they own valuable property which they acquired before preretirement.

Mr. Speaker, reverse mortgage could restore dignity to some of Jamaica's finest who contributed so much to our country but have so little to live on at this time. This could also lead, Mr. Speaker, to providing a path to reduce urban decay and general reduction in the quality of our housing stock, as a significant number of such real estate are in places like Vineyard Town, Hagley Park and other mid-town regions, which were once homes of successful middle-income Jamaicans. They acquired these properties before their retirement.

Currently, the primary interest in these real estate are overseas-based siblings who have only emotional interest and will leave the house after the owner's passing, to be squatted in and to begin the process of decay. These areas, if acquired by investors after the passing of current owners, are likely to be developed into quality housing, and where redefined, maybe offices. But it would reduce the growing incident of urban decay and could spur rejuvenation in some of our mid-town and inner-city regions.

Mr. Speaker, we need some new thinking for growth and development, and the reverse mortgage programme is one that could bring this kind of activity to bear on the housing sector.

It is urgent that we find ways and means to bring into the entire process private capital which has to be the engine of growth at a time of difficulty as we are currently experiencing. We, on this side, will seek transformation, not bureaucracy or good bookkeeping. We have the vision and the leadership, the energy and the foresight to make those changes.

Finally Mr. Speaker a smaller programme but one that still would contribute significantly to the growth process and to improving our housing stock, but this would require some funding from our capital programme. But given the nature of the proposal and the target group I am thinking of, I think we could find funding within the $99 Billion capital we have, not additional capital.

In this year, Mr. Speaker, I am looking at and urging the Ministry to reactivate the Housing Fund under the Housing Act and capitalizing it in order to bring relief to thousands of humble Jamaicans, and contribute to growth and bring about greater poverty relief than many of the current programmes being used for poverty relief. Food For The Poor houses are good but they cannot be the only answer to the housing stock problem for the poor in this country.

I say, Mr. Speaker, it is apparent from the level of informal development that low income families can build their own homes with minimal resources. We should seek to provide them with a planned legal framework in which to do so, and to allow for the development of working people's homes. The concept I am putting on the table, Mr.

Speaker, is one that I would like to dub Procure and Build. Essentially, we would seek in collaboration, whether with the private sector or through the ministries, housing agencies or the development agencies, to provide the housing lots. Depending on the location, we could identify lots from anywhere of $1.5 Million to $2.5 Million. In terms of inner-city communities where there is already existing basic infrastructure, the lots could be even less expensive. The Greenfield lots...

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Warmington...

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. Deputy SPEAKER: You may see the lady - sorry about that Dr. Chang, your colleague contravened the Speaker's order. Continue.

Dr. DAVIES: Warmie trying to cross the floor.

Dr. CHANG: He was attracted by the lady, but we understand.

Mr. Speaker, the concept is fairly simple. Let us seek to provide a building lot. In an urban center, where we are trying to replace urban decay, lots could be much less expensive. In Greenfield areas, you could get to as high a cost as $2.5 Million.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. CHANG: Infrastructure - that's the cost of the infrastructure. In an urban centre, as I said where you already have road, light and water, you need cleaning up and repair, the lot could come out at a cost of $1 Million to $1.5 Million. In a Greenfield center, we would have to go up as two point five, maybe a bit more. To add to the cost of that, building material of up to $750,000, so you create a mortgage of between $2.2 Million and $3.5 Million. Under the Housing Fund and the Housing Act which allows you up to six-year mortgages, an interest rate of as low as two per cent, you could provide that individual access to a home for a mortgage of less than $5,000 a month. I am sure if the family is provided with preapproved plans and you use the Housing Act to ensure they have titles - because much of the problem Downtown which we allude to so often as garrisonization, is because we did not complete the work on the Housing Act and ensure they had titles.

As you are aware, Minister, we had been working - I am sure you are doing it now - we started work with you when I was there to try and get titles for many of those homes Downtown which were built in the sixties, and some in the seventies. Ensure at the very start, that the titles are available, and ensure that the families build their own homes.

Let us pause here, Mr. Speaker, because shared work is not alien to Jamaican culture. Rural Jamaicans has come together often to work on their farms - share day's work. If you identify 50 housing lots Downtown and identify the 50 families, they will come together and build their own homes at a much lower cost than we now do by contracting. And we can begin the process of alleviating urban decay and the housing shortages. (Applause)

Naturally we would want some supervision, but with people of integrity, so we don't get the usual thing of people thieving the material and going home. And I would like

to include, for social intervention at this level, Jamaica Social Investment Fund, SCC, NGOs, that they introduce enterprise activity for these people. Many of these individuals with small capital will begin business that would earn them far more than the $5,000 a month that they are required to pay when they are not minimum wage workers. But bear in mind, at the level or mortgage I am alluding to, we can - in fact, a minimum wage earner can pay the mortgage.

The Housing Act, which by some looking on would say it was abused, and maybe has acquired some nefariousness because of the nature with Downtown constituencies, is a powerful Act which was designed to bring solutions. We must not be afraid to use it, but do so in a manner that is transparent and with integrity.

Engage the social organizations, the churches, the community-based organizations, organizations of faith that would work within these communities to ensure we have a dynamic low income community that is devoid of the kind of features we now have.

Informal settlers, Mr. Speaker, have demonstrated the capacity to build quality housing with limited resources, and since we are from Montego Bay, I am not speaking of those who earn large income from other areas; I am speaking of humble people who, over time, build themselves by hard work and dedication and shared community labour, good quality homes for themselves. The community labour is not alien to our culture, Mr. Speaker, and I suggest we capitalize on it.

With the current Strata Act, which we modified, and it is now being in place and the Minister responsible for it is over there, and I understand he is working assiduously to bring on stream the Town Houses and Common Areas Act, we could even use the same principle in building multi-family units because at this rate of mortgage it could be done but of course as I said it would be limited. And I will mention a figure. I am sure you can find $2 Billion in the $99 Billion by redirection, because this funding has to come from within the existing Budget. And I am asking that that be the redirection...

Dr. PHILLIPS: Within the existing...

Dr. CHANG: Within the existing budget. I emphasized throughout my presentation, we are not going to...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Dr. Phillips)

Dr. CHANG: I will help you identify it because I think it is an important enough programme to redirect some of the funding; J$2 Billion could bring relief to 1,000, or more families... (Applause) ...and that is the kind of relief that would make a bigger difference than some of the programmes we are now doing.

So, I am quite aware, Mr. Speaker, and to the Minister, that we have to maintain the fiscal balance, and that every programme that was mentioned take notes of that fact. But in the area we are referring to, at the very lowest level of the socio economic grouping, the Government of Jamaica will have to do some prioritization. But I am confident, if it is efficiently implemented, and we can

demonstrate with integrity and transparency, such a programme, international assistance would come into play at a later stage. Let us start the process and we would need mutual appreciation and understanding, working together with leadership in the community, we can in fact bring about improvement in these areas. (Applause)

The Housing stock in our inner-city communities in rural Jamaica and in informal settlements is deplorable for too many of our people. We need to approach it more aggressively. Our people have the capacity for hard work when they are satisfied with the rewards. They can be creative, innovative and cooperative, but they must see the reward at the end of the day. Given the legal framework, our culture can solve the problem.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Speaker's time has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time be extended sufficient to allow him to complete the presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that Dr. Chang be allowed to finish his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Chang.

Dr. CHANG: Thank you and thank my colleagues for the extension.

Government needs, Mr. Speaker, to facilitate the progress and give our people a chance to be great. It is government, over many years, that have been an impediment to some of our people's creativity. The entire process, taxation and security efforts make our people - poor people feel oppressed by government. And I use the term collectively, as the scourge of persistent poverty remains among them. One once said that under certain programmes there was a great transfer of wealth from poor to rich. I won't go into the names.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. CHANG: But indeed, Mr. Speaker, more critically and it was more your colleague writer, you know, Mr. Thwaites, Mr. Maxwell claimed paternity for that statement - the late John Maxwell - a good writer.

The Housing Act allows the Housing Fund to give six year mortgages, Mr. Speaker, and this in an active housing fund can be used as a vehicle to resolve some of the critical problems affecting our poor people throughout Jamaica. I think it needs to be examined and pursued as part of our housing programme and part of the solution to economic development.

The final thing I will comment on, Mr. Speaker, although not strictly within my portfolio, is the hurdle to simplify our complicated and cumbersome approval process. While the Housing Act gives us some leverage in the housing sector, I think it is appropriate timing for the housing ministry, local government ministry, relevant state agencies like NEPA, to design a simple and transparent, and efficient system for simple development.

There were some discussions put on the table in prior times. I would mention one or two but I think this need some study and discussion to come up with an effective solution now. It is necessary that we facilitate and encourage private sector development at

this point in time. The revenues of the Jamaica Government do not allow us to spend money loosely on many areas that are critical.

I remember a suggestion made at some point that we ought to register professional architects and engineers who could then sign off on buildings up to a certain size within the given development area. In other words, if an area is designed for single family homes a professional architect will sign off like a licensed electrician signs off electrical plans, or a lawyer signs off on documents for certain activities, and once they have signed off, they pay their required fees, and, of course, if engineering is required, so too does the professional engineer.

Having signed off, they pay their required fees to the local authorities and start construction. The knowledge that such people have is the same that everybody in the various agencies who spend month and months looking at this thing have, and sometime they have more knowledge. And if professionals signed off on inadequate or wrong plans and start construction, then they could be de-registered publicly, like we de-register a lawyer for unethical behaviour, or a doctor similarly.

What we will have to ensure, of course, is that the local authorities - and I am sure my colleagues will speak to that more on those who have experienced local government - would be provided with a strong professional corps of inspectors who could inspect the construction plan throughout its development. But they should be given the authority that if one proceeded with construction without contacting the local planning authority, they will have the authority to, not only stop the building, but even pull it down if necessary.

Currently, it is a long process in the Court which doesn't make sense. So, we will have to revise the entire law. The carrot is to give them the right to begin the facility to start work quickly. Plans can be approved by professional architects and engineers within the scope identified by the planning authorities. But the local authority needs the authority to intervene if they breach the Regulations, and to intervene effectively which means they might have to pull down the building if it is so necessary.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, under Housing, I want to look at the Housing Agency for a brief moment. The Housing Agency which was re-branded from National Housing Development Corporation, I think played a very vital role in leading the fray in the development of low income housing. This needs to be revitalized. I note that having gone through almost an implosion; the Ministry had taken some steps to do some work on revitalizing the institution.

We need, Mr. Speaker, through the Housing Agency, to continue the programme of upgrading informal settlements, giving financial empowerment to these dwellers, unleashing their entrepreneurial potential and adding wealth to the country and increasing its tax revenue.

It is unfortunate that we have reduced the scope of this programme, as the idea originated with the current portfolio Minister; providing titles without infrastructure is not

satisfactory. It merely shifts the blame to the residents seeking help from parish councils, public works, MPs and other individuals who do not have the resources nor the capacity to provide satisfactory infrastructure. And in so doing, you do not realize the full value of the investment of the individual. Unless you put in the road - basic infrastructure doesn't have to be fancy a road and although we put in some fancy ones, but unless there is basic access, water supply and power the value of the property cannot be realized, right. So we can take steps to do that. The current challenge with HAJ, Housing Agency of Jamaica, I say have put back the progress we made in developing the skills required for regularizing informal settlements and building low income solutions. I hope we can recover.

The development of this nature cannot be an exercise in politics or expediency. Technocrats who have been training for years in the particular field should be allowed within the law and the policy and regulations to do their jobs independently. This is the only way we can get dynamic and efficient development in the sector with a government agency. In reforming the Housing Agency, I commend to the Minister we find a way of putting in place the Housing Division of the Ministry of Housing in the HAJ, which would lead to greater efficiencies. One of the problems we have is several little groupings doing the same work, so you have the Ministry Division building some houses, we now have the Housing Agency doing some, we have NHT doing some, we have UDC doing some and I'm not sure who else not doing some. I think Ministry of Agriculture might be doing some as well. This kind of multiplicity of small agencies is inefficient, unnecessarily costly and will not prove effective in the short term or the long term to consolidate your professional skills in one large efficient agency, pay them well and provide the programme required makes much sense than what we're doing now. The Housing Agency could become the leading agency for housing development in the public sector.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I make two comments here. At one stage with much less staff the Project Division at the National Housing Trust were doing far more housing starts than the Housing Trust with far less staff than the Project Division of the Housing Trust? In addition to that the Housing Agency reached a stage where private developers were talking to them about managing their projects, because in the latter years they have acquired a level of expertise which was appreciated by those they worked with and they too could supervise private developers who come under the Housing Act. These are ways, Mr. Speaker; we need to reform our approach to Housing. The need for housing is easily identified; the quality of our stock is poor. We need to find a solution within the current fiscal framework to provide adequate housing for poor people and all Jamaicans, not just poor Jamaicans. Young professionals in Jamaica today cannot find houses to buy. Many are staying at home or migrating. The need for housing stock is urgent and bear in mind, Mr. Speaker, that housing construction is one of the few things that generate extensive increase

in employment and bring about significant real growth in the economy.

WATER

The other sector I wish to move on to is to take a look at water. I see my colleague has moved on. Water, Mr. Speaker, is one of the basic requirements for sustainable development. The National Water Commission uses the term water is life. It is, indeed, life. But before I proceed, Mr. Speaker, to examine some of the concerns in this sector, I'd like to take the opportunity to extend my sincere condolences to the family of Mr. Tony Lee, a construction worker on the Tulloch Springs/Rio Cobre Water line who died in an accident out there and to extend my sympathy to his six colleagues who were hurt in that particular accident working on this project under the Jamaica Water Sector Supply Improvement Project. It was most unfortunate and I want to thank and commend all the workers who have been trying their very best to maintain and bring water to the people of Jamaica under very difficult circumstances aggravated by the drought and sometimes failing policies of the Government.

We note with concern that the capital allocation for water has been reduced by about near $4 Billion. We understand the need to spend within certain limits, but it is still troubling for more than - one its personal, Mr. Speaker, it took me considerable negotiation with the Planning Institute of Jamaica, the department in the Ministry of Finance and the Inter-American Development Bank who was then one of our prime partners to ensure that water received within the public sector investment programme adequate fiscal space for the development of an efficient water system. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, among the reasons for the cut, I understand, is that in the last two years despite… having a $10 Billion space the money was not spent and, therefore, it was easy for the Ministry of Finance to, in fact, reduce the fiscal space. In fact, our spokesman alluded to that yesterday when some multilateral projects are in place you budget for them and if money is not you will, in fact, find space being created at the end of the budget year. In this case one could not blame the procurement process and I ask the Minister to take a look at how his department and agency is functioning because in the case of the Jamaica Water Sector Improvement Programme, for example, which is nearly three years behind schedule, when the Government was elected that project was already procured and planned and the money was in place. So there was no need for enormous length of delay. In fact, I heard that Board took all kind of times meeting looking at all kinds of things that was not necessary or needed and, therefore, the project delay was certainly unnecessary and one must understand that that has increased the severity of the impact of water supply in the Corporate Area during the dry season. Had that work been completed we would be the position we are in today.

There will be some challenges you know, Mr. Speaker, so I'm not going to deny that.

That project would not have settled the water problem in the KMTR or the north coast, and I comment on both. In addition to the...

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Dr. CHANG: ...that programme, funding was there for work on some twenty-nine facilities in the Corporate Area. In the progressing of that work, of course, there will be some interruptions. So we understand that that work went out somewhat late too. The construction of an additional treatment plant on the Rio Cobre plant was also part of that and should have started by now. That is nowhere on the horizon from the plans projected by the Government, but the Corporate Area and St. Catherine is nearly half our population. We need to plan appropriate water supply to satisfy the demands. It's a critical part of the development process and an important part of the quality of life for our people.

In the case of the North Coast, tourism must have water to develop. The fallout in the north coast, Mr. Speaker, and you suffer from it on a regular basis in your constituency I'm aware, was not just because of the increased hotel rooms, which contributed and hotels use an enormous amount of water. I don't think many people appreciate large hotels will demand up to two million gallons of water per day, right. In fact, when we were doing the line to Lucea, that's what Iberostar asked to be reserved. They're currently using a million and a half. So it is in expanding the hotel industry one must consider the availability of adequate water supply. You will not get guests in Jamaica if they go to a hotel which has no water. The Minister is right there listening. So work on the North Coast and Negril area, we expected should have started and it has started, but the capacity to do both the North Coast and Corporate Area exists and while the funding was there I hold the Ministry accountable for not having proceeded in a timely manner.

I say it, Mr. Speaker, because the entire project itself when we were faced with the drought in 2009 which was far more severe than now, we were able to, despite of all the challenges laid out in the procurement process, negotiate and start what was the largest, single engineering project for water - and up to that time the largest single project in Jamaica for US $215 Million within a twelve month period. We started negotiations in October 2008 and 2009 pipes were in Bog Walk. If we set out with the commitment and the will, we can achieve efficiency and speed on critical programmes. Cutting the capital budget for water may have been part of what is necessary by the Ministry of Finance to meet its targets but it's an unfortunate and something that should not have been done and even if it was done this year had the [National] Water Commission backed by the Ministry moved efficiently and quickly on their programmes would have had the projects in place that would have brought relieve to thousand of Jamaicans.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, as we hear talk about cutting the budget by $4 Billion, some other issues are rising. I understand in Port Antonio we are busy building sewer lines the men from there with no sewer plant (Chuckles) and since

your speaking on behalf of your colleague, I think you have to ask him where is the plant going because we're going to end building sewer lines throughout Port Antonio and once they make connection there is no sewer plant. I'm aware that the original sight was captured.

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...the sea, the sea.

(Laughter)

Dr. CHANG: But the Ministry has a responsibility to move quickly to identify an appropriate site and to ensure that while the funding is there, the plant is built on time or the poor people of Port Antonio who now have received a better supply and expecting sewer treatment will not have sewer treatment plant although the lines are there. This is the kind of inefficiency and error that we cannot tolerate. And, indeed, Mr. Speaker, I aware some of our multilateral partners who fund us significantly, whether by policy or programmes, are getting very uncomfortable with the quality of implementation of programmes in Jamaica. Too many of our funded programmes take too long, run over budget...

(Cross talk)

Across the board. I have said that and this among them and if you speak to any of the multilateral funding agencies some will say to you Jamaica has had all the programmes we need to achieve sustainable development, but we have not implemented most of them and even those that we have implemented we have not done so in a manner that is efficient and satisfactory.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, I will reach out to my colleagues on that side. We are willing to cooperate and look at any means to improve the process of implementation of projects in Jamaica. I think we can all agree in this House it has been the most singular, most challenging and difficult part of the development process. We have to find a better solution, because we have competent individuals. We have resources on occasions, but we seem to be able to fail to go through the process satisfactorily. We have to find a way.

I note, Mr. Speaker that the damming of the Rio Cobre has come on stream. As one man said to me it's a fifty year-old idea.

Mr. DALLEY: It's what?

Dr. CHANG: That the damming of the Rio Cobre gorge. As I indicated some time it's not something that I thought was worthy of significant pursuit. Among our problem in this country we have people who understand - have the knowledge, but when they are Jamaicans we don't pay attention to them. The best reservoir of knowledge about a Karstic Limestone regions resides in people in Jamaica, among them Basil Fernandez of the Water Resources Authority. In fact, the cost overrun on the North South Highway, which the Chinese rescued us and we are so happy for that on this side we are both happy that happened, but if you look at the original estimates, Minister and I remember it very clearly it was suggested that we could have built that North South Highway from some US$88 Million. It's going to cost about twice

that because somebody never read the Water Resources Authority Report that clearly indicated where that factory line was and the risk or cost involved in bypassing or going over it. I have a copy of the Report it was done.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

(Cross talk)

Dr. CHANG: No, it was done from 2005 (Chuckles). Talk to your Minister, right and the work was started and it wasn't read. Mike continued the work because as a responsible Minister he continued a good programme.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Dalley)

Dr. CHANG: But that report was not part of what you received. Someone needed to have looked at it and while we would have pursued it we would have known from day one the cost.

The risk involved in the gorge, it may be worthwhile doing more intensive boring, but karst limestone anywhere in the world is not good for damming, well especially when you are near earthquake zone. Simple shifts, simple earth tremors and all your water going to disappear underground. Fortunately you will get it back down stream, the aquifers downstream will collect the water and we will get to pump it out in wells, which is where most of the water is stored but it's quite an expensive thing to store a couple billion gallons of water to recharge the wells downstream, you can recharge the wells much easier quite frankly, Minister.

I think you should maybe introduce the Chinese Construction Company to those who have developed the hard rock drilling technique in the Blue Mountains. Hard rock drilling technique, while still under patent, is a modification of hydraulic techniques to drill deep down and reach what you might call 'old water'. Much of it is guaranteed to be under the Blue Mountains; it's a heavy rainfall area, it is volcanic rocks. And if you pursue hard rock drilling which again the Water Resource Authority is aware of the process involved, at the time it was not - we could not establish a procure and buy - the kind of contract with them that it would be necessary for them to build, but it would be worth your while have them get the owners of the hard rock drilling technique link with the contractors.

If you put wells behind Pine Groves into Mavis Bank and you are getting 10 to 15 million gallons of water out of two wells, you not only get enough water to continue the development to supply the Corporate Area over a long time, but you could generate significant power by inline turbines with this volume of water which would make a lot of sense, it will be a lot less cheaper and you would not have the ongoing cost of power supply that you will have elsewhere, because when you have dams or treatment plants you still use a lot of power to pump.

You could also do the drilling to the east near the Yallahs Valley and run that water only in the drought season into the existing Yallahs pipeline; either way it is less expensive and, I think, there is a much surer way of getting that water supply, additional water supply out of the Blue Mountains that you need in the Corporate Area. I think it's a better deal and I would urge the Minister to

examine this kind of activity, nor should we dismiss the Mahogany Vale Dam which has been studied for years and which has been examined by some of your new found friends in the east, that too has potential and they got all the studies.

Dr. DAVIES: Don't forget where it comes from.

Dr. CHANG: Indeed.

I have not, Mr. Speaker, that's why I gave them copies of the entire studies done on the Mahogany Vale Dam and they have been looking at it, I gather, they are not people who act intemperately and they will take their own time and find their own studies to find the justification for viability and otherwise. But fortunately, let's face reality, the Chinese are good friends at this point because they are the country with the most cash available and they think long term more than other countries as well, and since their centralized economy allows them to make decision centrally they are good partners for long-term investment and we should talk to them.

In the drought season, Mr. Speaker, I would say again we need to move towards a point where we don't have water lock-offs because we have enough water in Jamaica to supply Jamaicans. What we need is the infrastructure and that's why I say we need to put in place the required infrastructure even when we are faced with fiscal challenges. Some are very simple. I give you a simple example. Hopewell in St. Elizabeth, not in Hanover, they were without water for about 10, 12 years; they spent a long time drilling wells in the wrong place, but we put a well in there, simple cost at the insistence of the Minister and we had to take out an order to be able to access the property and now trucking of water is alien to a wide area of that constituency. I don't see the MP here this morning. But the entire Hope Valley area, going almost back to Treasure Beach no longer needs trucking, they are getting reliable water supply and the well itself has the capacity to cover a wider swathe than it is, just has to increase the size of the pipe. This kind of activity is what is necessary. Oftentimes we get carried away with putting in a standpipe here which goes dry in the dry season anyway and extends the pipe and it gives good political mileage. But we need to examine where we need the kind of infrastructure that will guarantee reliable, continuous supply of water.

I see my friend from South St. James looking on. He had a real challenge up in the hills and that has to be dealt with and looked at in a different way. But certainly some areas like St. Elizabeth, South Trelawny have some quality reliable supplies need infrastructure. These are productive areas in the country: place like Quashi River, Agulata Vale, White River, White Hall in New Market, are areas where we had looked at the required plans to put them in place and identify areas of funding. They should not have shifted the funding in those situations.

The Water Commission I appreciate, Mr. Speaker, have to operate within the established fiscal guidelines, but they do have funding to spend and if they spend it timely and efficiently we can get through most of the

programmes. The K factor which is part of the bill on every water bill you get will provide some $45 to $55 Billion over a 15-year period. That is approximately US$500 Million. It can make a major impact on the quality of our water supply.

We have had loan funding from the commercial banks. I refer to the Jamaica Water Sector Improvement Programme, which is still ongoing and should have been finished already. That was US$215 Million. The IDB lent us money and we are not using it, even when we are having severe drought throughout the Corporate Area. That funding, as far as I can see in the Budget, has not been touched since two years. I don't think our friends are going to be very happy with us and we should not be happy either. Because when you are in an urban centre and you don't have water is a miserable process, and all the MPs from the - in particular downtown, the Corporate Area can attest to that and funding is there. We ought to find a way to get that programme going and ensure that we get reliable water supply in the Corporate Area.

The CRE funding, Credit Enhancement Fund is a unique fund, can do a lot with sewage. We need to move on with it. It needs, Mr. Speaker, efficient and speedy implementation on these major programme areas.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, in addition to the failure to implement significant capital programmes on time and in an efficient manner, I'd like to comment briefly on the Rapid Response Unit. I want to put it to the Minister that we had examined the feasibility of transferring all these trucks to the local authorities. I still submit it's a better way to truck water when we have to. I think the national body should concentrate on the large programmes, get their projects efficiently implemented and on time that you can have more people getting piped water into their homes. But while we need trucking the local authorities are much better prepared to truck water. They are familiar with the details of the communities. They can react faster and far more efficiently to water shortages than can a central ministry do.

The work was done. We have the Board of Survey looked at the rolling stock; they are ready to be transferred. I do not think we should hold on to them. The name sounds nice but it doesn't work for water. If the parish councils had those trucks they would be better maintained, because their mechanics out there when they want water they are going to get the trucks working and you can get water to the communities. I commend it to the local authority should have that.

(Applause)

The only thing that should be central, Mr. Speaker, is that we could organize, through the Ministry of Water, that the Water Commission will receive the subvention to supply the trucks through the Ministry. Don't worry about how the accounting goes, because all you want to ensure is that when the trucks want water and the parish councils send them to the pipe they get the water. Once they can have that in a reliable manner they will get the water to people much more efficiently than a central water supply system. (Applause)

Dr. DAVIES: How many of the trucks were working under you?

Dr. CHANG: We had 20 working trucks and Rapid Response and 10 new ones we bought. But I was not eager in activating them, I was eager in transferring them to the local authorities, as they were. The tanks are excellent so even when the trucks themselves, which had serious mechanical problems, were not utilizable the tanks are excellent water tanks, and if you put them in a local situation people will transfer them to other truck heads. It is a much more efficient system, Minister, and we need to look at how we can do it better and we need to incorporate our local authorities.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the programme of reducing non-revenue water must be approached with some urgency. This country produces millions of gallons of water but we lose about 65% on average. In some places as much as 70%, which means for the same amount of money you spending now you could get twice what you are doing, the amount of water you have. It will be difficult to reduce it to 5% like the Japanese or even approach in a very short time the kind of accepted international level of 35% to 40%. But if we work assiduously at it we can knock away 25% quickly that would give you an additional 30 million gallons of water per day, even in Mandeville where we have a genuine shortage and need to activate wells down the plains of St. Elizabeth and Mandeville, but just correcting water loss in Mandeville could double the supply in Mandeville at any point in time. In fact, the last investigation we had suggested that we were losing up to 70% of generated water in Mandeville. So approaching Mandeville - and there are other areas in Jamaica with that kind of loss; 70% and it's very costly to pump up the hill, 70% from technical losses, some stealing, some leaking, all of that kind of activity.

We need to implement the programme of non-revenue water reduction aggressively and quickly. There are not many people can do it, so we should find them and, even if by negotiation, proceed to ensure we have a programme in place. We have enough water, what we need is efficient management to ensure reliable supply to Jamaicans. With global warming and climate change water is fast becoming a highly valuable commodity. It's an area where even multinationals wish to invest in. We have enough water for our people. We need to ensure we can manage what we have well and at some point may even get some to sell.

The governors of the Water Commission, Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Government Member)

Dr. CHANG: ….is my last point. The Water Commission and water is one of Jamaica's larger corporations. They have cash flow of some $25 Billion, $25 Billion. They have 3,000 facilities across the island.

Mr. PHILLIPS: You say $20 Million.

Dr. CHANG: No, I know it's $25 Billion.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Davies)

Dr. CHANG: I know it's over twenty. The writer puts that in there. But in fact, the projection is $28 Billion. Last year it was $23

Billion. They have a staff of 2,100 across the island and this needs to be managed like a large corporation. It cannot be managed *ad hoc*. The NWC Act allows for nine commissioners and these should all be individuals with an understanding of corporate governance and corporate business. It may be, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we get the quality that we require that we could make the Water Commission one of the first corporations where Parliament approves the Chairman, because water is not a party issue. It affects all Jamaicans and we need an efficient quality water company to run the water company in Jamaica. (Applause)

I allude to this because there are two individuals that come to mind who demonstrated outstanding quality service as commissioners. One has a sister in this House, but she happens to be a senior vice president of one of our largest corporations. The other one heads up a large corporation when you were in Government the last time, currently heads up a large corporation. They showed an understanding and a quick grasp of the complexity of running a large corporation. When you put someone right there, (DB) who doesn't understand it in charge then all kinds of things go wrong and nothing can get done quickly. I refer to two individuals I don't think they will mind - I won't call their names, but there are two senior management individuals in this country. We need people like that and maybe to get them we need to bring them here some time for the chairman and there is a pilot way. The Water Commission needs effective governance and the Board must understand the difference between policy and operation and what corporate policy direction is required to make a company of this size functions efficiently. Minister, it's not your responsibility I am sure you can advise your colleague, I think you understand exactly what I am saying. We need new ideas, we need new plans and a vision to ensure that Jamaica has a satisfactory water supply system and the people of Jamaica at all levels can benefit from quality water supply.

We are at this point not in very bad order, you know, Mr. Speaker, but you hear comments about differential rates which will not be necessary if you get the system work efficiently. And individuals should be aware that we have what you call a lifeline limit and many people don't know the geographical difference is not appropriate despite the upper cost for Mandeville.

Currently, Jamaicans pay several rates for water. Three thousand gallons, which is 2,000 gallons above the World Health Organization limit is the lifeline limit. Individuals using 3,000 gallons get a subsidy. The rates increase for every 2,000 gallons until you get to a very high rate of 10,000 gallons per month, that's why your water bill shoots up when you have a leak. So we already have differential rates to allow for a national water system so there is cross-subsidy. And I don't think anything is wrong with that. If we were able to get our supply up to all the population in a reliable way, we can in fact continue to provide water to all Jamaicans at a reasonable rate.

The final area of my concern, Mr. Speaker, is infrastructure and in particular roads, but infrastructure involves roadways, our airports and our seaports, air, sea and land and rail. Indeed, I'm quite happy to use the term by our former Minister, it's multimodal if we are to go forward in a very constructive way. I will comment on that later.

International trade is based on air and sea transport and it has been shown that quality road development gets one of the highest rates of returns in the shortest time possible, that's a fact at a local level. And of course, rail can be an asset depending on what you're doing and where you are putting it.

We therefore need to develop and articulate a comprehensive transport policy at this time. We need to look at our Jamaica and again look at evolving a Physical Development Plan, Minister. If we look back, as far back as 1964 when the first Physical Plan was done, not a 2030 Vision, a Physical Plan, it can provide a roadway for - a pathway for effective management and development of our road infrastructure and settlement strategy. It is time to look at a Physical Development Plan, the last one was done as I said, way back in 1964, it is still a very useful Plan but times have changed, population has grown and we need to look at what is relevant today. Such plans are much longer lasting than regular economic plans and I'm sure that you could get the international help to look at a comprehensive transport plan, physical plan for Jamaica at this point in time, it would be appropriate that in fact your Ministry take a look at that. And something that could last us for 25 years and we can therefore follow a road map in terms of a development strategy, and not just piecemeal, a highway here, a road there and so forth. The first Plan, I remind you, was developed way back in 1964 under the then administration of Sir Alexander Bustamante.

Before I go into that aspect of things, I note, Minister, that we're having serious problem with road transport in all areas. Not only because of bad roads, but right now in the Corporate Area, we have serious conflicts within the commuting public with the JUTC. The challenges facing our commuters includes; students procuring safe, reliable and affordable transportation, disabled and the general public.

Infrastructure and road infrastructure is like the circulatory system of the body....

A MEMBER: I don't understand that.

Dr. CHANG: ....that's what will ensure productivity and a healthy economy. And when you get poor infrastructure and poor roadways, productivity is seriously impaired. Minister, we have to look at how we can resolve it.

The history of our bus system is well known. We are operating between corporate or public owned companies with an *ad hoc* system of private small operators, including legal and illegal operators.

Dr. DAVIES: That's Pearnel's system.

Dr. CHANG: That is the system we have inherited and not only Pearnel.

The system has failed to satisfy the

demand of the population and have over the years impaired our productivity and the dignity of our commuting people.

The current attempt to bring order to the system has some merits, but we should not disrespect the small operators who, at one time was the backbone of the system. Those who have been denied renewal of their licenses, Mr. Speaker, were people who invested in rolling stock with the hope of continuing in the business.

Mr. Speaker, all I say to the Minister, if in fact we are continuing to subsidize, in fact as we see in the budget, major subsidy to JUTC, if removal of the franchise operators is going to make them viable, then why not use the subsidy, buy out the franchise holders because they are business people like everybody else, they are Jamaica business people who invested their money in the faith that they are going to continue and have a business to operate. Buy them out of the subsidy and let JUTC get the money. In the process, work with them through the Transport Authority, find them alternate routes, alternate business. As a Government, we cannot treat small....

Dr. DAVIES: So why....

Dr. CHANG: In other words, you can take them off franchise routes. You can assign them new routes to Spanish Town, to Linstead, elsewhere.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Dr. CHANG: This is a matter for discussion.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Dr. CHANG: Whether you…. What you pay them....

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Dr. CHANG: Common sense, Member. When I say you compensate them instead of buyout them, if they find an adequate route for them, fine. If on the other hand you cannot place them in the system elsewhere, then you pay them off like you did to NTC. You buy them out like you did to NTC when they take you to court. What are you using to subsidize the bus company now? If you are subsidizing them the same money.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Robinson)

Dr. CHANG: Do you need the subsidy still, that's not the implication.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Robinson)

Dr. CHANG: No, no, we are not against reform. We welcome reform but it must take place in an environment of equity and fairness, respecting those who have invested their time and money in the sector.

(Applause by Opposition Members)

Mr. SHAW: That's right.

Dr. CHANG: There are small business people who have been there for years and when we needed them we used them. We must show them some respect and we cannot be arbitrary and arrogant in dealing with them, Mr. Speaker. That's not correct. If we are sincere, we can find a way to do it better.

The road, Mr. Speaker, as I said is like the circulatory system of the body, will determine our productivity, security and prosperity, but like the economy; the road system is in serious need of disrepair.

We have had a Jamaica Development Infrastructure Programme. We did some good work despite of political attempts to diminish

the success of the programme. I notice the Government is attempting a similar programme with a new name, but I say, Mr. Speaker, a rose by any name is still a rose.

It must be recognized in the Budget - while it must be recognized in the Budget and I repeat, Mr. Speaker. While the expenditure in any major programme must be recognized in the Budget, it is not necessarily the most efficient way to spend the money directly through the Ministry of Finance on a programme like this.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Dr. CHANG: You are running it through the Ministry of Finance, and it's not necessarily the most efficient way of doing it.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Dr. CHANG: I wish.... Remember, I started off by saying, Mr. Speaker, it must be recognized. And all I am saying it's not necessarily.... And the Member just agreed with me that part of our problem is implementing major projects in this country, we don't do them efficiently and well.

I wish you well on the programme, look forward to working with you. I look forward to some roads in Montego Bay too, but we need to look comprehensive at how we can improve our entire road network.

Mr. Speaker, part of what we could do is to reclassify the road network and determine engineering standards for each grouping. The current road maps of Jamaica showed a,b,c, Parish Council roads. We have all kind of roads; housing estate roads, community roads, school roads, agricultural roads and they are kind of scattered all over the place. I suggest that you lay out a plan, which will include a Highway system revolving around highway 2000, that's part of a Physical Development Plan for years and they are implementing it and the Minister before me continued that. These of course, would have linkages with other roads that should be classified as a, b, and c, or whatever classification you wish and lay out for them minimum standard of maintenance.

We have no such activity today in road programmes. The local authorities, of course, have to get adequate resources to deal with community roads and separate this multiplicity of road authorities. National Works Agency deals with certain highway and certain roads. Local authorities deal with others in terms of maintenance. And in the process, set up an engineering team who will have the requirement responsibility to set the standards and the local authorities must have access to their skills to ensure that we maintain standards. Strong engineering duty is required, our road system need to be identified properly and maintained properly.

I am aware, Mr. Speaker, that we do not have all the money to do what we want to do but if we do it properly and efficiently we can get much more for what little we spend. And that's critical to having an adequate road system. As we evolve and develop, then we can have a much better roadway system.

I'd also like to comment to you Minister, because I had the experience and my colleague, you might have done so when driving on the new Sligoville upgraded road. But most people won't drive on it at nights,

it's too dark. Now we can't put streetlights all along it, but there's an evolving - a nice little technology using paint with photo-luminescent pigments, you can use that....Just paint it and it brightens up at night overnight. Use that to mark the roadway and the borders. You are going to do that then. Accepted, Minister, because we need that kind of thing. They dig up the cat eyes, they dig up the cat eyes and take them out and put on trucks. I don't know what they do with them; they dig them up all the time.

LOGISTICS

In the context of our Airport, Mr. Speaker, we are divesting the Montego Bay Airport and that's working well. We are in the process of divesting Norman Manley and that makes sense, but we should not in any way dismiss for the medium term the suggestion by the Member from Central Clarendon about the potential of Vernamfield.

I will reiterate my support for this because if we are to become a part of the international trading circle and in fact develop a Global Logistics Hub; we need an airport that can accept long-haul flights. The current airports do not have the capacity to evolve to that level. Long-haul flights require 12 to 14 thousand feet at least and may be even longer. This cannot be done in Montego Bay and Palisadoes. They will still have value, they will still be functional, but for cargo and long distant flights we need a new airport at some point in time.

Mr. SHAW: Vernamfield.

Dr. CHANG: Vernamfield is the ideal place for that.

In addition, not only because as we say, we are moving towards a Global Logistics Hub, I reiterate our position for that that concept evolved when you were in Government and two of my colleagues spoke extensively on it, the Member from Central Clarendon and the Member to my right from North Central St. Andrew, who I'll refer to again, who spoke extensively on the development of the Kingston Port and the neighbouring Caymanas Economic Zone. Ideas that if followed through can bring significant and major development to the Corporate Area and to Jamaica.

(Inaudible comments)

Dr. CHANG: The centres of wealth that are evolving are in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the far East. Places like Beijing, Shanghai, Delhi and Dubai, we must be able to accommodate direct connections from these areas and it will require new airport facilities.

I'm aware that Montego Bay is extending to 10,000 feet. And this will bring some significant benefits, but it will not be adequate to move in this direction. And while I am not saying we can find the capital to build it tomorrow, we ought to keep it on the horizon and plan for this kind of activity in this area.

(Applause)

A Logistics Centre with the proposed economic zone must have an airport of this magnitude if we are to be successful in this in the short run.

Mr. Speaker, seaports will be the axis for

development. Sea transportation is around what Logistics Hubs evolve. Transshipment is central to logistics development. Jamaica's prime location is not debatable or challengeable, despite of efforts and structural moves for Cuba and Dom. Rep. to participate. Jamaica is 200 kilometers from the main shipping lane. The pirates of the Caribbean proved that many years ago, we are still the best location for shipping in the Caribbean, right. (Applause) Captain Morgan proved it that's why he became Governor.

I am worried about the commitment of the Government to the magnitude of the concept. I said two of our Members spoke to it; my colleague from Clarendon actually had a document developed. And while we sometimes smile a little bit cynically when he said "multimodal", it's an accepted document and the concept initiated that started the full discussion on a Logistics Hub in Jamaica. He should be commended for that effort; it's not his personal thing... (Applause) ....it's the Ministry of Transport and Works.

We now use the term Global Logistics Hub, that's universal and nothing wrong, but his "multimodal Transportation Centre" where the concept evolved, is the same concept. And in fact, is maybe a more direct term because you need air, transport, you need sea transport, and you need adequate highway system on land to link the various economic zones.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Anthony Hylton)

Dr. CHANG: But, if you put a IT Centre in Mandeville, which could be... But I am just saying, if you put a IT Centre and an Education Centre which Mandeville could become and provide education - educated personnel not only for Jamaica, but all over the world, then you need a good highway in linking them.

Infrastructure is a critical part of any such development and has to be planned over the long-term, right. You may need - some have indicated - some of the experts have indicated that Goat Island is a better place to build the berthing facility for super-large ships. If you do it there you may very well need a rail-link from Goat Islands to Kingston Harbour, which is a bigger and safer harbour, and therefore would accommodate the feeder ships that will carry products from the larger ships to the East Coast and South America.

So, the concept needs to be outlined to our people that they understand fully what we are doing. And I emphasize the coastal belt, Mr. Speaker, because while it may be repetitious in one sense, but I think this concept is so significant and could bring so much to this country, it needs repetition.

It also needs to be understood by the investors that Parliament, as a Parliament is satisfied with these developments. We cannot ask anyone to bring it here. While we can claim paternity at different points with different aspects and implementation rights, nobody investing Two Billion Dollars US (US$2B) in Jamaica must have any doubt that anybody in leadership questions that investment. That's the basis for our repetition. (Applause)

So the divestment of Kingston Container Terminal must be pursued and we must ensure

that the required infrastructure be put in place in order to optimize the use of this major asset.

But, Minister, Kingston itself has advantage which, even if we cannot bring the super-large ships here, we need to look at the Corporate Area inner-city redevelopment to provide economic activity to rejuvenate the entire downtown area. Kingston is our capital city, historically, and today it is one of the - it is Jamaica's premier city, despite I am Montegonian. We have had significant urban decay downtown. We must put in place a comprehensive plan to redevelop downtown and restore the dignity downtown, and provide jobs for our people. (Applause) A section of downtown is an embarrassment - should be an embarrassment to some of us in this House. We need to find a way to bring back life and economic activity to downtown. Part of it...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. CHANG: Desmond is a critical part of getting it going downtown, and I don't apologize for that, seriously.

Part of any development of us becoming a central trading centre would be to ensure - and this will not cost any money, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. DAVIES: They say moving Desmond is called urban renewal! I left you in the stumps...

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. CHANG: Mr. Speaker, that's neighbourly banter, we leave that alone.

Mr. DALLEY: He hasn't been down there for weeks!

Dr. CHANG: But, certainly, Mr. Speaker, while we work and I comment that we become more decisive and clearly articulate the comprehensive position on our global logistics hub that everyone in Jamaica can understand - indeed, when I say coastal, you know, Mr. Speaker, I skipped a little bit. But part of it is that if you develop – we are a changing environment, you know, we have big talk about the environment when it comes to specific issues. If Kingston was just being developed today, I am sure some people would object to using what was some of the most fertile plains, the Liguanea Plains, to build houses on. Kingston is the central city, development changes the environment. What we have to do is ensure that the benefits we derive from it supersede any loss that is made to it. Coast-line development is what is going to be critical.

If you go for a significant global logistics centre not only the Corporate Area and Kingston Port and Goat islands will evolve. Other centres could begin to get development, whether for dry-docking, or a place like Mackerell Bay in Clarendon and elsewhere, which are near to Vernamfield, and even in the West. We therefore have to ensure that we just don't get over-excited about what will happen to the coastline.

Built environment is part of human development. What we have to do is use the additional resources we may earn to protect some of the pristine areas that we want to keep as samples of what we were then. You know, you might want to build a tree-house somewhere, you know, but we are not going to live in tree-houses. And, indeed, places like the Blue Mountain, which is not only - the

Blue Mountain/John Crow Mountain area, not only a prime environmental area, but is critical to our water supply, need to be protected.

Part of the challenge we face today - the Cockpit Country, as well, in the east and west they are like the lungs of the country. But part of our problem, you know, Mr. Speaker, is that we speak about environmentally-protected areas but we are doing precious nothing to protect them because we don't have the resources, we don't have the manpower or the money.

If we pursue major development programmes that bring about increased wealth in the country, we should then define those areas and put in place effective protective measures for these areas that they know when we say it's an environmentally- protected area, it is an environmental area that is protected and retained in its pristine form. And there are a number of them we can speak to, Mason River in Upper Clarendon and so forth, which we need to protect. We don't have the resources to do it now. And much of the debate we have out there is merely a debate that isn't worth the value of the debate, quite frankly.

But come back to the Corporate Area and its global logistics concept. We need to put in place, Minister, the required legislation, which have been spoken to by a number of my colleagues in this House, both to my right and left. Increase the activity for ship registration - well, maritime service, in general can become a major part of the economic activity of the Corporate Area if we go in this direction. (Applause) Not only ship registration, insurance, bunkering, international financial services. The nature of international financial centres is changing because of the different new regulations to prevent laundering, but there is still room for expanded international financial services. What we need is the legislation and the regulatory framework, and we need those now, not tomorrow.

Legal services - dry-docking would have to be outside. But again, the Corporate Area and St. Catherine have the critical mass of professionals and skills that are needed to begin this process now. We need to move quickly and assiduously to create the kind of development plan that will attract the investment we need to begin to move Jamaica forward. One day soon we hope to sit there, but we don't want to inherit a bankrupt country, you nuh. I am sure none of us on this side would want that.

Let us understand in concluding, Mr. Speaker that - we often refer to Singapore, and I would like to point out that Singapore, when they came in 1964 we were at about the same level in per capita income. They moved decisively and efficiently to develop their economy, right.

Dr. DAVIES: Again, you commended that?

Dr. CHANG: Without an opposition. But that's why I said on this note; we are at one on a similar policy system. But irrespective of the hindrances, their per capita income today runs somewhere near Fifty-five Thousand Dollars US (US$55,000) per head, we are still

struggling below five. So I don't expect in our lifetime to reach anywhere near Fifty-five Thousand Dollars ($55,000).

But, Mr. Speaker, you understand if we reach Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000) per capita, per head, our debt becomes insignificant and the entire character of a country changes. That's not an over-ambitious achievement or plan. Ten Thousand US (US$10,000) per head is small time. Barbados is at eighteen. We have sat down, dilly-dallied and pursued programmes incompetently and inefficiently, lacking direction, and kept the country in poverty. Poverty is not poverty - to remove poverty, Mr. Speaker, is not poverty relief, it is to generate growth in the economy, maintain a stable economic framework, grow the economy and allow people with skills to earn the kind of money that they need to live a better quality of life. That, Mr. Speaker, is the challenge.

I have not in fact offered any panacea or firing of magic bullet. What I have presented, Mr. Speaker, is a number of ideas that can stimulate growth without impacting on our fiscal accounts. This side is fully aware of the need for stable, macroeconomic parameters. Some of the programmes - I would like to quote from former distinguished Member of the House and say, are impatient of debate. They need no debate, let's move on. Others may need some study, but what we are seeking to bring to the fore are genuine programme and concepts that can drive private sector development in Jamaica's economy, and bring about hope to our people, and provide opportunities for increased wealth.

No single action can solve this. We need to do this - what we need to do is to think out of the box and provide the policy framework to ensure efficiency and facilitation of private capital. Private capital has to be the driving force. And we have to make Government more efficient by providing a better legislative framework and a regulatory framework that accepts that individuals who have money will invest it if the atmosphere is right, they will make a profit, but in the process they will create jobs and create opportunities for others. Absolutely nothing is wrong with that.

The housing sector, Mr. Speaker, already has a private/public partnership policy, use it. But the country needs a broader policy to provide a satisfactory framework for private sector to participate in all public infrastructure programmes.

I want to reiterate that infrastructure lays the foundation for sustainable development. We maintain that Jamaica needs a holistic plan to ensure not only development of the infrastructure, however, but sustainable economic development. And the Opposition Leader will speak more to that in his presentation.

We need to design the right programmes to give the people the opportunity they seek. Our nation has the talent, the commitment to our Jamaica, and the capital. We, as politicians, need to provide the policies and framework to allow the enterprise and

creativity of our people to move the country forward. And there is a significant responsibility on the part of the Government, to lead in that way. We on this side will offer the suggestions and ideas, but the Government must begin the process now.

We need leadership that is free of the colonial legacy, post-independence leadership that is knowledgeable of modern technology, understand the nuances of social media and education.

We have such a leader, and a leader that has the confidence to challenge the *status quo* and orthodoxy of multilateral agencies which in many cases have been the cause of persistent poverty in developing countries like ours.

(*Sotto voce* comments from Dr. Davies)

Dr. BAUGH: You can't divide us again! Don't try it!

Dr. CHANG: We can be wealthy - we will be wealthy. Our people have talent and the skill. We need leadership and a new direction to unleash the potential of Jamaicans. It is possible.

Mr. Speaker, may God bless us all as we strive to bring prosperity to our people, equal rights and justice to all Jamaicans. That's the mission of this generation.

I thank you.

(Applause)

Opposition MEMBERS: Well done!

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business this afternoon. I therefore move for the adjournment of the Parliament until tomorrow, the 24th of April, at 2:00 p.m. when the Opposition Leader will address us.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House adjourns until tomorrow, April 24 at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The Honourable House of Representatives was adjourned at approximately 5:48 p.m. to resume on April 24, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, April 24, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:36 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House
Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern

MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern

MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern

MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central

MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Raymond Pryce.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker...

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Warmington.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I have tried since yesterday to get some answers to questions I asked as it relates to salaries and allowances to Parliamentarians, whereby we received our payslips and what it reflects on here is not what is in the bank; whereby Members of Parliament, for the month of April, some Members of Parliament received part of their full payment of salary and allowances, while some Members of Parliament, even though we Received the payslips, we got none. Nothing was transferred to the bank. So, I have been asking since yesterday what is the situation, why MPs received - Parliamentarians, some received part payment, some none at all, even though we received the full - the paystub showing the full amount. Further, I would like to know if this is the situation that exists right now within the payment to public sector workers, or if it relates only to Parliamentarians?

The SPEAKER: Well, the accounting people made themselves available during the 1:30 period, to explain what had transpired. And all of that will be sorted out by the 25th.

Mr. SHAW: He wants you to explain it.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I wasn't there, so could you explain to me what it was.

The SPEAKER: We will explain to you.

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, but it is something affecting the House, so I am asking; I am asking.

Mr. D. SMITH: When you will explain?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I am probably not able to give him all elements of the answer. I can say definitively that all the resources necessary were transferred from the Accountant General to the Parliament.

(MR. ANDRÉ HYLTON, PNP, St. Elizabeth, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

There is no problem with payment for public sector workers.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: I believe that there may be issues that arise in relation to the transfer from Parliament, which may be an accounting problem. And I understand, as you have explained, that the relevant officer of the Parliamentary staff has been explaining to those Members affected what has happened. But, I want to be definitive, lest there be any misunderstanding going forth from here that all the resources necessary were made available from the Accountant General to the Parliament.

Mr. WARMINGTON: What I was told, Mr. Speaker...

The SPEAKER: Let me just add - hold on, let me just add - because there is a distinction between your basic salary and your allowances. And it appears as if payments are made separately, so your basic salary could come first.

Opposition MEMBERS: No, no, no, no!

Mr. WARMINGTON: What happened Mr. Speaker... what happened before is that they are bound together so that your allowances became pensionable some years ago. And that is why it is calculated in this, that the deductions are made from the entire stuff. Your salary and allowances are pensionable. And what I know each month, that it is always one payment. I checked up to today with my bank and I looked at my statement, and every single month one transfer has been made to my account. So it never normally split. I am hearing about it for the first time. It has never been split. It always comes out in one. But we were told yesterday that an e-mail was sent out to explain to Members... that it came from the accounts department... that an e-mail was sent out, but we... I haven't seen such stuff...

The SPEAKER: No, no, no, there was an e-mail to say...

Mr. WARMINGTON: ...to explain what was happening. But none came out. No Member on this side received any such e-mail.

The SPEAKER: No, the e-mail said that there would be an explanation.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Nobody on this side received an e-mail; that's what I am saying. Nobody on this side received any. And still what is being said, it still hasn't shun any light on the issue why I received a pay stub giving an amount for the month and - as a matter of fact, I am among the Members of Parliament who didn't receive any at all. And there are others on this side who have not received any... (Inaudible)

The SPEAKER: The bottom line, which is the most critical line, that you will get payment in full by the due date, which is the 25th.

A MEMBER: Warmi, it is based on a deserving basis.

Mr. WARMINGTON: You mustn't get any at all.

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Speaker gavels)

PRESENTATION OF BILLS WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE HOUSE FIRST OBTAINED

The SPEAKER: At this time, I would just like to welcome our special guests here today from the Diplomatic Corps, from the Opposition Leader's constituency and visiting Parliamentarians and former Parliamentarians, welcome. (Applause)

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we will continue our Debate on the Estimates, and this afternoon the Leader of the Opposition will be the sole presenter.

(Applause)

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on rising, I give God thanks...

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: ...for sparing us as a nation and as a Parliament, that we can all gather once again, to discuss the people's

business, and to re-commit ourselves as instruments of His will.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, you will understand if I thank the delegates of the Jamaica Labour Party...

(Applause/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: ...to my Parliamentary colleagues, members of the party, workers, well-wishers, Jamaicans, for their prayers and support, and for their participation in a democratic exercise that re-affirmed my leadership and their faith in that process.

(Applause by all Members)

I stand here to address the nation because of them. Mr. Speaker, I did not win a prize; the people have reposed trust in me, and I well know that I can't do it alone. Audley and I made a fantastic... (Inaudible)

(Mr. Holness shook hands with Mr. Shaw/Applause)

A MEMBER: *Weh* Tufton?

Dr. PHILLIPS: We are like that.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize members of the Diplomatic Corps who are here in the Gallery. I would also wish to especially acknowledge some students from Penwood High School who are here in the Gallery as well.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to specifically recognize my councillors: Councillor Delroy Williams, Councillor Christopher Townsend, and Councillor/Caretaker, Glendon Salmon.

Mr. Speaker, let me acknowledge members of the Junior Shadow Cabinet who have joined us today. They are a group of young, vibrant, energized patriotic Jamaicans who represent the future, and they have a passion about building our country. (Applause)

Also joining us today are members from the private sector, the church, civil society. They play a critical role in national development. The Opposition pays keen attention to their views, and is always eager to partner with them for the advancement of the nation and its people.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, my family is my refuge. My mother, a retired civil servant, who ensured that I received the education I needed to be where I am today, is here with us. (Applause) My dear wife, Juliet, is also here. (Applause) She has been a tower of strength in everything I do. She is a pillar of support, confidante, partner and friend. (Applause) And for the first time my two boys are coming to see their dad in Parliament, Adam and Matthew are also here. (Applause) I work feverishly to secure a better future for Jamaica, not only for them, but for all the children of Jamaica.

(MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, the people of West Central St. Andrew are my extended family. It is always a source of great pride to see literacy rates increasing year after year in the four primary schools in the constituency. I am of a

firm belief that the most effective vaccine against crime and poverty is education. (Applause)

Opposition MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: It means that more of our children will be able to gain knowledge and understanding and make greater use of the opportunity schooling provides. Mr. Speaker, West Central St. Andrew like all the constituencies of the western belt in Kingston: West Kingston and the Prime Minister's constituency of South West St. Andrew are badly in need of serious urban renewal.

(HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, North, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for Public Service, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. D. SMITH: Omar one all right.

Mr. HOLNESS: Including the former Minister of Finance, South St. Andrew, yes. Badly in need of urban renewal. Some of the oldest communities in our capital city, Mr. Speaker, face serious challenges due to lack of proper infrastructural development and maintenance. The housing stock in some of these areas have deteriorated to the point where there is little or no market value to spark regeneration. This year, Mr. Speaker, we hope that National Works Agency will finally sign the contract to fix Woodpecker Avenue, one of the main thoroughfares in West Central St. Andrew.

Mr. D. SMITH: I wish you luck.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the universal cry in West Central over the past few weeks, and I suppose right across Jamaica, was the cry for water. We have pipes, but many of the water mains are old, corroded, leaky and not sized to deliver the volume and pressure sufficient to meet the demands of the constantly growing population in those areas. The situation is made worse during the drought period. The complaints that I have received suggest that the period of water lock-offs are too long. Most households, to my certain knowledge, cannot store more than a day's supply of water. So, by the second day of the lock-off the entire community is in crisis. And remember, Mr. Speaker, we don't have enough water trucks to respond. So this year, Mr. Speaker, through the Constituency Development Fund, I will be trying my best to assist large households, households that have many children and elderly with black tanks, those plastic water storage tanks. They will be made available, rationed in the best way possible to assist residents of those areas with storage capacity. That's the best I can, Mr. Speaker; it's a partial solution; it's a local solution, but at least it will help during the drought period.

Mr. Speaker, the most important challenge that faces us now as a country is ensuring that we stay true to our vision of making Jamaica the place to live in safety, work for prosperity,

raise healthy families and operate in a business friendly environment. Mr. Speaker, it is our vision and belief that every Jamaican can attain prosperity, but if we are not honest about how we got to where we are today, our ambitions will be merely a pipe dream.

For years we have been like the children of Israel who were led out of colonial Egypt with a promise land in sight. Mr. Speaker interesting it is that if one were to do a geographic assessment of the journey from Egypt to Israel it would only be about two weeks by foot, but the Israelites ended up spending forty years in the wilderness going around in circles, repeating their mistakes after mistakes.

Mr. Speaker, over the past years we found ourselves being made the same promises, being sold the same vision of how we are firm and how we should stand firm, that the progress we should not stop, that we should log on to progress, we not changing course, it's a new beginning...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yes.

Mr. HOLNESS: This is about people power.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yes.

Mr. HOLNESS: But where did it all take us?

A Government MEMBER: [From] Government.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, like the Israelites, we have ended up spending a generation in the wilderness, going around in circles, being subjected to the same pain and punishment.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: That deliverance has brought...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the poor Israelites.

Opposition MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, like the Israelites wondering in the deserts of Egypt, Jamaicans are now asking the question, where are we going? There is a sense of uncertainty, unease and despair about the future of our country. And the answer comes from the Minister of Finance, the answer comes in this form, comes in this narrative of a newly converted market oriented...

(HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North, Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. CHUCK: Capitalist.

Mr. HOLNESS: No, capitalist is an outdated term.

Mr. SHAW: Evangelist.

(Laughter)

Mr. HOLNESS: He is now a market disciple.

(Laughter)

Mr. CHUCK: Hear, hear! Hear, hear!

Mr. CHARLES: Disciple of the market.

Mr. HOLNESS: An interesting article was written a few Sundays ago comparing the IMF negotiations of the 70s and now and

saying, my, how things have changed, because yes there are members of the team who were there in the 70s who are there now and how different their positions have been. And we welcome change and if you can change for good reason and you see logic and you see the light, we welcome you. We welcome you. There is no problem in changing. But the answer from the newly converted Minister about where we are going comes in this narrative, and you will identify with these statements, Minister, they are all cited:

> *For too long we have lived above our means. Now we are determined to live within our means, and if the revenues do not come in, we will have to make adjustments... curtail expenditure and defer some payments into the next fiscal year.... if we are going to enable future generations to realize their dreams and aspirations and to fulfill the vision of the founding fathers and mothers, we have a responsibility to reduce the burden of the public debt. Unless we do this, we will have forfeited the dreams of past and future generations."*

These are worthy statements from the Minister of Finance. There is nothing wrong with a determination to maintain fiscal discipline. And I am happy, as I said, that our political thought is evolving in this way and that finally we have come to the realization that we cannot borrow our way to growth. I think both sides of the aisle agree with that statement.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: We cannot borrow our way to growth.

But I also found another statement by the Finance Minister quite interesting. He made the statement in opening the Budget Debate. Here is what the Minister of Finance said:

> *"Our situation was compounded by those who found it politically convenient to propagate the view that the proven laws of economic development did not apply to Jamaica. Whereas other countries had to work their way to prosperity, Jamaica they said, could borrow its way to prosperity. I trust it is now evident to everyone that there is a limit to any country's capacity to sustain such fiscal irresponsibility. Jamaica has reached this limit. High debt prevents growth and limits the country's capacity to withstand unforeseen economic shocks."*

This is a profound statement and it leads me to wonder who the Minister was talking about?

Mr. CHUCK: Not Audley.

(HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. HOLNESS: Who was the Minister talking about?

Mr. CHUCK: Not Audley.

Mr. HOLNESS: Powerful statement. A powerful statement, Minister. But every study that I have looked at, and there are many, that examines Jamaica's current debt crisis - not talking about the debt crisis of the 70s and

80s, every study that I have looked at that has examined Jamaica's current debt crisis that is of the - 90s, the 2000s and now, every single one of them have concluded on basically three factors that have created this debt crisis, three.

The first is the collapse of the financial sector in the early 1990's that saw the creation of FINSAC and the subsequent absorption of FINSAC debt between 1996 and 2003 when the national debt moved. And this is not the IMF's definition of the national debt now. This is the Central Government debt solely from 71 per cent of GDP to 124 per cent of GDP, a 52 percentage point increase. That is an incontrovertible fact. That goes down in history. That fact cannot be debated away. In total, the Government created approximately $140 Billion in new debt due to FINSAC. What did that mean for us, Mr. Speaker?

(Cross talk)

FINSAC, FINSAC, yeah! And I hear the talk to the rescue of FINSAC - coming to that. What did that mean for us, Mr. Speaker? It heralded the start of the country's stifling debt burden.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. D. Smith)

Mr. HOLNESS: But the government did not only absorb bad private loans and we can have a debate about this: should the Minister have allowed FINSAC debtors to just fail? Should the Minister have allowed the banks to collapse? It is a judgement call that the Minister has to make. And I was not in that position. I can't judge the Minister for making the call, certainly with his Cabinet colleagues that we are going to take a decision to rescue FINSAC. That is, rescue the failing banks and financial institutions. We can't judge for that. But you know what we can judge for? An interesting book written by Wilberne Persaud, probably the only book to be written on the FINSAC issue, asked you when did you know about the potential collapse? And you're response was very evasive, Minister. It didn't say well, it came to my attention in 1994 or in... It was. So the question must be answered, in your role as Minister and even if you were to say that, well, I took over mid-stream, the question must be asked of the Government, when the Government realize that a financial collapse was imminent. And these are questions that have to be answered by the FINSAC Commission.

You see how very important it is. The Minister has said the national debt now is the most important thing but yet they don't want us to know why and how that national debt came to be. They don't want us to know that. They don't want us to know that.

Mr. Speaker, the Government did not only take over the FINSAC debt, private debt and the academics, the economists, they used a very - they used a term; they say the Government socialized private losses. But, Mr. Speaker, the Government also absorbed losses of public bodies and government agencies. We recall losses being absorbed between 1996 and 2003 - Air Jamaica, NWC, Bank of Jamaica - totalling approximately $41 Brillion. So within that period of time, Mr. Speaker, we put on to the public's back $140 Billion and $141 Billion in new debt between 1996 and 2003. But the Government, Mr. Speaker, was also bringing on to its books

significant debt that it had previously negotiated but did not account for it when the expenditure was made. This is something, Mr. Speaker that we all know as deferred financing. You remember that one, Audley? You remember how we had to fight to stop the Government from doing this damaging deferred financing.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Campbell)

Mr. SHAW: Keep quiet.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, it's one thing to acknowledge the debt a year or two after you incurred it so that your books can look good. It's another thing that you have to pay high interest rates for that luxury. I am not here saying you know, Mr. Speaker, that that money wasn't used to do good things. The Minister of Finance, I am sure, would hasten to remind us that some of it was used to build schools in the north of the island. Some of it was used to do Hope Road. So we are not saying that it didn't do tangible things but we must always ask ourselves, could we have done it differently? Could we have done it more efficiently? You see, unlike the FINSAC debt, the public who is bearing the totality of it can't claim to get anything tangible or like the absorption of the other debts, the public can't really claim it because some of that debt is just going back to pay debt, some of that is just foreign exchange losses. There is no asset to back that, that's just paper debt we have. That's the reality of debt.

Mr. Speaker, recently, this year the Government took on contingent liabilities of Clarendon Aluminum Partners Limited, CAP, and Wallenford Coffee Limited, $258.3 Million in debt, US by the way, J$28.3 Billion; this year the Government took it on. You see how that debt is just growing. What is the public getting for the CAP debt and the Wallenford debt? We need to ask ourselves these questions.

The third point, the third factor that drives the debt is the change in the nature and profile of our debt. Mr. Speaker, this started in the mid-1990s. In fact, it started - well let me not say it that way, let me say it this way. The profile of the debt started to change in the mid-1990s with the development of the local capital market which opened new borrowing options for the Government. Multilateral debt on borrowing which had far better concessional interest rates was rapidly replaced by borrowing from the domestic capital market, which came at much higher interest rate but without any conditionality. So the Government ran from scrutiny if it were to borrow from the multinationals and decided to take debt for which it was not being required to account in its usage.

As a result of that - you know, domestic debt prior to 1999 up to say even 1989, domestic debt averaged 28% of the total debt stock, since 1999 domestic debt accounts for approximately 60% of total. So what we were doing is just borrowing, borrowing, borrowing domestically, literally creating money. This was during the period of the good old days of Government placing large amounts of debt with the domestic capital market and not only Jamaican currency but in US dollar instruments as well. It was also the period of time that the Jamaican Government gained

access to international capital markets where it could float bonds and gain access to hard currency outside of multilateral institutions. This era of debt expansion led to the view that Jamaica could borrow its way to prosperity. Having destroyed the real entrepreneurial spirit of Jamaica with FINSAC, the Government now created a new kind of entrepreneurship, the Government created a new type of entrepreneurship, the investment in government paper. That became the new type of entrepreneurism.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Davies)

Mr. HOLNESS: For a decade the only game in town was government paper and it grew with the Government's veracious appetite for debt. Why was the Government borrowing so much as it did? During most of the 90s and early 2000, the Government was actually running at double digits primary surplus, meaning its revenues could cover its operating obligations; it could pay its workers and pay housekeeping with some balance to contribute towards debt repayment. But the Government still found the need to borrow and borrow excessively. And remember now, during that time the Government did not face a global financial crisis. What happened, Mr. Speaker, is that as debt servicing increased, the Government had to borrow to meet its debt service obligation. And remember now servicing higher interest debt so it has to borrow more. That, Mr. Speaker, created the vicious debt trap cycle, borrow to repay debt and then you have to borrow again to repay debt, and so you have to keep on borrowing...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Borrow from Peter to pay Paul.

Mr. HOLNESS: …and you keep doing that, Mr. Speaker, until the debt is now close to two trillion Jamaican dollars. That is the genesis of the national debt. So we asked the question, in the Minister's words, who were these fiscally irresponsible people who had led Jamaica to a mountain of debt? The Minister must answer that. Who was he talking about?

Mr. André HYLTON: Audley.

Mr. HOLNESS: Which Minister propagated the view that (improved) and larger economic development did not apply to Jamaica, whereas other countries had to work their way to prosperity Jamaica, they said, could borrow its way to prosperity.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Pickersgill)

Dr. DAVIES: They said.

Mr. HOLNESS: That's what you said.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Campbell)

Mr. SHAW: Keep quiet.

Mr. HOLNESS: Under which Government did the collapse of the financial sector occur? Which Minister came up with FINSAC? Which Minister used deferred financing? But here is the (Inaudible) which smart Minister conceived the forward sale of bauxite in the CAP deal which eventually - ended up costing more to produce than the actual price that was secured for the forward sale? You know what happened to us, Mr. Speaker, with this debt we ended up having to pay our partner in the bauxite firm Alcoa - Glencore, no, Alcoa.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Shaw)

(DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM MCNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. HOLNESS: No Alcoa. We ended up having to pay Alcoa to produce the bauxite that we had sold already but when it came time to produce and deliver it, the price of oil had gone up so much that it cost way more to produce than what we had gotten for it when we sold it. So every year the Jamaican Government, whenever the oil prices went up, had to find money, money that it could have taken to build schools. And I will tell you why I raised it, because I went to the then Prime Minister, Bruce Golding and told him about the need for school place, the Prime Minister was telling me, listen, we have to find hundreds of millions of US dollars to pay Alcoa to produce the bauxite to give it to Glencore who had already paid for it at a price well below what it cost us to produce it?

Mr. McKENZIE: Is lie.

Mr. HOLNESS: Now, Mr. Speaker, it is decisions like these that have created the debt today. Decisions like these

Mr. CHARLES: The Prime Minister going to speak tomorrow so keep quiet. Don't disturb...

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, all of this was done under almost two decades of PNP Administration. I think you know, Mr. Speaker, it is probably a little bit unfair for me to blame the Minister alone.

Dr. DAVIES: Go ahead.

Mr. HOLNESS: It's a little unfair because the truth is; you are part of a Cabinet and obviously everybody over there shares it, shares the responsibility.

Dr. DAVIES: Explain that. I want to hear it if you will ex...

Dr. PHILLIPS: Election stopped at 2007.

(Applause)

Dr. DAVIES: Explain the moving from...

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, no wonder this Government is doing everything possible to hide FINSAC Report, no wonder, but that report must come to light, must come to light.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, when the Minister comes sanctimoniously to preach to us about 'living within our means and recognizing limits to borrowing', where was his voice then when his colleague predecessor made it clear that he was going to 'run wid it'? Where was he then? Don't come now to preach to us about fiscal responsibility! You were the ones who created the hardship on the people in the first place.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: And you are now subjecting the people of Jamaica to this pain and punishment because of your fiscal irresponsibility.

(Applause) (Heckling)

Mr. Speaker, the National Debt....

The SPEAKER: Audley Shaw. Audley Shaw.

Mr. HOLNESS: ....and meeting IMF Tests are now the fulcrums around which Government Economic Policy revolves. It is now the excuse or the reason behind every economic decision that the Government is making. The imperative is no longer care for the poor or concern for the hardship of the people, there's.... that's not the issue any more. No! All this talk about 'we love the poor' and 'people power' has no meaning to anyone any more. If you listen carefully to the Government, what the Government is saying. We care more about passing the IMF Test than passing the people's test.

(*Sotto voce* comments by both sides)

Mr. HOLNESS: That's what they are saying. That's what they're saying.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: We pass the people test! We pass the people test!

(Heckling by both sides)

Mr. HOLNESS: The Government is now saying, it's not about 'people power'. No! The Government is now saying....

A MEMBER: Satan!

Mr. HOLNESS: ….IMF has the power! That is what the Government is now saying.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Audley, why you... the thing.

(Laughter)

Mr. HOLNESS: When we say to live within our means, cut our expenses and pay more taxes, what the Government is really saying is that the people of Jamaica must pay for the bad mistakes and bad decisions of the then Government of 18 years of PNP administration. (Applause)

You know, Mr. Speaker, when the government has decided on who or what they are going to cut, they cut without mercy and they tax without thought. Take, for example, the recent decision of the JUTC to slash routes to sub-franchisees.

(Inaudible comment)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, so concerned I was about the decision that I chose to check the reality for myself.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. HOLNESS: I decided to get, Mr. Speaker, the real story. So I went and I visited the Transport Centre and I got a briefing from the Managing Director, or what is the Managing Director.

Dr. DAVIES: Yes! Yes!

Mr. HOLNESS: So, Mr. Speaker, here's what I found.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. HOLNESS: The explanation is that, in order for the JUTC to improve revenues, they must take away profitable routes from the sub franchisees.

A MEMBER: Take away.

Mr. HOLNESS: Take away…. That's what you've done.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, it was presented in a most arrogant fashion.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: Take it or leave it!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. DAVIES: No! No! (Dr. Davies held his hand up) On a point of order! On a point of order!

Mr. CHARLES: Don't disturb the Leader. You going speak, don't disturb the Leader! Have a seat man, have a seat!

(Heckling by both sides)

The SPEAKER: Minister Davies.

Mr. CHARLES: You cannot speak.

A MEMBER: Another point of order!

A MEMBER: You hav fe give him a seat!

Mr. CHARLES: You cannot speak.

A MEMBER: Listen!

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker….

Mr. CHARLES: State your point of order.

Dr. DAVIES: ….perhaps because he's uninformed, the Leader of the Opposition....

Opposition MEMBERS: No, no, no!

Dr. DAVIES: ....the Leader of the Opposition is misleading the House and the public.

I held several meetings with the franchise holders. We discussed the issues and I overruled the proposal from the JUTC and expanded the number of routes on which the private franchise - sub-franchise holders could operate. And, therefore, I reject totally, absolutely, the assertion that this was arrogantly dealt with.

Mr. CHUCK: Clarification not point of order.

Dr. DAVIES: It's a revocation of what is a misleading statement and, therefore, the House cannot proceed to have a debate…. (Disturbance) ….based on misleading statements.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the member is entitled to his defense. What I was told and I met with the sub franchise operators.

Mr. DALLEY: You went on a job.

Mr. HOLNESS: They were of the view, and I certainly form the view based upon what I saw, that it was done in a 'take it or leave it' fashion.

Mr. Speaker, there was no consideration that the franchise holders had invested borrowed funds and some of them would have taken their redundancy money and invested in a bus at a time when the JUTC was not able to meet its carrying capacity, because that is the inequity of the situation. The JUTC couldn't meet their carrying capacity and so they invited persons to make an investment. And now, all of a sudden, Government sey, for us to make more money, these profitable routes that you have we have to take them away.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You repeat the foolishness!

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. McKENZIE: You caan call the Leader of Opposition.... You have a... sit dung beside yu! Caan refer to the Leader of the Opposition…. sit dung side yu.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, could you… On a point of order. I would like you to ask the Member to withdraw the comments he made in referring to the Leader of the Opposition as a whimp!

A MEMBER: No! No!

The SPEAKER: Which Member, which Member was that, Member McKenzie?

Mr. McKENZIE: What you say, sir?

The SPEAKER: Which Member was it?

Mr. McKENZIE: The Member from Westmoreland, Eastern Westmoreland.

A MEMBER: Bush man.

(Heckling)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Buchanan...

(Heckling)

The SPEAKER: ....Mr. Buchanan.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker....

The SPEAKER: Just a minute, Mr. Holness. Mr. Buchanan, there's a - I did not hear what is alleged you have said, did you actually use those words?

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker....

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Sit down! Sit down!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: The Speaker has acknowledged me.

(Laughter) (The Speaker gavels)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: The Member from South West St. Catherine…

Mr. CHARLES: Just withdraw and sit down. Don't give no speech.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: The Member from South West St. Catherine, Mr. Speaker, made a remark and and I thought it was wimpish and I remarked to my colleague beside me that that's a whimish comment. He, who was asleep… (Laughter) ....woke up on the occasion, hearing that and misunderstood what was said.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: Rubbish!

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. SHAW: We're going to evict you from this House!

(Laughter)

(Heckling)

Mr. WARMINGTON: You, you've been showing such disrespect all day! You have been showing such disrespect all day!

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Leader of the Opposition is making his presentation, I think it is only fitting that we hear him.

(Applause)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Thank you very much.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, some people can bear sacrifice more than others, some people have more means more than others. What do you tell a bus operator who finds himself suddenly without income? The conductor and driver who no longer have a job, the mechanic whose services will no longer be needed, the families who depend on these breadwinners who probably now will not even be able to afford bread, what do we say to them? Sorry me fren, but the money we would normally use on transportation, we have to use it to pay bak the money we borrowed to pay bak the FINSAC debt, so we have to take away your livelihood to make the JUTC profitable. That is what we're saying to that bus operator.

Mr. Speaker….

The SPEAKER: Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended sufficient to allow him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently for him to complete his presentation?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness.

(Applause)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, we believe that there could be a more palatable solution to this.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: The JUTC estimates that its carrying capacity is approximately 25,000 seats with 50% of that as standing passengers. That target, I'm sure, was set over a decade ago and possibly is out of line with the current commuter demands. A revision of this I am sure will reveal the need for more seats. So the assumption that the JUTC has now reached its carrying capacity with the addition of its new buses may not be an accurate assumption in the first place. And I encourage the management of JUTC to look into that, because it could very well be that they actually need the buses that they have cut from the system.

But, in any event, Mr. Speaker, the JUTC should seek to set higher service standards by reducing the number of standing passengers. So even without checking whether or not the actual demand is greater, 50% carrying load - well, 50% standing carrying load certainly puts pressure on the buses and helps to increase the wear and tear much quickly. So that figure of 50% of the carrying capacity standing should also be reduced. And when you do that, you'd probably find that you need more seats. So, Minister, I recommend that to you.

But, even outside of that, even outside of that, the solution could also lie in how the JUTC allocates its capacity during peak and off-peak times against the variable cost of operating the system. I am sure that many times you would have seen virtually empty JUTC buses operating during off- peak hours. The cost of fuel and crew would make those trips uneconomical. However, allocating these buses in off-peak time, in other words, Mr. Speaker, giving the sub-franchisees the off-peak hours - you have smaller buses that match the off-peak demand could actually save the JUTC cost.

Mr. Speaker, I'm saying that in these difficult times when we have to make tough decisions, Government must show thoughtful and creative leadership to balance the need to satisfy the IMFs imperatives.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: And I pointed out to you one way in which this could be done. Use the off-peak times when you are carrying high variable operating cost and substitute your JUTC buses with the smaller sub-franchise buses whose cost match the peak demand, that is a workable option. And again, I encourage the knowledgeable Minister, to look into that solution.

Mr. Speaker, in our poor budgets during the worst global recession as a government, when our remittances fell, our bauxite earnings fell, and there was general fallout in government revenues, we levied a total of approximately Forty-six Billion ($46B) in taxes. We were called uncaring, wicked, evil government. This is only the third budget of this new PNP Government, and already they have dashed on the people almost Sixty-two Billion ($62B) in new taxes.

And so I ask Mr. Speaker, who is the wicked government now? Who is the uncaring government now? Who is the evil government now?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, who are the people inflicting pain and punishment on the Jamaican people?

A Government MEMBER: JLP!

Mr. HOLNESS: It is always a tough call to increase taxes. It is never a good idea to take more money out of a shrinking economy and pull more money out of people's already over-burdened pockets. It is even more disturbing when those taxes are not going towards the provision of additional services or the development of new infrastructure, or increased opportunity. But these taxes are to pay obligations created by this Government's policy failures and bad decisions like CAP.

Nevertheless, the old saying is true; the only certain things in life are death and taxes. So if you have to tax, at least tax smart, tax thoughtfully, tax fairly.

Mr. Speaker, we have made specific recommendations to the Government not to increase transaction taxes, that is, Transfer Tax and Stamp Duties, for example. Instead, in its wisdom or desperation, whatever the case may be, the Government has instituted a new transaction tax, the Withdrawal Tax.

Every Minister of Finance must be cognizant that a tax is as much a revenue earning measure as it is a signaling mechanism for the market. In other words, Mr. Speaker, we don't only put on the tax to earn revenue, sometimes you want the market to behave in a particular way and so you use a tax. This tax is going to do more damage in its signaling, than what it will earn in revenue.

Mr. Derrick SMITH: You understand, Bobby?

Mr. HOLNESS: And every Minister must understand that such thing. The tax might be small, you know, it might be inconsequential, but the signal it sends does more damage than the revenue it collects. And such is the case with Withdrawal Taxes. Numerous studies have been done on these taxes, Minister.

The Minister says he does not know whether the banks are going to pass on the tax. But all of us know that the banks are going to pass on the tax.

Mr. Speaker, the tax is likely to be a nuisance. When you write a cheque for Ten Thousand ($10,000) you better be sure that you have Ten Thousand ($10,000) plus tax in your account, otherwise you will be getting back your withdrawal amount, less tax, because it is unlikely that the bank is going to pick up your tax if you don't have it in the account.

So, Mr. Speaker, some countries have implemented the Withdrawal Tax, but they have quickly taken it off, because they realize, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, that it sends a bad signal to business. Pakistan still maintains a Withdrawal Tax and they do it for a particular reason.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Taliban.

Mr. HOLNESS: But what they want to do - but we don't have any Taliban here so why you putting on the tax?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: The reason why they put on the tax is to encourage people to use the banking system. So it's a disincentive to pay in cash or to operate in cash, so it's a tax on the withdrawal of cash. But in Jamaica it is a tax on every transaction, including transactions between yourself. Which is what I can't understand, Minister. So if I have two bank accounts and I want to transfer money from Bank 'A' to Bank 'B' I have to pay a tax on that. It doesn't make sense.

Mr. Speaker, this tax becomes a punishment for using the formal banking system for regulating transaction tax...??? I am sure the Minister has heard people say to him that they are now going to put their money under mattresses, because what they stand to get in interest on savings is less than the amount that they have to pay in bank fee; and on top of that, too, they have to pay a tax to use their own money.

In general, Mr. Speaker, financial transaction taxes like this Withdrawal Tax, like Stamp Duty, have a negative impact on commerce. As a new convert to free market principles, we would have expected that you would have intuitively known this.

Mr. Speaker, these taxes are counterproductive to the growth agenda, and that is why most countries have abandoned them.

But there is another consideration. Yesterday I received an e-mail from a Jamaican living in one of the Gulf States, who is following with interest a proposal to create an international financial centre here in Jamaica. And I thought I would just read what the e-mail said. He said:

> "Has your government abandoned the idea of Jamaica as an international financial service centre? Surely, they must have. If the country is serious about becoming an off-shore financial centre, how can it place a general tax on financial transactions?"

It sends conflicting signals. People, in thinking where to invest their money, assess political risk, the favourability of the tax environment and the strength of the regulatory environment and the justice system. With the imposition of a general financial tax on transactions, Jamaica has become less attractive when compared to other countries which are presently developing their plans to become off-shore financial centres as well. How do you expect to compete with Panama, for example which has no tax?

Mr. Speaker, the Government was not thinking when it implemented this tax. The tax will certainly reduce the pay of public sector workers who are already feeling the pain under the cold wage freeze. It will affect

business operators, from the small shop owner to the big retailer. It will affect the grandmother - this is one that I found very interesting. It will affect the pensioner who has opened a JN account to receive her remittances or her pension from overseas.

It is a dragnet tax which you cannot escape or avoid if you use the regulated banking system. It is a continuous tax. It is not a tax on value, it is a tax on the use of money, it is a tax on the rollover of money.

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took her seat.)

So if Kevin pays Keisha, who then pays Simone, who then pays Donna Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000) each time, four set of taxes will be taken. It is therefore inflationary.

Mr. Speaker, we are strongly opposed to this tax. (Opposition Members applaud) It opens the door to other brazen and thoughtless tax impositions under the guise of passing some IMF test.

Mr. DALLEY: Guise, eh?

Mr. HOLNESS: It would be irresponsible for the Opposition to merely say we oppose the tax. Prime Minister, we resist this tax. (Opposition Members applaud) This is now a point of departure.

Prime Minister, you claim to be looking out for the interest of the poor and vulnerable. In today's Jamaica the poor and vulnerable use banks and ATMs, too. They have to cash their PATH cheques, they have to take their remittances from accounts which they were encouraged to open.

Prime Minister, withdraw the tax. (Applause) Withdraw the tax or else! (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Or else what?

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, we cannot let adversity blind us to opportunity.

Mr. SHAW: Hear! Hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: We cannot let crisis and desperation cause us to forego creative solutions. Making sacrifice does not mean that people have to suffer, but that is what is happening to this Government. The Government is not implementing creative solutions or taking smart decisions that will spur growth. They are not taking decisions that are fair to the people who are called to make the sacrifices. And most of all, it is not being true to its own call for sacrifice.

Mr. SHAW: Hear! Hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: The Prime Minister is calling on the Jamaican people to live within their means, yet her Administration shows no solidarity with the poor. They are not leading by example with the belt-tightening. The Government continues to spend on new vehicles, contract jobs and consultancies for the "boys" and "girls", not to mention the massive travel bill.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. DALLEY: No, man, you know better than that!

Mr. HOLNESS: You know, Mr. Speaker, my friend from Northern Clarendon...

Mr. WARMINGTON:...who has no sense!

Mr. HOLNESS: ...says I know better than that, as if to diminish the symbolism of Government showing solidarity.

You know, I found it quite interesting that...

(*Sotto voce* comments from Mr. Dalley)

Mr. SHAW: Keep quiet, nuh man! You are an irritant! Stop it!

Mr. HOLNESS: ...the Prime Minister of the UK, David Cameron, when he was carrying through his austerity programme, he would normally have the convenience of flying on his own jet. But you know what he did - he didn't have to do it but he did it - he flew commercial, saved the Government hundreds of thousands of pounds. He didn't have to do it.

Dr. DAVIES: That's an exaggeration!

Mr. HOLNESS: No, it's there.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: Don't diminish the value of the symbolism, don't do that. It is important that if you are going to ask people to make sacrifices, you must do it yourself!

(Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: Lead the way! Inspire them!

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is right...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HOLNESS: The Minister of Finance is right on one thing. We are at our limit, both for fiscal recklessness and the absorption of new taxes. We are at our taxable limit. For accountability and history, it is important to establish who caused the debt crisis that we are now grappling with. Indeed, we must judge our Leaders by their deeds and not their words. At the end of the argument, however, we still have the debt, and we must still find a solution as to how to... (Inaudible)

So, the question is asked again, where is Jamaica going with all this debt? Are we to conclude from the Minister's Statement that for the foreseeable future, or at least for the next three years until the end of the Extended Fund Facility, that all we can look forward to are more taxes, steeper budget cuts, and people losing their livelihoods. Is that what you are offering to Jamaica?

Dr. PHILLIPS: More agro-parks, more hotel, more jobs.

Mr. HOLNESS: Is that what you are offering to Jamaica - more taxes... more taxes... more cuts?

Dr. PHILLIPS: More energy solutions.

Mr. HOLNESS: That is what you are offering.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. HOLNESS: Minister, I went on a bus... I went on a bus - went Downtown, did my fact finding before I came here to make my speech. And you know what, Mr. Speaker, the common theme - he said we were searching for a theme - he doesn't have to search hard; anybody who he speaks to will tell him the common theme, right across Jamaica - times hard.

Mr. D. SMITH: ...(Inaudible) ...people fool we up.

Mr. HOLNESS: Times hard because of the debt; and who caused the debt?

Government MEMBERS: Audley, Audley.

Mr. HOLNESS: The PNP.

(Applause by Opposition Members)

A MEMBER: It is rubbish... rubbish.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I sat beside a cosmetologist - a young lady who was training to become a cosmetologist, on the bus, and she complained to me - she complained to me, Mr. Speaker, that last week she bought some products, and it cost her *x* dollars, and by the time the products finished, which would have been in a week, and she went back, the products went up 30 per cent. And when she asked why the products gone up so much and the dollar don't devalue that much, the supplier explained to her that he has to buy stock three months in advance, and so he has to charge a price now that can get him that amount of stock to last him for three months.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: Oh yes, she said to me, Mr. Speaker, after complaining about all that is happening in Jamaica, she said to me, *mi wah leave Jamaica because Jamaica nah guh no weh.*

Mr. Speaker, I spoke to an ancillary worker, and she was almost on the verge of tears when she put her case to me that her pay only goes to cover bus fare and lunch money. I spoke to a young man who asked me for a job.

Mr. PICKERSGIL: On the same bus?

Mr. HOLNESS: On the same bus, and he left his resume with me.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker... Mr. Speaker, right at Parade when we disembarked...

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HOLNESS: Seriously - at Parade, Mr. Speaker, when I disembarked, this young man...

A Government MEMBER: Lie.

Mr. HOLNESS: ...handed me his resume and he said to me that, five months now he is going around, leaving his resume all over Kingston, every where he sees there is a job opening, looking for a job, can't get a job. And this fellow has a first-degree from UWI - can't get a job. But, my friends opposite make light of the situation - make light. Mr. Speaker, time hard but it is not hard for them.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke to a taxi-man.

Government MEMBERS: On the bus?

A MEMBER: On the bus, he spoke to a taxi-man.

(Heckling)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, you know, it is a good thing, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SHAW: It is a big laughing matter, *nuh* true?

Mr. HOLNES: ...that that taxi man wasn't carried on television, on the news, and his complaints were carried when I was speaking to him. And, you know what he complained about, how he was treated by Transport Authority and the police, but he said - he asked me to ask you Minister, he said that there is an anomaly...

Dr. DAVIES: How come you just asking me now and it is three weeks ago.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: I had to leave something for the speech. Mr. Speaker, he asked me to ask you...

Dr. DAVIES: On TV?

Mr. HOLNESS: Publicly - *nuh* public business, yes. So, he asked me to ask you why is it that the Transport Authority is only licensing the cabs to carry three persons but yet they are asking them to get insured for four, and he found...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. HOLNESS: No, it's four plus the driver - three plus the driver. So, he is asking you, Minister, to look into that anomaly. And I am doing it publicly. I may not see him again, he knows now that I have asked you, and you are going to look into it. Mr. Speaker.

Dr. DAVIES: *Yuh tek im* name?

Mr. HOLNESS: No, it is a general problem, not specific to him.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that policymakers know how the people feel. Things look very differently from the top floor at the Ministry of Finance than how they look in Half Way Tree square. My job, as an elected Leader in this country is to represent the views of the people in the highest Court of the land, the Parliament. My job, Mr. Speaker, is not only to plea the case of those who are suffering; it is not good enough to say how much we love the poor, we must show them that we love them. We must give them hope. We have to show that there is an alternative path to the current path we are on. We have to provide solutions.

Mr. Speaker, we are the party of solutions. All speakers on this side have not only brought the hardship of the people to Parliament and criticize the Government for its inept handling of public affairs; we have also brought solutions and proposals to the table.

In last year's Budget, Audley and I brought 21 discrete solutions to the table which could be implemented in the short and medium term. This year, I want to engage the country in some big ideas that could make Jamaica take that quantum leap.

Mr. Speaker, idea number one: Institutional reform. Mr. Speaker, Jamaica's economic history is a story of paradoxes and unfulfilled potential. God placed us strategically along international shipping routes and close to the largest markets in the world. However, we have not taken full advantage of this. We have, through the years, received consistent flows of major investments. However, we have simply not performed in the way that we should. We have not grown in any meaningful way.

As you have already heard, the crowding out effect of high debt is inimical to growth. But there is something else that is holding back growth in Jamaica, and that is the lack of institutional reform. It is said, with economic thought that merely employing fiscal discipline, cutting public expenditure, raising taxes and borrowing less, and sticking to targets, while necessary to achieve growth, it is not sufficient.

There must be an accompanying set of reforms; reforms in our laws, regulations, government, and you would have heard us say, Mr. Speaker, from time to time, that the Government must complete the tax reform process. The Government must start the reform of the pension system. And, Mr. Speaker, to be fair, we must acknowledge that the Government has brought important bits of Legislation, some of which were developed under the JLP Administration, notably, the Omnibus Incentive Act, and reforms of the tax waiver, the incentives and the fiscal rule, to name a few. Those important Bills have been brought.

This, Mr. Speaker, is one aspect of institutional reform. We must undertake these reforms if we are going to actually set the stage for growth. We cannot build a 21st Century economy on 20th Century practices, laws, and regulations.

Today, I want to take the concept of institutional reform one step further. Consider for a moment how you define an economy, or a society. You could say that a society is a network of people, organizations, and institutions. Equally, you could say that the economy is a network of people, markets and institutions. If you want to judge how well our society or economy is doing, all we have to do is examine how well the constituent parts are fulfilling their purpose, and how well they are integrating and effectively contributing to the needs of the wider society and economy.

I believe it would be a useful exercise to conduct an institutional audit and review of our society and economy. It would reveal organizations that are not fulfilling their mandates, markets that are failing and emerging social and economic needs which are there, but no established mandated institution to fulfill them.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a conventional or limited public sector modernization review. It has been going on for years in one form or another but which - and which has produced report after report, but none of these reports ever get used.

Mr. Speaker, I am talking about asking some serious questions of our institutions and organizations. I am talking about radically transforming our institutions to make them relevant to today's needs. The greatest institution builder in the history of modern Jamaica is the Most Honourable Edward Seaga. (Applause) He was a visionary who understood that you build a nation by building institutions. But sometimes institutions lose the vision for which they were created. They miss their purpose. They become self-serving. Mr. Speaker, when last has the UDC built a new town, or revitalized an urban area - when last? With the great problems of urban decay and population shifts, where is the visionary thinking and creative execution of the urban development agenda?

Dr. PHILLIPS: The bus park Downtown was your idea.

A Government MEMBER: It is the bus park Downtown.

Mr. HOLNESS: Or, Mr. Speaker, are our boards trapped in the mindset and fear that they cannot do anything because they have no money.

Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that the real housing demand in Jamaica is somewhere in the region of 20,000 housing solutions per year. That's the estimate.

Dr. DAVIES: Yesterday Horace said 10. Horace said 10, yesterday. I heard Horace's speech.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, 20,000, that's per year. Mr. Speaker, when Michael Manley conceived the idea of the National Housing Trust, he was seeing before his eyes the mobilization of workers' savings to accelerate the process of acquiring and building homes for the common man. I ask the Prime Minister, do you think Michael Manley would be pleased with how the NHT is being operated today; with the savings of workers being taken as tax to repay debt? Do you think Michael Manley would be satisfied to hear that the NHT is only going to do 2,000 solutions this year?

Mr. SHAW: Shame.

Mr. HOLNESS: I don't think so, but that's one of our major institutions. Is it fit for purpose? Is it doing what it is supposed to do?

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. HOLNESS: But it is there.

Mr. Speaker, HEART/NTA was set up more than thirty years ago to ensure that industry had a trained and work-ready labour force. But it's a puzzle to me looking at STATIN's report on the average for the last three years of training in the labour force. Mr. Speaker, you would be surprised to know that only some 11 per cent of the labour force is certified in vocational areas, 11 per cent. Approximately 13 per cent of the labour force has a degree or diploma. Approximately 69 per cent have no formal training whatsoever. And we wonder why our productivity rates are low compared to that of our regional competitors. Edward Seaga would certainly not be satisfied with this situation.

Mr. Speaker, I selected the three of our larger institutions to illustrate the need for an institutional audit and review right across the society. Many of these organizations were established thirty, forty, fifty years ago and since their establishment their mandates have not been refreshed. There has been no recalibration. As a matter of fact, some are not fulfilling their mandate and need to be revitalized. Some have been fulfilling their mandate, like the Rural Electrification Programme and I would dare say too the Family Planning Board. But these organizations need to be re-tasked to serve other emerging needs and I will say that I have seen where the Rural Electrification Programme is doing some re-tasking now to spread renewable energy. And that's good and this is the kind of thing that needs to happen; an institution has reached its sunset, you have to decide if you're going to keep it or you're going to re-task it; you're going to shut it down or you're going to re-task it.

Mr. SHAW: Omar, vision. Vision.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, without this kind of exercise we will continue to have institutions using public funds in inefficient ways and not contributing to national growth and development. When this institution - or when institution or institutions and organizations lose their purpose, they become

merely bureaucracies. They exist to follow routine even if that routine doesn't serve a larger purpose. This becomes the source of frustration for those of us who have to do business with Government or seek Government approval. You're put through a long and convoluted process with steps and forms that seem utterly meaningless. And you wonder to yourself, couldn't this be done in a simpler fashion? Why does it have to take so long to get things approved? The simple answer, Mr. Speaker, is that our institutions have become bureaucracies. They're not concerned with outcomes and efficient processes. They're only concerned with procedures. It is the duty of government to ensure that all our institutions, whether they be ministries, agencies, government-owned companies, or self-financing statutory bodies, that all our agencies are fulfilling their mandate. Otherwise, Mr. Speaker, we are simply wasting public funds.

Mr. Speaker, I keep pointing out that in the 90s we engaged in an exercise that expanded government. We engaged in an exercise that created a new form of public body called the Executive Agency. In the Executive Agency Act is the requirement that the Executive Director, the CEO, is reviewed periodically. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Government if these reviews are being done; if these executive agencies are being reviewed against mandates? Are key performance targets set for these agencies? Or are they using public funds in the same way that central ministries use them? These are fundamental questions to ask because they have an impact on the efficiency of our budget. When we as parliamentarians sit out here we can't tell if what is presented to us is the best decision. We can look at it from a political point of view, but we can't look at it from a technical point of view.

Mr. SHAW: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: And so it is important that there is some eye, some element, some oversight body that is reviewing these organizations. Fifty years now, we have whole heap of organizations all on our budget and we don't know if dem mek sense.

Mr. Speaker, the way in which our system of government is structured, Parliament has part of that role. Every year - and the Member from Central Kingston, I recall, was a crusader for this, he would stand up and ask why are the reports late. (To Rev. Thwaites) You recall? Why are the annual reports late? Why they are not tabled?

Mr. SHAW: Arrears to.

Mr. HOLNESS: Yes.

Mr. SHAW: He was big on that. Oh yes.

Mr. HOLNESS: Yes. But no I'm not making a criticism of you, Member. I'm not criticizing you. I'm just illustrating the point that Parliament should have the role of oversight of the efficiency of institutions and it is done through the process of these institutions submitting to Parliament their annual reports. But you know what has happened, Mr. Speaker, and we're all guilty of it as parliamentarians, the report comes, they come late, they are five years behind, sometimes two years behind, we try to get them up to date. I suspect they're still up to

date now, but we don't read them. The Sessional Committees…

Dr. PHILLIPS: If your spokesman... (Inaudbile)

Mr. HOLNESS: Yes and the Cabinet should do as well.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. HOLNESS: (Chuckles) Mr. Speaker, the Committees of Parliament don't always have the resources to do this. We must give credit to former Prime Minister Golding. He improved the system by making the parliamentary Committees headed by Opposition Members and gave more resources to the Public Administration and Appropriations.

Dr. DAVIES: You're arguing with that. Audley was chairman of the Public Accounts....

Mr. HOLNESS: Yes, I'm talking now about the augmentation of the process.

Dr. DAVIES: Okay.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: So no, we give Audley credit for his years of service there.

(Cross talk)

Well, I remember the formation - Mr. Speaker, let's be fair on this, it was the previous PNP Government that established the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee.

Dr. PHILLIPS: And the Economy and Production Committee, everything.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. HOLNESS: Now, Mr. Speaker, I recall that the then PNP Government - I was the one by the way Mr. Speaker who moved the motion here for the re-installation of that Committee and for many years, I remember I sat on the Committee and we meet once, we called for the Financial Secretary at the time and she was very reluctant in coming and we had two meetings and then after that it died. It was not until we took over that the Committee got the energy and started to meet again. So that's the fact, that's the fact. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the point because I don't want to lose it. I want the House to be seized of it. I want Jamaicans to understand that where we are as a country we need now to take stock of our institutions.

Mr. SHAW: Hear! Hear!

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, an institutional review is not auditing exercises. They have to be done against a clear national vision and a plan of action and then we see how our institutions fit into the big picture. This has to be done with missionary and visionary zeal. It requires leadership whose time horizons are not the next elections, but who can think and envision thirty, forty, fifty years from now. I have started that process to begin to look at our institutional assets and see how they can support the growth agenda, how they can be reformed to be more efficient and effective. That's why, Mr. Speaker, I have appointed a junior shadow Cabinet, a group of young accomplished persons to assist in this exercise. We are not waiting until we are the Government then we figure out what to do with power. We are starting to use our time effectively to make sure that when we become the Government, we hit the road running.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Trust me you'll have enough time. (Laughter)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I want to put one other solution/suggestion on the Table.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Pickersgill)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I want to briefly talk about the knowledge economy. Societies and economies, Mr. Speaker, have evolved through various stages. We know about the Agrarian revolution, when land and natural resources were the main drivers of economic development. We then transitioned into the Industrial revolution where capital, the production of goods, became the main drivers of economic development. Today, the world is in transition again, the Information Age is upon us. This is the era of constant innovation, where information is converted into knowledge and intelligence, which drives the creation of new and improved products. In this age, economic development is driven by know-how, by technology.

Mr. Speaker, whenever I get a chance to speak of this topic, and I see the Minister of MSTEM, I always raise the point that we must not be confused by the explosion of cell phones and tablets and computers and the internet. All it means is that we are consumers of technology. We own our phone, we own our computer, but we don't own the technology that was used to make them. We don't own the know-how and in today's world it is the people who own the know-how that controls the wealth. That is the reality, that is the reality.

Mr. SHAW: Yes, knowledge base.

Mr. HOLNESS: So, Mr. Speaker, in everything we have to do, we have to focus now on the creation knowledge, know-how and technology.

Mr. D. SMITH: Knowledge base.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, knowledge, technology and know-how, resides only in people. Only people can innovate, only people can take existing information, use it to create new knowledge and then embed that knowledge into products that drive economic activity. It means that if we are to grow in the Information Age, we have to invest in our people. In today's world you can measure the wealth of a country by the level of know-how that is resident in its people. The STATIN figures for training can be used as good proxy for know-how. With approximately 69 per cent of our people not trained in any specific skill or application, we can have a better understanding as to why it is Jamaica is not growing. Why is it that even when we have big investment, Mr. Speaker, we still don't grow.

Mr. D. SMITH: We don't have any benefit.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that by now every Jamaican has heard about the coming of the logistic hub, as the Minister has pointed out.

Getting Goat Islands or wherever it is going to be located doesn't mean that you have a logistics hub. The two things are not the same though they are… Mr. Speaker, Jamaica has always been close to major shipping routes. We have had a port for a long time, and aside from the infrastructure

investment required which we will see if the Goat Islands project materializes, beside all of that we still need the investment in the human capital to make the logistics hub happen.

Let me say this to you, Mr. Speaker. Prime Minister, Minister with responsibility for the development of the logistics hub, two Ministers, if I were the Government, the money that I borrowed to do roads, I would take half of it and invest it in the Caribbean Maritime Institute and expand the capacity of the Caribbean Maritime Institute quadruple, so that we can be prepared to actually become a logistics hub. That's what I would do. (Applause)

As I said earlier, Jamaica has a growth paradox. And in my last speech, Mr. Speaker, I spent extensive time explaining what this growth paradox is. We have gotten significant investments before in our bauxite, in our tourism and recently in our telecoms. But the infusion of capital and jobs has not resulted in sustained take-off of growth.

Mr. SHAW: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: We are lagging on the runway and then we stall. Billions putting for bauxite, billions for tourism, billions for telecommunications, whole heap of jobs but we still just taxing on the runway. We can't take off. One of the major constraints on growth why we can't take off is the structure of training and know-how in our labour force.

So if I were the Government, the money that I am taking to fix roads I would take it and invest it in developing the human capacity of our people, because it is with that that you are going to earn the money to fix the road, otherwise all you are doing, Mr. Speaker, is fixing roads but creating another debt trap. And this is how we have to start to think out the solution for growth. That's how we have to start to think it out. The growth not just going to come because all of a sudden we are exercising fiscal discipline, no, all that is going to do with the fiscal discipline is shrink your economy, make it harder for your people, you can't get the taxes so you have to put on more taxes, and you end up back at square one. At some point in time somebody is going to have to say: let us go on a different path. Let us do something different.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I want to focus on knowledge. And if we are going to have these two new industries: the International Financial Centre and Logistics Hub and we are serious about them; well let's make the investment in the people because those two industries, Mr. Speaker, rely on nothing else but people. (Applause) Otherwise, Mr. Speaker, what Mr. Golding said is true, you are going to stay on the shore and look over at the Chinese working in Goat Islands. We are going to pass New Kingston or pass Downtown or Montego Bay, wherever the International Financial Center is located and just look at the buildings with expats working in there. We have to make the investment in people now. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, that is why we have already developed our plan as to what we are going to do. I will share it with you, I will share it with the country, the country needs to know. If we were the Government, Mr. Speaker, we would totally rethink the restructure of government.

What we would do, we would take the Training Section from the Ministry of Education. We would take some aspects of economic planning from the Ministry of Finance. We would take some aspects of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, some aspects from the Science and Technology Ministry and we would create a new Ministry call the Ministry of Knowledge, Economy and Growth. (Applause)

Dr. DAVIES: I think Audley should be in charge of that.

Mr. HOLNESS: Some of the task that this new Ministry would have, Mr. Speaker, would be number one, increased training in the workforce. (Applause) Number two; ensure knowledge transfer from foreign workers. That's critical. Government can't assume that because somebody is working alongside an expat that there is going to be knowledge transfer. You have to be deliberate about that. You have to actually set-up a programme so that that happens. That Ministry would be tasked with establishing a system of national apprenticeship and internship for our Jamaican youth. Every Jamaican youth should be attached to some training institution where they can learn a skill, learn how to work, learn discipline, (Applause) learn character development, national system of apprenticeship.

A Government MEMBER: Ronnie just announced it.

Mr. HOLNESS: No man, that's my announcement. That's something that I - I don't have to ask that.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Davies)

Mr. HOLNESS: You would go into it from 16 onwards. So the profile - we will get to it. I don't want to be distracted.

Mr. Speaker, the other task of this Ministry would be to ensure that skills and know-how match industry needs, both current needs and projected needs. And this is important, Mr. Speaker, to reduce what is called frictional unemployment. Jamaica has a very high level of unemployment, 90% of problem is not that there isn't any job, the problem is that there are jobs but the skills in the market don't match the jobs. And it takes a lot of time for people to go and get retrained. So you need a ministry that is actually ensuring that the subject that people are taking in schools, that the career path that people are going into that they match what is currently needed and what is projected. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this ministry would be charged with the task of making Jamaica the regional training hub. And we are already placed for that you know. Our training institutions, if properly resourced, could take on training for the entire Caribbean. Certainly, our teachers colleges could do that. The Edna Manley School could do that; Caribbean Maritime Institute could do that.

Mr. McKENZIE: GC Foster.

Mr. HOLNESS: Make the investment in creating Jamaica as the (head state) on training... (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this Ministry would also seek to identify linkages between industries and support these industries with marketing intelligence so that they know where consumers are, where demand is, what it is

likely to be. This Ministry would take knowledge, it would look at the economy and it would create growth. That is where we need to go. So when people say, yes, we are passing the IMF test, you passed three tests, that doesn't mean you are going to pass the other test to come. What you are going to do? Well, Mr. Speaker when people ask me I know what to tell them. When people ask me I already have plans put down to deal with it. I am not searching - I don't have to ask anybody else. We have developed these plans and we are waiting on the people to call us to implement them. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I don't want our Jamaican people to be just consumers of other people's knowledge and know-how. I don't want our people to be the ones getting the low-skilled jobs forever. Mr. Speaker, I want our people to be able to run these new industries to the point where if it is going to be foreign-owned the owners say: you know what, it doesn't make sense that I put people on a plane and carry them to Jamaica. Jamaican workers are just as good and better, it's better I pay them to do it. That is what we have to do and you can only do that by restructuring your government to focus on human resource development. We must engage a radical revolution in our human resource training in this country if we are to have any hopes of… (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, economic uncertainties are not the only uncertainties that perplex Jamaicans. There are a number of topical, social issues that are of concern to Jamaicans. Prime Minister, people want to know where we are going with the CCJ, Caribbean Court of Justice, haven't heard anything about it, but people want to hear. Our position is clear, ultimately it is a matter for the people to decide.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Wheatley)

Mr. HOLNESS: Then, Prime Minister, there is the issue of ganja liberalization.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Audley settled that.

Mr. HOLNESS: Driver, don't stop at all. Colorado Mall!

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. VAZ: The police.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SHAW: But dem chopping it up fine, fine.

Mr. HOLNESS: Madam Prime Minister, there is the issue of ganja liberalization which has been occupying public attention recently with very active lobby groups. And I must say, Prime Minister, I met with a few of them and they make a pretty compelling case, they do. But I also met with other persons who expressed private concerns. It is such an issue that people who oppose are not going to likely to say they oppose.

Mr. PRYCE: Where are you on it?

Mr. HOLNESS: It is still an evolving issue. But we did conduct a debate in this House, thanks to the Member from North East St. Elizabeth. It was a very interesting debate. I sat and listened but it was obvious that they were divides not along party lines but it is obviously moral issue for the people, it's a social issue, it's a religious issue for people. So, even across party lines you will find that there is no real consistent position, because

the Member from St. Ann, North West made a very compelling medical case against marijuana whilst the Member from North East, St. Elizabeth made a compelling case for marijuana.

Mr. SHAW: For export.

Mr. HOLNESS: And of course, the Minister of Finance made a compelling case for export.

Mr. Speaker, people want to know where we are going. People want to know where this debate going to end, people want to know, people want to come to a conclusion. Then Prime Minister, there is the great uncertainty in the LGBT community and ordinary Jamaicans alike about your promise to review the Buggery Act. The issue, Mr. Speaker, the issue...

Mr. SHAW: Check Time 100 for that. (Laughter) Check Time 100 for that.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by the Prime Minister)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the issue...

Mr. SHAW: Time 100 for that.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HOLNESS: I will be meeting with them, don't worry.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by the Prime Minister)

Mr. HOLNESS: I will be meeting with them.

Mr. Speaker, there is great uncertainty in the LGBT community and ordinary Jamaicans alike, about your promise to review the Buggery Act. The issue is very sensitive, of course, but I'm sure you will agree that more and more Jamaicans are generally discussing the matter, discussing the issue. And I think, Mr. Speaker, a way to finally bring some certainty to it would be to put it to the people.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: What's your position?

Mr. HOLNESS: Put it to the people.

(Heckling by Members)

Mr. HOLNESS: You ask me what my position is? I'm a servant of the people. Put it to the people.

(Disturbance)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker...

(Disturbance)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. HOLNESS: And finally, and finally...

Mr. SHAW: Put it to the people.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: Don't just pass a law; put it to the people first. When you a pass law, put it to the people first.

Mr. HOLNESS: And finally Mr. Speaker, there's the issue of the Queen being our Head of State. I'm sure that Jamaica would love to have our own Queen. And so, and so, Mr. Speaker, I am suggesting that we -

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: I would suggest my wife a Queen.

(Applause/Laughter)

Mr. Speaker....

Mr. SHAW: (Laughs) Good one!

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, my suggestion to the Prime Minister is that there is an election due sometime next year for Local Government; why not make

arrangements to have a Grand Referendum at that time. It would be cost-effective and it would certainly settle these thorny issues, while at the same time answering the question, where are we going on social issues?

Mr. SHAW: Put them on the Ballot.

Mr. HOLNESS: Put them on a Ballot, have a Referendum, do it at the same time as Local Government. (Applause) Let us solve these issues once and for all. (Applause) Don't let them stay there hanging, let's decide and move forward as a nation. (Applause)

You know that, Madam Prime Minister, is true people power. That is true people power. Mr. Speaker, let us have this Grand Referendum.

Mr. Speaker, the Jamaican people are quite aware that the country is going through difficult times. I don't get from the people that they are reluctant to make sacrifices for the good of the country. The bus franchise holders are not saying that the JUTC should continue to make losses and keep them on. That's not what they are saying. That's not what I got from them.

What they're saying is that the managers, the Minister, the politicians who run it, that they must exercise discretion and understand that the burden-sharing must be fair. That's what they are saying. And we can't argue with that point so we have to look for solutions that increase service, make the burden manageable and make the government agencies less dependent on taxes. And there's the solution, if we put our heads to it, we can find it. But sometimes we make desperation blind us to opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, while people are willing to make sacrifices, they don't want to sacrifice in vain. They want to get a sense that better will come, that there is hope, that there is a direction, that though we are going through turbulent times, people want to know that the pilot is competent, in charge and that we will reach the desired destination.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: And if the people are unsure and they ask the pilot for assurance, they want to hear the pilot chart the course. They don't want to be told, "go ask the co-pilot!"

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, in the past few days and in the days to come, you will hear about how much the government cares about the vulnerable. Mr. Speaker, caring is not just words, caring is the demonstration of deep understanding of issues and the assurance of solutions. The Budget does not give the assurance that we are getting out of crises. The budget says we will be in crisis for some time to come. This budget says the government is reliant on taxes. Eventually, taxes will disincentive businesses and revenue yields will decline, which will lead to more taxes to make up for lost revenues. This is in fact the cycle that we are in.

Last year, the Minister imposed some taxes. He said afterwards that there will be no need for any new taxes. Then he comes now and says, 'well, I thought we would not have needed any new taxes'. But, we told him that the more you put on taxes - and we are reaching our taxable limit - the more the yield,

the more the actual revenue from the tax will fall. And therefore, you are going to have to now come and put on more taxes. That's the cycle in which you are at you know, Minister?

Mr. D. SMITH: Maybe he should return.

Mr. HOLNESS: That's the cycle. So all that you're giving to the people for the foreseeable three, four years 'til you come out of the IMF deal, if you ever, is more taxes. We don't hear the innovative thinking of how we are going to solve our problem. All we hear about is fiscal constraint. That is not going to help us, with due respect, Minister.

Mr. Speaker, the present tax strategy of the Government is indiscriminate, desperate and a disincentive to business. We have shown that the government's policy of devaluation is flawed and inimical to the greater objective of reducing debt. Audley showed that clearly yesterday. Whilst you are trying to meet the IMF....

Dr. DAVIES: He didn't speak yesterday.

Mr. HOLNESS: Tuesday. Thank you for the correction. Tuesday.

A MEMBER: The next thing.

Mr. HOLNESS: Audley made the point very well, that while the Minister of Finance is being faithful to the IMF with regard to reaching the true value, the real value of the currency, allowing the currency to devalue, he's being unfaithful to himself in trying to control the debt, because the debt, based on your Strategy Paper, has increased by some $80 Million due to foreign exchange cost. So, you are in a conflicting position. You have two targets that if you meet one you gwaan fail the other. You know....

Dr. PHILLIPS: Don't worry 'bout that. What you don't know, we will explain.

(Laughter)

Mr. HOLNESS: I leave it to you, Minister, you are the Minister.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Opposition are preparing ourselves. We are ready. We will be hitting the road to answer the call of the people. We want that young man who was on the bus dropping off Resume's, though qualified and searching for job for over five months, to know, that we understand his plight and that we have plans to transform and grow this country. (Applause)

We are thinking in radical and new ways to achieve take-off. We want the young cosmetologist to know, that we will bring stability and opportunity to the economy, so that she doesn't have to go to live overseas. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker we believe in the Jamaican Spirit. I am hopeful in the energy of youth, which make up 66% of Jamaica's population. They are not jaded by the failures of the past and they are still open to trying new ideas and take hold of the possibilities of the future. (Applause)

We believe in Jamaica's industry and enterprise. We reject the PNP's poverty politics. (Applause)

Under the PNP, social mobility is destroyed. By their policies, without any global crises, they have decimated the middle-class of this country and increased poverty. (Applause)

The competitive and progressive attitude of this country, the competitive and

progressive attitude of this country is that we have an open society, we work hard and talent is rewarded. And it is on this basis that self-improvement is achieved, that each generation can expect to do better than the generation that followed. That is the definition of prosperity. That is the definition of progress. Under the PNP that is no longer the case.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we have been in the wilderness for far too long. The people of this country are waking up like the people of Israel we will have our deliverance.

(Applause)

We will find our way to the Promised Land.

A MEMBER: Yes, we will.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, we believe there is a pathway of prosperity for Jamaica. It requires visionary leadership; it requires leaders who can see the forest through the trees. Right now this government is only seeing trees, they don't know... (Chuckles) ...where they are in the forest.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: They need, Mr. Speaker, leadership that can stand up, look on the horizon, and if we're going in the wrong way, if we applying the wrong tax, that Government can sey, wrong jungle... (Laughter)

(Mr. Holness pointed to Mr. Pickersgill)

(Mr. Pickersgill laughs)

…wrong tax. But what we have right now is that the Government is in the jungle, in the forest and the people asking them, 'where are we going?' And the Leader turn to her co-leader and sey, "weh we going?" (Laughter)

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. HOLNESS: No direction, and that is how people feel.

Mr. D. SMITH: Co-leader is Omar, you know.

Mr. HOLNESS: They don't feel that the sacrifice, Mr. Speaker, is going to carry them anywhere.

Who will give deliverance to the people, who will restore hope, justice, leadership and prosperity? We understand the JLP is justice. The JLP is good leadership. (Applause) The JLP stands for prosperity.

(Applause)

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Standing Ovation by Opposition Members)

(Applause) (Heckling)

(The Speaker gavels)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended for us to do any further business this afternoon. I therefore move for the adjournment of the Parliament until next Tuesday, the 29th of April, when the Prime Minister will make her contribution to the debate.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do adjourn to next Tuesday, the 29th of April at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: House stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at approximately 4:49 p.m.

TUESDAY, April 29, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:19 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House
Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM McNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern

MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern

MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern

MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Arnaldo Brown.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Before we get down to today's business let us welcome our special guests today. We have Members of the Diplomatic Corps visiting with us, Mr. Errald Miller. (Applause) We have the President of the Senate and other Members of the Senate, (Applause) and former Parliamentarians, we welcome you all, good to have you. (Applause)

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 62**
  Plant Health Policy and Implementation Plan
- **Ministry Paper No. 63**
  "New Approach" National Security Policy for Jamaica 2014
- Corrigendum to the Ministry of Finance and Planning
- **Ministry Paper No. 64**
  Revenue Measures for the 2014/2015 which was laid on the Table of the House of Representatives April 17, 2014

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Last week I raised the issue of Members of Parliament receiving part salary or part payment or some Members of Parliament not receiving any payments at all. There were some explanations or excuses given then as to why. This week what I need to ask is what is the situation with drivers employed or assigned to Members of Parliament and Ministers because to date what I know is that those with whom I have checked, those drivers have not received pay up until now and some secretaries of the constituencies have not received either. So we got one explanation last week. So what is the situation now as it relates to drivers?

(DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, entered and took his seat.)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington this is not the appropriate place.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Where is the appropriate place, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Bring it to the attention of...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Where is the appropriate place?

The SPEAKER: The Accounts Department.

Mr. WARMINGTON: They are employed by Parliament, and you have entertained the questions.

The SPEAKER: If you are bringing it to the attention of the Parliament, yes, but you cannot get an answer today.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Well, if you say I cannot get an answer today but tell me that it is not - I cannot bring it to Parliament. They are employed by Parliament, Mr. Speaker, you erred right now, you are not correct in your ruling, I may say, this is the place to bring the question. You as Speaker ought to find some way to give an answer but to say you will give the answer in due course, but don't say I cannot bring it here. This is the place for it to be brought.

The SPEAKER: You could not be expected to get the answer today.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Why?

The SPEAKER: You are bringing it to my attention now.

Mr. WARMINGTON: So, I am bringing it to your attention, you will give an explanation in due course.

The SPEAKER: I will investigate the matter.

Mr. WARMINGTON: But don't say this is not the appropriate place or time then. That one you are incorrect with.

The SPEAKER: This is not the appropriate place to go into the details of it.

Mr. WARMINGTON: But you cannot say it is not the appropriate place, I disagree with you.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Warmington.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BUDGET DEBATE

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we continue the debate under Item 5 of the Order Paper. And today the single presenter is the Member who has served unbroken for 40 years the constituency of South West St. Andrew. (Applause) The Member who has served the longest as Sports Minister anywhere in the world. (Applause) And the Member who is the first female Prime Minister of this glorious country. (Applause)

Today we anticipate from our Prime Minister, her contribution to this debate.

The SPEAKER: Prime Minister. (Applause)

The PRIME MINISTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, distinguished Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, and international

organizations, Jamaicans, at home and in the diaspora.

(HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, Clarendon, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

It is with a deep sense of humility and gratitude that I rise to address this Parliament, in this important Budget Debate.

I give thanks to the Almighty God, for his favour on Jamaica and for his guiding hand in the face of the great challenges of our times.

(HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General, entered and took his seat.)

As a Government, we remain confident and resilient anchored in the mandate of the people to lead this country with skilful hands and integrity of heart. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, today, I remember my mother and my father. I honour their sacrificial investment in my life and I love them for the legacy of their values which have inspired me during my over 40 years of unbroken service to the people of Jamaica. (Applause)

(HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, entered and took his seat.)

I thank my anchor, my husband, Errald, (Applause) and the other members of my family including the one in a million Marva... (Applause) ...for their continuing support and encouragement.

My deep gratitude is extended to the Members of the Cabinet, the leadership members and supporters of the People's National Party, my councillors, and constituents of South West St. Andrew, the members of staff of the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Office, my advisory and administrative team, my security detail.

(MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural, entered and took his seat.)

I want to recognize the presence of the President of the Senate, Senators, former Senators, former Members of Parliament.

I want to begin by thanking the children of Jamaica, and to their parents, I say, take care of our precious gems, and the future leaders of Jamaica. The little girl that you abuse today, in a few years could become Prime Minister of Jamaica. The boy that you abuse today, in a few years' time could become Prime Minister of Jamaica.

(MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern, entered and took his seat.)

Ministers of Government, Leader of Opposition, Members of Parliament, Senators, mayors, doctors, lawyers architects engineers, we have a responsibility. I call on communities to join the parents in looking out

for the children in the various communities across Jamaica.

(MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, let me once again express my heartfelt gratitude to every Jamaican those at home and those who reside outside of Jamaica. You continue to be the wind beneath my wings and the source of my motivation.
Today, I am also inspired by the words of Joshua Chapter 1 verse 9:

> Have I not commanded you? Be strong, and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Applause)

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. Speaker, I address this Honourable House at a time when the financial resources of our country are low, when the confidence of some of our fellow citizens has been dented by doubt and discouragement. It is a time when many ask the question, how much more can we sacrifice? I say to them, be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged.

(HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

Last year was another challenging year. The severity of the fiscal adjustment which has to be undertaken is causing hurt to all of us. No one has been spared; the poorest households, middle-income professionals who operate on a fixed income, and business persons with large and small enterprises.

My understanding of the pain, Mr. Speaker, resulting from some of the adjustments, particularly in the fiscal accounts, comes from a lifetime of service to the people of Jamaica, and an abiding desire to improve the lives of the entire Jamaican family.

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: It is not based on a single bus ride. When I go to the supermarket…. (Applause/Laughter)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: …I see the changes in the food prices and I am aware of the economic challenges within households. I feel the concerns, I know the expectations. Many persons tell me about their dreams for their children, they tell me of their hopes for a prosperous society. (Applause) My Administration, Mr. Speaker, shares their dreams and their aspirations. To realize our goals we have to get the economy right.

All well-thinking Jamaicans know that the economic adjustments have to be made. Most understand that this Government has been focused and responsible, they know that we are staying with the programme of macro-economic transformation. Let there be no doubt about that. This Government is equally

focused on protecting our people, particularly the most vulnerable in our society... (Applause) ...from the shocks of the adjustments that must be made.

Mr. Speaker, we are balancing the books while balancing people's lives. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: That's right!

The PRIME MINISTER: This is not a catch-phrase. It expresses the core of my philosophy on politics and governance. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right!

The PRIME MINISTER: It remains, Mr. Speaker, my non-negotiable position after four decades of public service. (Applause) It remains the firm guiding principle of our Government. When I speak about balancing people's lives I have in mind the generations of the Jamaicans who have emerged through a complex history, descendants of slaves, Maroons, indentured workers, traders and planters. I speak of the policemen, teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, household workers, gardeners, business owners, hairdressers, taxi drivers, civil servants, security guards, all the persons who are the engines of our nation's growth and development. I speak of the firemen; I speak of every category of workers, including our farmers, the backbone of our nation.

For us, Mr. Speaker, no matter how small the pie, every single member of our Jamaican family must get a portion, regardless of where they live, how they look, how they vote or not vote.

(Applause)

And I want make it clear, I know one thing, no matter what anyone wants to say, I am the Prime Minister for all Jamaicans. (Applause) We are the Government for all the people.

We have developed a creative mix of programmes intended to reduce the economic and social pressure on all our people, especially the poor and the middle- class. We were seeking to ease the tax burden, so this Government reduced GCT from 17.5 per cent - where we found it when we came to office - to 16.5. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker that is balancing the books while balancing people's lives.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: We believe in the dignity of labour, and that everyone should earn a decent wage for their work. We therefore increased the Minimum Wage twice. That is balancing the books while balancing people's lives. (Applause)

We believe that our people must be able to maintain, Mr. Speaker, a measure of economic stability in their latter years. That is the reason we increased the NIS pensions by 16.7 per cent. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: That is balancing the books while balancing people's lives.

We believe that public sector workers who have served this country with distinction and dedication should be able, despite the constraints, to feel the appreciation of the nation. This Government has increased government pensions twice. (Applause) That

is balancing the books while balancing people's lives. (Applause)

We know that our children must be given the best opportunities to learn. That is the reason we have significantly expanded the School-Feeding Programme. (Applause) And I want to commend the Minister of Education and his team.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, we have implemented several important community-building programmes through JSIF. That's balancing the books while balancing people's lives.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: That's not all, Mr. Speaker. This Government has made several major investments in our people over the last year and into this new financial year. We believe that we have a sacred duty to intervene on behalf of those who, for reasons of circumstance, age, infirmity or lack of opportunity, cannot adequately help themselves.

The Government will be spending over Five point Five Billion Dollars ($5.5B) to safeguard the welfare of the vulnerable in our society. (Applause) This amount includes Nine Hundred Million Dollars ($900M) to facilitate a 15 per cent increase in payments to PATH beneficiaries.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear! (Applause)

The PRIME MINISTER: That's what we mean when we say we are balancing the books while we are balancing people's lives. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we believe in education. We are the Government that had transformed education for our people.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right! That's right!

(MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western, entered and took his seat.)

The PRIME MINISTER: And there can be no denying of this. This is why we have made changes to the lending policy of the Students' Loan Bureau. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: That's right!

The PRIME MINISTER: Steps needed to be taken to address the conditions governing loans to students. We are aware that there are thousands of students from low-income households who, through hard work have qualified for tertiary institutions. Our commitment to balancing lives, Mr. Speaker, does not permit us to have the doors of opportunity slammed in the faces of those students simply because they are unable to qualify for loans from the Students' Loan Bureau.

(Applause)

You know, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency we now have so many students in tertiary institutions, some have graduated. We have doctors graduating, lawyers, engineers, just name it. You know why? Because we took the conscious decision in South West St. Andrew to invest in our children. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, balancing the books while balancing people's lives is a commitment that we stand by. Even before we came into Office 2012 we recognized the need for a special programme to provide jobs for the most needy. Under my instruction the JEEP Programme was designed and implemented. It has become one of the most popular programmes in recent times. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The PRIME MINISTER: I believe that whenever there is a crisis affecting our people the Government has a duty to apply appropriate measures to lessen the burden.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: JEEP has generated jobs for more than 42,000 persons. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: JEEP allows Members of both sides of this Honourable House the opportunity to have an input in the^ development and implementation of the small infrastructure projects that benefit the communities they represent - all of us represent.

Mr. VAZ: I want some more this year.

The PRIME MINISTER: And you shall have. It bears no political colour. It is not green, it is not orange, it is not blue, it is about people. (Applause)

Projects such as drain-cleaning, planting of barren hillsides, no grass, no trees, repairs to health centres...

A Government MEMBER: Sidewalks.

The PRIME MINISTER: So during this fiscal year the JEEP has been refueled to the value of Six Hundred and Thirty Million Dollars ($630M).

(Applause)

This is a special allocation from the loan made available for the Major Infrastructural Development Programme. I want to pause to commend Minister Davies and his team. Mr. Speaker, the progress continues as we work daily to balance the books while balancing people's lives. These are only some of the measures which we have taken to address the difficulties being faced by our people.

There were many more achievements, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my address to Parliament last year, this process is a journey, not an event.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's correct.

The PRIME MINISTER: The outcomes we seek will give us robust economic growth, and marked improvement in the lives and fortunes of our people. (Applause) I am committed to continuing to seek out and apply the necessary measures as we strive to balance the lives of all our people, as we balance the books.

Mr. Speaker, there is no quick fix to our economic situation. On this, we should have

bipartisan agreement. If there was a quick fix, given the Opposition's claim to their capacity to manage the economy, perhaps it would already have been fixed.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's correct.

The PRIME MINISTER: Instead, Mr. Speaker, it was made worse.

(DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central, entered and took his seat.)

Had the JLP Government done what they should have done when they should have done it, the country would not be in this difficult position... (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Control, control.

A Government MEMBER: It is true.

The PRIME MINISTER: ...lest we forget. You know what I have now discovered; there are four missing years, every time some people talk.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That is true... true, true... disappear.

The PRIME MINISTER: Just in case, Mr. Speaker, some people forget, the truth is that they took the IMF Loan Funds upfront. When the time came to make the necessary reforms, reforms that they had agreed to make, they did not fulfill their obligations. (Applause)

Mrs. NIETA-HEADLEY: That's correct.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

A Government MEMBER: They run away.

Mr. SHAW: And you haven't done it yet either.

Mr. CHUCK: Still not done yet.

The PRIME MINISTER: The Opposition Spokesman on Finance is on record saying - in this Parliament in 2010...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Shaw)

The PRIME MINISTER: Not even my baby Christiana is going to save you from this.

(Laughter/Applause)

And you know I love her. She is so sweet.

"The adjustment measures… let me look because I have to quote it properly... "The adjustment measures were difficult but could not have been avoided. No Government likes to impose new taxes, or to cut wages."

A Government MEMBER: Who said that?

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: No, *sah.*

Mr. PARCHMENT: Audley, can you recall?

The PRIME MINISTER: The truth is, if we could have avoided it, we would have. We took these serious and tough measures to secure the future of the country.

Government MEMBERS: Nooo… aaahhhh.

Mr. PARCHMENT: It could never be Audley. Audley, is you say that?

The PRIME MINISTER: "Our willingness to take tough measures - not popular, but necessary - give confidence to our development partners."

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Really!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Who was that; man a yard?

A Government MEMBER: Rey-rey… It was rey-rey time.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, they say they knew what they had to do, yet they failed to do it.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's correct.

A Government MEMBER: They walked away from it.

The PRIME MINISTER: I am here to tell the returned Opposition Member that no amount of blustering, or rhetoric, either now or then, will change the facts. It is history. You squandered your opportunity.

Government MEMBERS: Yes, yes.

The PRIME MINISTER: You may have chosen to forget but the people of Jamaica have not forgotten.

Mr. ATKINSON: And we will remind them.

A Government MEMBER: We can recall.

Mr. McKENZIE: Keep quiet.

The PRIME MINISTER: The then Government did not do what had to be done. That is why our Government, we are now feeling the crunch. Mr. Speaker, in his presentation to this Honourable House last week, the Leader of the Opposition made interesting use of the selected statistics on the Jamaican economy.

A Government MEMBER: As usual.

The PRIME MINISTER: He sought to establish that all the problems which the country now faces, originated during the 18 years of the last PNP Administration, from 1989 to 2007. In a sense, he was just a little too clever in this use - or should I say, misuse of statistics.

(Laughter/Applause)

He seemed to have forgotten the four years when the party which he now leads, formed the Government. Perhaps we should call this period, September 2007 to December 2011, the missing years of recent Jamaican history. (Laughter) I pause because I see Members of the private sector here as well. Thank them for their contribution, and thank them for being present.

A Government MEMBER: And they were present in those years.

The PRIME MINISTER: It is my duty to place on record, the hard evidence, Mr. Speaker, of the extent to which the country reverses forward movement during those four missing years.

Here are some facts. I challenge either the Leader of Opposition, or anyone else under his charge to successfully refute...

Mr. McKENZIE: Eighteen.

A MEMBER: How you know *suh!*

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The PRIME MINISTER: It is a refutable fact, that during the 18 years of the PNP Administration, the level of poverty declined from 29 per cent in 1989 to 9.9 per cent in 2007. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

The PRIME MINISTER: It is a fact that the last fiscal year of the last PNP Administration, 2006 to 2007, the economy grew by 3.4 per cent.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: That is right.

The PRIME MINISTER: It is a fact that inflation for 2006 was under six per cent. (Applause) It is a fact that the country's debt stock grew by just under 70 per cent between September and December 2011 - the missing years.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Holness)

The PRIME MINISTER: It is a fact that the exchange rate in September 2007, was $70.41 to US$1, and it was $86.60 to US$1 in December 2012. That too, was during the missing years.

Mr. SHAW: I mentioned that.

The PRIME MINISTER: Thank you for mentioning it; you reminded me.

Mr. Speaker, there are more statistics that could be provided to establish that while some things did not turn out as we had hoped, as a Government, and I am sure as they had hoped when they were in Government - and we readily admit to that - the country, in 2007 was in a better position than when we returned to Office in 2012.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That is true... fact.

Mr. MAIR: Untrue.

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker that is history. We accept that during the eighteen-year period of the PNP Administration, that there was significant borrowing and that we ran a budget deficit for several years. However, Mr. Speaker, there is a clear evidence of social and economic improvements. These include: the reduction in poverty, the expansion of educational opportunities, and the improvements in physical infrastructure, such as, the North Coast Highway, stretching from Negril to Port Antonio...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes...

The PRIME MINISTER: Highway 2000, which has revolutionized travel along sections of the South Coast...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes...

The PRIME MINISTER: ...improvements to our international airports and seaports...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes...

The PRIME MINISTER: ...significant developments in the tourism sector...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes...

The PRIME MINISTER: ...expanded water and sewage developments... and the list - I could go on, and go on, and go on... (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Don't stop the progress.

The PRIME MINISTER: The question I ask the Leader of the Opposition...

A Government MEMBER: Which one? (Laughter)

The PRIME MINISTER: The question is, Mr. Speaker, what exactly does the country have to show for the $660 Billion in increased

debt that incurred over those four missing years?

A MEMBER: Yes... missing...

A Government MEMBER: Christiana bypass.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The PRIME MINISTER: One of this Government's main priorities is to reduce the debt.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Prime Minister's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Prime Minister's time for speaking be extended until she has completed her presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Prime Minister's time for speaking be extended, sufficient for her to complete her presentation?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Prime Minister.

(Applause)

The PRIME MINISTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; thank you Honourable Members. This Administration has not only been saying that we have to live within our means. We have been doing more with less. Jamaica cannot continue to borrow its way out of its troubles. That is why we have to make the economic adjustments. Mr. Speaker, the Budget for 2009 was $561 Billion; the budget for 2012 was $610 Billion; this year's Budget is $540 Billion. We have no other choice but to spend less this year. We have to live, Mr. Speaker, within our means. (Applause)

The country is already aware; this Government secured an IMF Agreement. We negotiated hard to arrive at the best Agreement for Jamaica. As in any negotiation, both sides held strong positions. Our strong position was that the poor and most vulnerable must be protected in the adjustments.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right.

The PRIME MINISTER: We had to remain true to our word. We are balancing the books while balancing people's lives. To date, we have passed all quarterly IMF tests... (Applause) ...but this cannot be said of the four missing years.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mrs. NIETA-HEADLEY: Oh, dear, oh, dear!

Mr. Speaker, there are signs of improvement in the macro-economic stability of the country. The country's debt to GDP ratio is declining and we must keep going in this direction. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Right… right course.

Another Government MEMBER: Full speed ahead.

The PRIME MINISTER: There is evidence of growth in the following sectors of the economy, Mr. Speaker:

- agriculture;
- tourism;
- construction;
- mining and quarrying.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right.

The PRIME MINISTER: Earlier this year, Fitch Ratings upgraded Jamaica to a B-Minus rating and an overall positive outlook. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's correct.

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to complete the economic reforms especially since we are seeing a return to growth in critical sectors and since we are seeing greater levels of investment activities. This year there has been a small revenue package that has been presented by the Minister of Finance. Many concerns have been raised, we have listened. I have spoken to the Minister, we have discussed at the Cabinet, the Minister of Finance is to address the issue or the issues that have been raised when he closes the debate tomorrow. So this will be dealt with tomorrow.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's correct.

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

(Cross talk)

The PRIME MINISTER: The tough decisions we have taken and the painful adjustments, Mr. Speaker, we have had to make, they are bearing fruit. Bearing fruit, Mr. Speaker. We are seeing encouraging signs. Let me express my profound gratitude to the Jamaican people for making this tremendous sacrifice for the future of our country. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: It is during the most difficult circumstances that the Jamaican people reveal their courage and resilience.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: It is when we are asked, Mr. Speaker, to make that extra sacrifice, when we feel we are almost at the edge, that we find the strength to dig a little deeper into our resolve.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

The PRIME MINISTER: That is when we reveal just who we are: strong and determined to make life better for our children and our children's children. (Applause) At times such as this, Mr. Speaker, we must rise above the negatives, look for the positives and seize the opportunities.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right.

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, the issues we debate in this Honourable House today are not about the JLP and the PNP.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: If we must look to a P, that P must be the people.

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: That P must be purpose.

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

(Applause)

The PRIME MINISTER: That P must be progress.

A Government MEMBER: Yes.

(Applause)

The PRIME MINISTER: That P must be prosperity for all of us.

A Government MEMBER: Yes.

(Applause)

The PRIME MINISTER: Today we must declare our purpose as a nation, the purpose of ensuring a firm and solid foundation for the future.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right. That's it.

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, when I think of balancing people's lives, I think of the children moving into new and improved educational facilities.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hear, hear!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's it.

The PRIME MINISTER: For example the brand new Marlie Hill Infant School... (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's it.

The PRIME MINISTER: ...and Cedar Grove Academy in St. Catherine. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right. That's it.

The PRIME MINISTER: I think, Mr. Speaker, of the sugar workers and their families...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's it.

The PRIME MINISTER: ...who have been relocated from barracks into new houses with modern amenities. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

A Government MEMBER: Progress.

The PRIME MINISTER: I think of the thousands of persons who have been brought into the light through the Rural Electrification Programme... (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's it, that's it.

The PRIME MINISTER: ...and I commend the Minister. I think of our farmers who are now receiving water for irrigation through the National Irrigation Commission. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's it, that's it.

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

A MEMBER: Cow passport...

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, we are continuing the process of balancing people's lives. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right, that's right.

The PRIME MINISTER: We have honoured our commitment to complete various reclassification exercises. We have honoured our commitment to make one-off payments of $25,000 *per annum* to public sector workers. This amounts to J$2.8 Billion.

Mr. DALLEY: Promise made, promise kept.

The PRIME MINISTER: We have made the first payment and we are committed to make the next payment in August of this year. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right.

The PRIME MINISTER: We have honoured our commitment to preserving the jobs of public sector workers, avoiding the distress of mass redundancy.

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right.

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, we have honoured our commitment to transforming the lives of our people through the removal of zinc fences, building roads, schools and refurbishing health centres. (Applause) We have also provided grant funding for a wide range of projects across the country.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's it.

The PRIME MINISTER: That, Mr. Speaker is balancing people's lives.

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

The PRIME MINISTER: I turn now, Mr. Speaker, to some critical areas on which this Administration is focusing. We have made concerted effort to increase employment opportunities and to attract investments. We're undertaking infrastructure development projects for Jamaica's success. We're working toward making communities more liveable through a coordinated strategy, which includes rural development. You know, if we were to speak the truth very often governments are so tied up because of the lack of funding so that many times the focus is placed on our cities and towns and deep rural Jamaica is forgotten. I want to see us begin to look at our deep rural areas because those of us who represent inner city constituencies we know what it is. It is also said that there are some communities in deep rural Jamaica where the people their lives are worse off than those even in our inner cities. We need to address both," both our inner cities and those in deep rural Jamaica.

(Applause)

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, we are expanding ownership in Jamaica by providing opportunities for more Jamaicans to own property. We have restored Jamaica's credibility within the international community.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, we have.

The PRIME MINISTER: And I pause to thank the officials who are here: the members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps for the support we have gained, we have gotten from a number of countries. And when I mentioned sugar barracks, I should mention the European Union. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: And the Ambassador to Jamaica and all the Ambassadors from Europe. Every time we go to hand out titles or keys like me I see the feeling of joy on the faces of these ambassadors representing their countries from here. God bless the European Union, the largest contributor of grant funding to this country. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: That is why, Leader of the Opposition, when I was invited by the Leader of the EU I could not say no, but you know what, (Laughter/Applause) but you know what, the Monday when I went to Cabinet there was one person who stood up to me and said, God bless you, EU released some funds.

(Cross talk)

No, no, wise leaders cannot just stay home every time. Look at President Obama, he was where? Looking for opportunities for trade and partnerships with other countries and we are small Jamaica one tiny dot on the map.

(Cross talk)

And I read it in the papers that I was in Mexico and I pinched myself to find out whether I was at home or I really was in Mexico, but I would like to inform that I

should have gone to Mexico today - I couldn't go - speech and we indicated and the Mexican President will send his plane to get me tomorrow. (Applause) And will get me back to Jamaica after the meeting tomorrow night. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Andrew a *tek* bus. (Laughter)

(Cross talk)

The PRIME MINISTER: Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition should accompany me.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Mr. HOLNESS: You go by yourself. I'm fine with the bus.

(Cross talk)

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, no discussion about balancing people's lives can take place without improving the levels of investment and employment. My Administration is of the firm view, Mr. Speaker that our human resource must be at the heart of our growth and development strategy.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: The Government remains focused on creating jobs for our people. Between 2008 and 2011 - over 90,000 Jamaicans lost their jobs. We came to office and immediately set about addressing the unemployment situation facing the country. We put in place a number of programmes, Mr. Speaker. Earlier I spoke of JEEP. Some 12,000 persons are expected to be employed in the new phase of JEEP this year.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: Am I right, Minister?

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

The PRIME MINISTER: Government and the people working, working, working. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Working, working, working.

The PRIME MINISTER: Over 5,000 persons will be employed under the Agro parks programme.

Another 2,000 direct and indirect jobs will be generated from the re-organized scrap metal trade. (Applause) That industry, last year, earned in excess of US$14.6 Million, approximately J$1.5 Billion. Last year, 14,000 persons were employed in the Overseas Employment Programme. (Applause) Minister, we have a total of 14,000 now overseas and remember they're going…

Mr. CHARLES: No, no!

The PRIME MINISTER: It is not for one year.

Mr. CHARLES: Not yet, not yet.

The PRIME MINISTER: Right, we have 14,000 persons. Based on information from the liaison service in Canada and the United States, that number is projected to increase - don't hold me to it if it doesn't happen because anything can happen and they do not.... projected to increase to 16,000 this year. But I want to advise persons don't go rushing the Members of Parliament, they can only send persons who have the experience to work in the areas that they request the persons for. These include: welders, mechanics and

drivers who are paid at globally-benchmarked rates. Government and the people working, working, working.

Dr. PHILLIPS: While you have been talking, talking, talking.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Working, working, working. (Applause)

The PRIME MINISTER: The Government will not be able to create all the jobs that the nation needs, Mr. Speaker. We, however, accept that we have the responsibility to create the enabling business environment in which the private sector can create jobs. It is for this reason that we have placed emphasis on increasing investment.

I just pause to recognize the presence of one who gave distinguished service to his country, former Minister, former Member of Parliament O.D. Ramtallie.

(Applause)

When we say we have been working, working these are some of the things we have been doing to assist in bringing investors to Jamaica.

In 2007, for example, Mr. Speaker, I visited Spain and met with private investors. I invited them to come to visit Jamaica. In March this year I was pleased to welcome Dr. Cobiella, the Chairman of the Hospiten Group. The Group has made an initial investment of US$20 Million Dollars to build a 16-room 28-bed general hospital in Rose Hall, Montego Bay. (Applause) Construction slated to be completed within a year. You know, Mr. Speaker, the interesting thing, the interesting thing, Mr. Speaker, was that at the press conference when he was speaking, he made the point that because of the Prime Minister's visit to Spain - and when I was speaking about Hospiten and our hospitals she said to me why not build one in Jamaica, I am here now to fulfill that commitment I gave you. (Applause)

I want to thank the Spanish Ambassador, former Spanish Ambassador Jesus de Silva and the present Ambassador, it is now happening. The project will provide 300 jobs during the construction phase (Applause) with an additional 300 permanent jobs for medical and health professionals when completed. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Working, working, working.

EMPLOYMENT

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, we are securing investments for growth and development with job creation. In March 2012, I had the pleasure of meeting with Mr. K.S. Kumar of Sutherland Global Services, a US-based Business Process Outsourcing firm at the Jamaica Investment Forum in Montego Bay. I was delighted to officially open the facility at the University of the West Indies in December last year. Seven hundred (700) employees, mainly university students are now working that company. (Applause) When they leave classes they walk over to the center, they work, time for classes they move back into their classes after and there are some of them that expressed - and one young man that wrote a letter said how difficult it was for him not even having lunch money, but now he can pay his boarding, buy his books, having lunch

money and can now assist his family. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Balancing people life. And they never meet him on *nuh* bus.

The PRIME MINISTER: Sutherland Global is now seeking to expand elsewhere in Kingston, Portmore and Mandeville and the commitment was given for Mandeville. (Applause) And if UTECH had enough land to accommodate the building UTECH would have gotten similar to the University of the West Indies. Mr. Speaker, Sutherland Global Investment was a direct outcome of the Investment Forum in 2012. I look forward to hosting the next forum March next year. (Applause) And I want to commend the Minister and his team. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, more than 14,000 Jamaicans mainly young people and they understand, have found jobs in the BPO sector. We are securing investments for growth and development with job creation. Many more companies are investing and diversifying their portfolios. We look forward to the opening of the first Marriott Courtyard property in New Kingston. (Applause) Sagicor has invested in three hotels and plans are well advanced to expand the product offerings by building a water park at one of these properties. (Applause) The Minister of Tourism and Entertainment will provide more details when he speaks in the Sectoral Debate. But I would like to say something else on tourism.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I met with the principals of TUI Travel, which is Europe's largest tour operator and arguably the largest perhaps in the world.

Last year TUI increased airlift out of the United Kingdom to Jamaica from over 50,000 persons to over 90,000 persons, seats airlift, I am talking airlift here. I was pleased to learn that in the winter season 2014/2015 TUI will cause the British Cruise Line, the Thompson Dream to port in Jamaica for the first time. (Applause) TUI also operates the Royalton Hotel which was formerly the Starfish Hotel in Trelawny. The principals of TUI have given me the commitment, Mr. Speaker, that later this year they will start the construction of an additional 150 rooms. (Applause) This is a further indication of their confidence in Jamaica, Mr. Speaker.

Noranda Bauxite is investing US$18 Million in expanding their port at Discovery Bay. (Applause) Digicel is investing US$80 Million to put infrastructure in place to tap into opportunities emanating from the Logistics Hub. (Applause) LIME is investing $8.7 Billion to deploy a cutting-edge 4G mobile network. Mr. Speaker, all three telecoms, Digicel, LIME and FLOW are getting hub ready. (Applause)

There is, Mr. Speaker, expansion in renewable energy with the JPS recently opening the hydro electric plant in Maggoty, St. Elizabeth. There is increased investment in the Wigton Wind Farm and other investment in renewable energy. Mr. Speaker, there is a waiting list of investors to get into the Free Zones. We will continue our efforts to attract both foreign and local investment to create jobs and to grow the economy.

Mr. Speaker, my Administration recognizes the pivotal role of the private

sector in the growth and development process of our country. (Applause) The formal signing of the Partnership of Jamaica took place last year on the eve of Emancipation Day. We are working together on the economic reform programme, energy, crime, justice and improving the business environment. I thank the Opposition and the representatives from the trade union movement, civil society, the private sector and members of the academic community, all members of the partnership for their participation. (Applause)

Another important partnership effort has been the formation of a Linkages Council. This is now fully active within the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. I just double checking something with you. What about the manufacturers, we had spoken to that issue, (Conferring with Dr. McNeill) they are an important part of it.

Okay, thank you. I want to ensure that our local manufacturers be engaged, because the more hotel rooms we get then certainly there should be a space for die furnishing from our local manufacturers. (Applause) The Council has been meeting under the chairmanship of business executive Mr. Donovan Perkins. The head of the Jamaica Manufacturer's Association, JMA, Mr. Brian Pengelley is on record as stating that members of that organization are already reaping the benefits of this initiative. And I want to thank him for being here today (Applause) and for assisting to get this done.

The successful staging of the JMA/JEA Expo, Jamaica, in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce is it another example of the benefits of public/private partnership. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the President of the JMA, the President of the Jamaica Exporters Association, Mrs. Kennedy and the JAMPRO team for delivering a successful Expo 2014. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, partnerships take different forms as we all work together to balance people's lives. We are working hard to grow every area of business in order to achieve our objectives of growth and development with job creation. Mr. Speaker, the world is changing. In this globalized world there are several emerging industries in which we have an interest. This year particular attention will be paid to the development of three important growth areas, these are: the cultural and creative economy; (Applause) two, innovation, science and technology; three, for too long we have not been as a country and government paying enough attention to the nutraceuticals industry. (Applause)

CREATIVE CULTURE

These industries represent big business with new and exciting opportunities. The global market value of the creative industry I am told is worth approximately US$1.6 Trillion. The combined global value of science and technology-based industries is currently estimated in excess of US$4 Trillion.

Mr. Speaker, the cultural and creative economy, innovation, science and technology and the nutraceutical industry all have some things in common. They are people-centered,

they depend heavily on human input and Jamaicans have a natural inclination for creativity, ingenuity and innovation. They have the potential to create a large number of technical, creative, administrative, research and professional jobs. We have to, as a Government, give them full support and I'm sure we have the support of the Members of the Opposition. (Applause)

They have the potential, Mr. Speaker, to engage young people and vulnerable groups. They cross disciplines, agencies and ministries and, therefore, require joined-up approaches. They each assist in national development efforts including health and wellness, communication, education, community development and poverty alleviation. They are critical elements to grow Brand Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that Jamaica quickly grasp the opportunities in these global markets. This Government recognizes that swift and definitive steps have to be taken to grow and develop these industries. This Government has taken action. We are actively developing plans and policies for these emerging industries.

I have instructed the appropriate agencies to consult with the relevant stakeholders to facilitate intellectual property, management, research and development, supportive financing structures for industries, marketing and promotion, institutional strengthening, business development and incubation, training certification and standardizations of skills, the establishment and/or renovation of facilities and the facilitation of domestic, regional and international trade.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, let me just look briefly at the cultural and creative economy.

The Jamaican culture is embraced worldwide and our creativity knows no bounds.

I was extremely proud last year when on arrival at two international airports, I was greeted by supersized images of Usain Bolt, the fastest man in the world, advertising major international brands. International brand and pride of a people!

Shelly Ann Fraser Pryce, the fastest woman in the world is Jamaica's UNICEF Ambassador for Children. International brand and pride of a people. (Applause)

Tessanne Chin's 'Voice' made waves internationally. (Applause) International Brand and pride of a people!

Jamaican accents, personality and the music of Jimmy Cliff made last year's Volkswagen 'Happy Campaign' a most memorable and valuable promotion piece for Jamaica. International brand and pride of a people!

How could we speak of Jamaican culture and not mention the great Bob Marley? He is posthumously featured in a Special Edition of the Rolling Stones Magazine, over thirty years after his passing. (Applause) His song, "One Love" was named the song of the Millennium by the BBC. Another international brand and pride of a people!

I pause to congratulate Sister Marcia Griffiths on her celebration of 50 years in the music business. (Applause) As we all stand together, we will all turn the corner together

and be able to say as sister Marcia sings, "Thank you Lord, it is Shining Time Again".

I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, to inform this Honourable House and all Jamaicans that the Cultural and Creative Industries Commission which I chair, and the supporting inter-ministerial technical working group have been established and have begun their work within the Office of the Prime Minister. We know where we are going. Mr. Speaker, we are working to apian.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear! (Applause)

The PRIME MINISTER: This is a Government at work, balancing the books while balancing people's lives. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, science and technology are important drivers of innovation entrepreneurship and wealth creation. With the logistics hub and other opportunities on the horizon, knowledge facilitation and development remain important priorities. (Applause) Now and in the future, 70% of jobs will require knowledge in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

This year, we will begin the inter-ministerial policy integration of critical ministries to streamline, Mr. Speaker, the applications of science and technology in development. Because of the importance I place on these critical areas of development, I will Chair the National Commission on Science and Technology. (Applause) In this context, Mr. Speaker I now turn to the nutraceutical industry that I mentioned earlier.

Many Jamaicans know of the medicinal value of our herbs and plants. (Applause) We use the leaves from our trees and bushes to make teas, spices and treat ailments. Here is a real-life example of how this industry can stimulate wealth creation in rural communities.

The Southern Manchester Herbs & Spices Cooperative Society, which represents 30 stakeholders and 150 farmers provide dried herbs and spices such as Lemon Grass, Peppermint, Rosemary, Cerasee and Basil to tea producers in Jamaica. JSIF has provided this cooperative with a state-of-the-art drying facility, located in Prattville in Southern Manchester.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Good place, very good place.

(Inaudible comments)

The PRIME MINISTER: Communities which will benefit directly include Hermitage, Campbell's Castle, Lancaster, New Broughton and Mannings Field. Mr. Speaker, I am sure you are particularly pleased at this development. (Applause)

Mr. VAZ: The people sey fi tell you hi!

(Laughter)

The PRIME MINISTER: The Scientific Research Council and the Bureau of Standards are providing institutional support to farmers and other players in the value chain. I wish to commend the important pioneers.

The Hon. Dr. Albert Lockhart and the late Dr. Manley West and their team are worthy of commendation.

(Applause)

The Hon. Dr. Henry Lowe and his team have pioneered the development of dietary supplements, wellness teas and instant porridges made from indigenous raw materials, among other products like body wash, body lotion, you name it from our local products including medicinal products. I want to commend Dr. Henry Lowe and his team. (Applause)

Businessman Mr. Anthony Freckleton has established Jamaica Exotic Flavours and Essences Limited in Bull Savannah, St. Elizabeth. He has been working with farmers and collaborating with local agro-processors and scientific institutions.

I am told that when there are no buyers for melons, they don't go to waste because of the work this gentleman is doing in St. Elizabeth.

(Applause)

They are developing a wide range of value-added products from local fruits, vegetables and herbs. These will be used in nutraceuticals, cosmetics, beverages and sauces, locally and internationally.

I wish to acknowledge the teams of the Northern Caribbean University for their work and research in terms of some of our plants and herbs. And the University of the West Indies that are engaged in these research.

There are also hundreds of unnamed Jamaicans, who as a matter of course have turned to nature and provided us with an organic culture of healing and nutrition that remains with us until today.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

The PRIME MINISTER: Those of us who grew up in deep rural Jamaica as children when we were ill, despite the medical doctors here who might not support some of what was done then, but it helped then. They didn't just rush us to the doctors when we had a fever or flu. They went behind the house or the kitchen or somewhere, they picked some leaves or something and they give us a cup of tea or mug of tea and within a day you are running up and down, well again and good to go.

Government MEMBER: Not eucalyptus oil.

(Laughter)

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, Jamaicans are not short of ideas, we certainly are not short on innovation and our entrepreneurial spirit is hard to beat.

(Applause)

As a Government, we are endeavouring to do more and to find new ways to facilitate our people, to help them to start and to maintain viable businesses. Good things are happening. You know, recently the NHT launched an entrepreneurship competition. In just two weeks over 500 applications were received. This tells me that our people have the desire and the capacity to actively participate in economic activities.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: I see hope in the responses to the calls for proposals from the CHASE Fund and the Sports Development Foundation. Hundreds of Jamaicans apply to them every year to fund their proposals. This tells me that our people, Mr. Speaker, are yearning for more opportunities. The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, corporate Jamaica can testify to the large number of applications for sponsorship that they get for viable, practical projects. I commend the National Bakery for their Bold Ones Project that is helping small businesses to grow. (Applause)

I thank all companies who are facilitating entrepreneurship through sponsorship and corporate social responsibility. Every member in this House has received their fair share of business proposals and ideas. I think people out there believe that our pay is pay that we can survive. But when we get the requests from our constituents from every level, if it is a funeral, if it is for medication, if it is for somebody to go to - it is just unbelievable. And so, as policy-makers, we in this Parliament, we have a responsibility to ensure that in a number of these areas we assist and help to create the opportunities in partnership with the private sector so that we can help more of our people.

(Applause)

We all have facilitated micro and small businesses from chicken rearing to dressmaking to hairdressing. We are indeed all in this thing together. And I can say with the words of what they would say in my constituency, 'we are going to work it out'. We have to put in place programmes to address business facilitation, and we have to get it right. Successive Governments come and go; we speak about how long it is taking to make it possible for people to get the approvals and to be able to do business successfully in Jamaica; we have to get it right in this area.

We have recently launched the Enterprise Jamaica Project which is consistent with the new MSME policy approved in Parliament last year. (Applause)

JAMPRO's Export Max Programme is assisting small businesses to expand exports. Also the EX-IM Bank last year saw the highest levels of lending I am told, in its history. We are creating and enabling business environment. We know where we are going, Mr. Speaker, we working to a plan. (Applause)

And we just spoke about nutraceuticals all made in Jamaica, this is 100 percent exotic essences, flavours, eucalyptus, ligament repair, this improves circulation, and the men should listen, prostate treatment, and this one pain reliever, relieve aches, pain and congestion. (Applause) And this is a moisturizing cream for the skin, all made from natural ingredient Jamaican products, all Jamaican, everything natural. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to infrastructural development. You see, you have to see with me and forgive me, Mr. Speaker, ladies and gentlemen and Members of the Honourable House. It is often said we are doing nothing. I need to inform the country of some of the things we are doing. And when you don't see me, I am working, working, and working. (Applause)

I now turn to infrastructural development. I was recently speaking with a colleague who reminded me about what life used to be like in the 1950s for persons living below Spur Tree Hill who had to travel to Kingston. I was told that persons would shed tears, bidding their

families goodbye, as they were unsure when they would reach Kingston by road, and how long it would take them to return.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that many boarded the back of a truck which they literally had to push when they came the steep and treacherous track that took them over Spur Tree Hill.

A MEMBER: 'Man Bump'.

The PRIME MINISTER: Known as 'Man Bump'. Thank God it wasn't 'Woman Bump'. That is why this government, over the decades, has placed special emphasis on infrastructural development. How far have we come over time? When the Leader of Opposition spoke, I remember he said although it was not in his official text, that we should spend - stop spending so much money on roads and spend it on education. But for me, growing up in deep rural Jamaica I understand clearly that both compensate the other, you need to have development. And guess what, as the daughter of a small farmer; I know what it was like when there was no road, but a climb the hill with load on the people's head so that they could get it to market. And if you do not have proper roads the children will never be able to get to school.

A MEMBER: Wrong bus.

The PRIME MINISTER: No, no, I believe the Leader of the Opposition said that because he was so satisfied when he took that bus ride the roads he travelled on.

Mr. Speaker, Norman Manley was ridiculed; Mr. Speaker Norman Manley was ridiculed for building the National Stadium. Highway 2000 and the North Coast Highway were called **pipe dreams.** Many scoffed at the work done to expand the Portmore Causeway, these development projects were implemented as part of a plan. This Administration continues to be guided by a plan for the development of its social and physical infrastructure. With all the roads work being taken now on highways and what we are doing, can you imagine, Minister of Road, Minister of Roads...

Dr. DAVIES: Yes.

(Laughter)

The PRIME MINISTER: Can you imagine, if you can find the money so that we could do a highway from Port Antonio through St. Thomas into Kingston?

(Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Vaz)

The PRIME MINISTER: No, no! I agree with you but I am just talking about the development opportunities, if we had money to undertake some of these projects, because it would open up two parishes that would be unbelievable one time. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Vaz)

The PRIME MINISTER: This Administration Mr. Speaker continues to be guided by a plan for the development of a social and physical infrastructure.

During my Budget Presentation last year the Leader of the Opposition may recall that I showed him a copy of the 1998 National Physical Plan of Jamaica. We promise to revise that plan that is being done. I promised in 2013 that we would commence the promulgation of development plans for those

parishes, Mr. Speaker that do not have plans. Four plans have been promulgated for the parishes of Portland, Trelawny, Manchester and for Negril Green Island. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. We know where we are going. (Applause)

We are continuing with the implementation of the major infrastructural projects across this country as part of the national development plan. Let me share with the country what some of these infrastructural projects are. When we improve our road network other development follows. We improved several major roads and highways during 2012 and 2013 including Bay Farm Road in St. Andrew, a road to growth and development, Scott's Cove to Belmont and Ferris Cross to Belmont, in Westmoreland, roads to growth and development. (Applause) Red Hills to Santa Maria, between St. Andrew and St. Catherine, a road to growth and development. Bog Walk to Sligoville in St. Catherine, a road to growth and development. We completed Segment III of the North Coast Highway Improvement Project, this runs from Ocho Rios, St. Ann to Port Antonio, Portland and was officially opened in May of last year, at a cost of 80 Million Pounds Sterling. This is a highway to growth and development. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the section of the North Coast Highway from Linstead to Moneague will be opened I am told in August. (Applause) Work will continue on Sections 1 and 3 in this fiscal year. We are moving steadily along the highway to growth and development.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: Thank you, Minister. We are moving steadily along the highway. I could tell you about more roads that are to be completed across the island, but I have more to say so I have to leave road for now. What is certain, Mr. Speaker is that this is a Government at work; we are going for growth and development working for our people. (Applause)

Our 25 retaining walls were....

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

The PRIME MINISTER: I want you to listen, because it is said, it is being said that we have done nothing. In just over two years over 25 retaining walls were constructed across the island last year. Among these are: Mount Ogle, Lawrence Tavern, Oberlin and Cassava Piece in St. Andrew, Castleton, St. Mary, Buff Bay Valley, including Hollywell, Cascade and Regale, Aberdeen, Balaclava and Dalintober in St. Elizabeth. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this is a Government that is working for the people. (Applause)

We have more work to do. We know that there are many more roads still to be fixed, many more roads to be fixed. This provides challenges for our transport operators, farmers and entrepreneurs and people in their communities who depend on our roads network.

The PRIME MINISTER: We are determined to repair and build as many roads as possible within the limits of our financial resources. Contractors are obligated to do quality work so that we do not keep repairing the same road over and over. Jamaicans are

making great sacrifices and want to see development happen. (Applause) They want to see value for their tax dollar. All of us in government have a duty to ensure that this happens.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has completed flood mitigation activities valued at over Four Million Jamaican Dollars (J$4B). (Applause) Because it is said that nothing happens, I have to take the opportunity now to say some of what happened.

A number of gullies have been built and others cleaned. Sandy Gully in St. Andrew, Capital Heights Gully, Green Pond in St. James, Black River seawall in St. Elizabeth, Roselle and Yallahs in St. Thomas, Rio Cobre and Port Henderson Drive in St. Catherine, Nightingale Grove, St. Catherine. This is a Government at work, working for you. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes! Yes!

The PRIME MINISTER: We also completed a number of bridges during the period. The Rio Grande bridge in Portland... (Applause) ...was opened last December. Building bridges for growth and development. The Westmoreland bridge in St. Mary was opened in August. (Applause)

A **Government MEMBER:** Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: It replaced the one that was destroyed by floods more than three years ago. We are building bridges for growth and development. (Applause) Cassia Park bridge in St. Andrew... (Applause) ...last year. We are building bridges for growth and development. (Applause) The Queens Borough bridge in St. Andrew was completed in December. We are building bridges for growth and development. (Applause)

The investment made to build these bridges was Seven point Five Six Billion Dollars ($7.56B).

Mr. Speaker, additional bridges built included those at Eleven Miles in St. Thomas, Port Maria and Eden River, and Fontabelle in St. Mary, Crooked River in Clarendon, Craig Mill in Portland, and Kintyre in St. Andrew. (Applause)

A **Government MEMBER:** Yes!

The PRIME MINISTER: I had the pleasure of crossing the new bridge in Kintyre, with residents, when we opened it last year.

Mr. Speaker, there are even more infrastructural projects currently underway across the length and breadth of Jamaica - of this country. These include a Four Hundred Million Jamaican Dollar (J$400M) improvement project in Ocho Rios to upgrade the cruise ship terminal and create stalls for craft vendors. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: Working for the people!

A Two point One Million Jamaican Dollar (J$2.1B) sewage improvement project in Portmore. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes! Yes!

The PRIME MINISTER: A One Billion Jamaican Dollar (J$1B) project for the installation of water pipes from Old Harbour to Manchester. (Applause) This is a Government that works! (Applause)

We are completing tourism development projects, including Hampden Wharf and streetscape in Falmouth... (Applause) ...the sea park in Negril, lighting the Elegant Corridor in Montego Bay, the development and operation of travel halts - thank you, Minister.

Mr. Speaker, there can be absolutely no doubt this Government, my Administration, is going for growth and development, working for the people. (Applause)

Over the next three years Mr. Speaker, we will continue the development of our infrastructure by way of the Major Infrastructure Development Programme. This will be financed through the China EX-IM Bank in the amount of Three Hundred Million United States Dollars (US$300M). The Government of Jamaica will provide an additional Fifty-two Million United States Dollars (US$52M) in counter-part fundings. (Applause)

It was suggested that the funds should be used to finance education instead, but we have to do what we have to do. At the same time the Minister of Education must pursue - and he got more money than last time, because we know the importance of education. Show me a prosperous nation and I will show you an educated people. (Applause) I believe in education.

Mr. Speaker, for us, governance is comprehensive. We do not believe it is a case of either roads or education. If there are no roads our children will not be able to go to school.

Under my Administration we are working to transform education, even as we ensure that we have a proper road network. (Applause) It cannot be one or the other. (Applause) We know where we are going. We are going for growth and development. Working for the people! (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I turn to the matter of Community Development. To me, Mr. Speaker, communities are not just clusters of homes in a common geographical area. Communities are and should be places where people from all backgrounds live, do business, create lasting memories and spend moments of recreation and rest with their families, where they can play with the children and pass on some good old-time values.

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: Central to the Jamaican community is the Jamaican family. That is why this Administration is placing emphasis on families and communities.

Our ultimate aim in building communities is for Jamaicans to be one family, as we work together to shape the future together.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: We are strengthening communities across the island through a number of programmes.

One hundred and seventy four (174) community access points for Internet service have been established islandwide, in collaboration with community organizations. (Applause) They have been funded by the Universal Service Fund; working for the people in communities. Forgive me, I am going through it because it is said we have done nothing and I want to establish what we have done so far.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The PRIME MINISTER: Since June 2012, five markets have been rehabilitated, including the one I opened for the Member of Parliament from Clarendon who last night planned to block the road so that the people cannot access the market.

Government MEMBERS: Nooo, Ruddy! Nooo, Ruddy! Shame! Shame! Come on, Ruddy!

(Heckling)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Ruddy, is that you?

The PRIME MINISTER: You don't have to say anything to him. I leave him to the spirit of the Right Honourable Hugh Lawson Shearer! (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Yeaaah!

The PRIME MINISTER: A man of dignity and a man that loved the people.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, the fish market in Lucea, Hanover, the Charles Gordon market in St. James, the Black River market, Phase 1, in St. Elizabeth, the Linstead market, Phase 1 in St. Catherine...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: ...and Rocky Point market in Clarendon.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes! Yes!

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, earlier this month I visited Clarendon to open the market - and I commend the Member of Parliament for the work done through JSIF. Working for the people. I was shocked when I got a call last night while I was still in office at 12 o'clock, and heard that he was saying he was going to come out on the road. I just want to warn him. The people will not be able to access the market when you block the road.

Mr. CHARLES: What! Victimization!

(Cross talk)

The PRIME MINISTER: However, I want to commend him, because this was commendable - this was a commendable example of a community partnering with the Government for development. And when I toured the market I was very proud. It is how fish markets across the country should look, and how we should try to deal with all our markets that our women and men that use the markets can do so with pride and with dignity.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, 31 health centres were refurbished across the island. Three of these are Centres of Excellence in Darliston, Santa Cruz and Claremont. (Applause) Another four health centres are currently being refurbished. This includes the Centre of Excellence in Duckenfield.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes! Yes!

The PRIME MINISTER: We are working for the people in communities.

The Social Development Commission has established a national database. This provides us with information to assist us to set priorities and plans for community development.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The PRIME MINISTER: We have long held the view, Mr. Speaker, that it is people whose ideas, skills and energy develop our communities and grow our economy. That is the reason why we have invested so much in education over the years. This has resulted, for

example, in tertiary enrolment moving from 21.2 per cent to 29.5 per cent over the last ten years. (Applause) And I commend both Administrations.

Last year, in education we built or improved over 100 basic schools and created 68 infant departments in our primary schools.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: Eight schools have been taken off the shift system, and we have opened two new high schools. (Applause)

One point Two Billion Dollars ($1.2B) Mr. Speaker, is to be spent to replace pit latrines with flush-system toilets in 158 schools. (Applause)

In this year, Mr. Speaker, 27,000 tablets will be distributed in our schools from May… Applause) ...of this year, at a cost of Eight Hundred Million Dollars ($800M).

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: You know, Mr. Speaker, it was brought to my attention by the people from St. Catherine that the Ginger Ridge School, where a man who gave years of service to education - and his wife, the father of our former Prime Minister and mother of the former Prime Minister, served for years - you know what I did? I gave instructions that it should be dealt with immediately, as well as the Marley Hill School that I attended, and it was done. (Applause) We have to move across - and I said to the Minister, I don't want to hear one school with any pit latrines. Our children must be introduced to the best in their early years.

(Applause)

Two thousand three hundred (2,300) additional school places will be provided through the expansion of the construction of new schools.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes!

The PRIME MINISTER: These include Belair High, Holy Trinity High, the Cedar Grove High.

We will be spending over Six Hundred and Fifteen Million Dollars ($615M) to upgrade the infrastructural facilities at a number of schools, Mr. Speaker, across the country. The schools targeted include: Herbert Morrison Technical, Anchovy, Hampton... (Applause) ...Edith Dalton James, Tacius Golding, Bridgeport, Titchfield and Aabuthnott Gallimore.

These are positive indicators, Mr. Speaker. Our investment in education is paying off. We all know that we have a great deal to do more. We continue Mr. Speaker to be encouraged by signs that we are moving in the right direction…

Opposition MEMBER: What!

The PRIME MINISTER: ...as we continue to go for growth and development working for the people. (Applause)

I turn now to our young people. My Administration is placing a serious focus and emphasis on youth development, Mr. Speaker. I wish to share with you just a few of the programmes that are being pursued across the country:

- The Ministry of Youth trained over 8,000 young persons for job placement;

Commend the Minister. (Applause)

- The Government continued to support the Private Sector led YUTE Initiative, (Youth Upliftment Through Employment), and I want to commend the private sector for that. (Applause)
- In 2013, through public-private partnerships, we started the Build Jamaica, a leadership and youth development training project which will ultimately impact 120,000 youth. (Applause)
- The Government increases its financial support to the National Secondary Students Council, the National Youth Council, and the Uniformed Groups. (Applause)
- 186 children of public sector workers were given grants under the public sector Memorandum of Understanding, valued at a total of J$10 Million.

The CHASE Fund has spent $547 Million on sport development, and $205 Million to fund arts and culture projects.

Over 12,300 children entered the JCDC National Festival in areas, including dance, music, and drama, through community and school groups.

These are new and recurring programs that are working for our young people, Mr. Speaker.

We are placing special emphasis on education and training as part of the framework of activities to benefit our youth.

- As we prepare for the demands of the labour market, the Government is placing special emphasis on science, language, mathematics and technology subjects.
- Our tertiary graduates, Mr. Speaker, are receiving the proper orientation for entrepreneurship, and the encouragement of innovation. (Applause)

Let me commend the churches, community organizations, NGOs, and the private sector for the part they play in helping our young people to grow and to develop. (Applause) I say to the young people of Jamaica, so many of you make us extremely proud... (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: ...in so many areas of national life. God bless you, future leaders.

Persons with disabilities, I just want to say a little... in our society... I just want to say as Legislators, we have to ensure that their rights be respected and their dignity preserved. (Applause)

The approximately 400,000 persons with various types of disabilities are an important part of the Jamaican family. That is the reason, Mr. Speaker, when I was at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security I led the charge for the establishment of the

National Policy for Persons with Disabilities and was heavily supported by the present President of the Senate. (Applause)

We continue to lead by example. We have engaged the services of a Sign Language Expert to communicate the proceedings of this Honourable House.

The Disabilities Bill will be tabled in this Parliamentary year. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: We congratulate the Combined Disabilities Association which has paved the way for more persons with different types of disabilities to be fully integrated into our community. God bless them. (Applause)

I want to make a special appeal to all Jamaicans to ensure that they do everything in their power to include persons with disabilities in community activities, as I implore the Government to continue to ensure that each Ministry employ persons with disabilities. (Applause)

There is a great deal that needs to be done to improve the quality of life, and unlock the potential of these very valuable Jamaicans. Many are well educated. I have given instructions that all Government buildings must be made accessible to the disabled - to persons with disabilities. (Applause)

I turn to a very important area, Mr. Speaker, and that is of our women. The contribution of our women to family, community, and national development has been significant. Women are the breadwinners in many families. They are the glue that keeps our communities together.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Fact.

The PRIME MINISTER: They are not only making their mark in the home; many have become leaders in both the public and private sectors.

Last November, I received an award on behalf of Jamaica from the European Union, recognizing us for the high numbers of women, employed in the Public Service.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: That was one of the trips I was criticized for. I came back with a lovely trophy for the women of Jamaica. The fact that we have...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The PRIME MINISTER: I was heartened when recently the World Bank issued a publication titled *Gender at Work* as a companion publication to its 2013 World Development Report on jobs. The Report which contained, Mr. Speaker, the result of a survey conducted in 114 countries, identified only five that had reached, or surpassed gender equality in occupations, such as, legislators, senior officials and managers. Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is one of the five countries. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: More of our women are becoming engaged in business. For example, in 2013/2014, 70 per cent of those benefiting from the nearly 10,000 loans, disbursed by the Development Bank of Jamaica were women. This Government has, over the years, been at forefront of implementing policies and programmes to

advance the cause of women. (Applause) We will not depart from this position. And, I remember the days when we worked, PNP, JLP women; we got together and worked and made recommendations for policies that were implemented, and legislations, on behalf, and in the interest of our Jamaican women. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: We had several meetings, and JLP women attended the meetings, and PNP women attended in those days when Beverly Manley was Director of the Bureau of Women's Affairs, and beyond.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Opposition Member)

The PRIME MINISTER: I know what I am saying; I attended those meetings.

Mr. Speaker, we are mindful that our women and girls continue to face challenges, not least of which is gender-based violence. To address this problem, Mr. Speaker, we have received assistance from again, the UN women to revise the National Strategic Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence. So the UN will be assisting us in this area, and we want to thank the UN. That revision was recently completed and implementation will begin soon.

We are also implementing some of the recommendations in the National Policy on Gender Equality. These include, gender mainstreaming, gender equality training in both the public and private sectors, and economic empowerment activities.

I am sure the women will agree with me in this Honourable House. It is so much easier for the men... their friends to mobilize support and fundraisers for them when it comes up to election...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

The PRIME MINISTER: ...than us women in the House.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes... that is true.

The PRIME MINISTER: We always have a difficulty.

I am pleased to announce to this Honourable House that the Cabinet has approved the issuing of drafting instructions for the preparation of the Sexual Harassment Legislation. (Applause) The proposed Legislation will contain gender neutral language, and will be a priority for this Administration. We are representatives of, not some, but all the people. It will be gender neutral, the language.

Mr. Speaker, Sport is one of the world's largest economic and social activities. It is the single most unifying force in the world, matched only by music and entertainment - apart from the churches. Community-based Sporting structures are important to Jamaica's Sporting success. People from around the world are often curious as to the secret of our success in track and field.

Success starts in the communities, and with the teachers, the coaches, the parents giving support. I usually make the connection with our grassroots Sporting activities, starting from infant school, to our globally recognized Boys' and Girls' Championships. I give credit to parents, teachers, coaches, and volunteers in the communities, who encourage and support

our young children. We are indeed, a country of high achievers. And I want to also recognize the contribution of the GC Foster College of Physical Education. (Applause)

Recently, a team of athletes competed at the CARIFTA Games in Martinique. This was the first trip of our young athletes, following the sudden passing of Cavahn McKenzie, in Tobago at the NACAC Cross-Country Championship. We understood that this would have been an emotional trip for them, and we prayed for their safety and their strength. The team returned with a record-breaking number of 89 medals... (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: ...comprising of 42 gold, 34 silver, and 13 bronze. (Applause) Jamaica is proud of this outstanding performance of our athletes.

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: I also want to congratulate the 21 record-breakers at the Boys' and Girls' Champs, and the Under 16 Netball Team that won the Regional Championships. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I just want to highlight some of the sporting activities taking place in our communities:

- Under the High School Sport Infrastructure Project, $250 Million will be spent over two years to improve sporting facilities in 24 high schools across the island; (Applause)
- $150 Million Dollars will be provided by the European Union - see again EU - and $100 Million from the Sports Development Foundation;
- $71.7 Million was spent by the Sports Development Foundation to upgrade hard courts football fields, provide lighting and other sporting facilities.

We also want to thank the Government of India for the planned installation of lights at Sabina Park. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: I want to thank the Indian High Commissioner as well for his work and support for us achieving this. I am sure all of us look forward to watching cricket under lights later this year. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: We won the Cricket match today.

The PRIME MINISTER: We won the cricket match?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes, we won the championship.

The PRIME MINISTER: We want to congratulate our team for winning the championship today. (Applause) This Government will continue to work for growth and development.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn attention to a critical area of priority in this Administration. We are now looking at all our pillars and we're looking at the development of rural communities. This is a central pillar in the approach to national development. When I spoke in these debates last year I advised the House that some of the worse areas of poverty exist in deep rural Jamaica, as I said earlier. I am acutely aware of the difficulties faced by our rural people. It is because of these difficulties, and I'm sure the rural MPs will

agree with me, that over the years, so many persons and, in particular young Jamaicans, seek to migrate from rural areas into our towns and urban areas. The urban pull of an earlier period has now turned into a rural push to the urban areas. We cannot sit back, Mr. Speaker, relax and see rural Jamaica losing its young and productive labour force to the urban areas. The approach to rural development must be wholistic, integrated and multisectoral.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: All people desire good work, good living conditions and access to public and social services. That's all they're asking for apart from the other things that will make life better for them. Over the last year, we have been quietly but successfully achieving a better coordinating mechanism among ministries, departments and agencies. It is important to note that rural development is not just agricultural development although agriculture is central. The primary objective of rural development is economic enrichment and promotion of social wellbeing of our rural population. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, we have made a start. When agencies such as JSIF, through their Rural Economic Development Initiative, RADA, Jamaica Agricultural Society, the Social Development Commission, and the Rural Electrification Programme all work together, they have a greater impact on the economic and social well-being of our rural communities.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: A number of programmes are currently being implemented with this joined-up government approach. These include construction of housing units under the Sugar dependent communities project, funded by the European Union. The Ginger Expansion Programme and the Agro Parks by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. It is no accident that all the centres of excellence completed to date are in rural Jamaica. (Applause) The National Housing Trust mobile service is bringing the NHT to the people wherever they are. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: The Rural Electrification Programme has achieved 97 per cent electrification throughout rural Jamaica. This Programme has embarked on a new electrification project utilizing primarily, solar energy. So, Mr. Speaker we recognize the importance of rural development and I am going to be placing a serious focus on this.

I want to look a little bit at expanding ownership in the Jamaican society. It was national hero, Mr. Speaker, the Rt. Excellent Norman Washington Manley, who declared at the launch of the PNP in 1938, and I quote:

> *"There is a tremendous difference between living in a place and belonging to it, and feeling that your own life and your destiny are irrevocably bound up in the life and destiny of that place."*

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: True that.

The PRIME MINISTER: As a people we must all feel that we have a stake in Jamaica, the land of our birth. People identify more strongly with their country and take

better care of its assets and its future when they own a piece of it.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's true.

The PRIME MINISTER: Many Jamaicans dream of owning a of piece land, with a house on it and a business to support themselves. They have to be given a chance at self-reliance. In order to expand ownership in the Jamaican society, the Government has implemented programmes for land ownership, titling, housing and businesses.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: That is why we will continue to place even more emphasis on facilitating micro, small, medium, large businesses for Jamaicans. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: That is why we will support the creative and cultural industries, science, technology and innovation. Jamaicans must own the intellectual property in their artistic expressions and all other inventions and designs. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: Ownership is central to the empowerment of people. This is what we mean by people power and what we are working to achieve. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: People have invested their money, their sweat, their blood, their tears and also have the fervent hope for a better life in our beloved country. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: More Jamaicans must have the opportunity to own and prosper in this country. As I travelled the length and breadth of Jamaica I witnessed the joy, delight, the excitement of my country men and women who have come to own their piece of this rock. One NHT contributor, upon receiving the keys to his home, at one of the many handing-over ceremonies I attended, said it best, Mr. Speaker, he said and I quote: "Thanks to you all. It is bye-bye rent. We now have the keys to our own homes".

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right, that's right.

The PRIME MINISTER: "Thanks to you, we here can say, bye-bye rent, mortgage time now." (Applause) "Now we have houses we can do our little improvement on". Home ownership delivers a great sense of pride and achievement, Mr. Speaker, and stability like nothing else. A student, from Majesty Gardens, in my constituency, who has 9 CXCs and 7 CAPE passes, and whose family recently received their keys to an NHT house, told us: 'This is an opportunity for me', and I quote her, 'and my family to improve our lives. We will now have individual bedrooms. I do love my younger brother, but I really don't mind not sharing a room with him. If and when asked for proof of address, I will now be able to furnish several utility bills. I will no longer be afraid or embarrassed to invite a friend to visit because I am terrified they might ask, can I use your restroom? Mr. Speaker, it is in moments like this that I am most heartened to lead a Government that is working for the people.

(Applause)

Permit me now, Mr. Speaker, to address the issue of land titles. Holding a Certificate of

Title provides a sense of security in having your land for life.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

The PRIME MINISTER: A title holder takes pride in knowing that they will be able to leave something tangible for their children.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right, that's right.

The PRIME MINISTER: When Jamaicans own their land, no one can move them from it. Under the Land Administration and Management Programme (LAMP), over 1,100 titles have already being handed out in the last two years. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: I want to congratulate the Minister. Minister, I want to congratulate you. Let me congratulate those who have received titles.

Mr. VAZ: Bobby, you know about that?

(Cross talk)

The PRIME MINISTER: You are now part of Jamaica's ownership society.

Mr. Speaker, the following citizens are now a part of the ownership society: the 60 residents of Flankers and Norwood in St. James; the 29 residents from Rose Hall in St. James; 24 residents of Callaloo Mews in St. Andrew; 17 residents of Martha Brae and the 35 from Duanvale in Trelawny.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

The PRIME MINISTER: The 70 residents from Ebony Park in Clarendon.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

The PRIME MINISTER: The 85 residents of Gravel Heights in St. Catherine,..

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

The PRIME MINISTER: ...and 51 residents of Seaview in St. Andrew. (Applause)

The PRIME MINISTER: And the list goes on, and on and on. Who says that we're not doing anything? Two years and look what we've done. (Applause) This Government is working to empower the people. The Land Administration and Management Programme is also rolling out its services in a number of other parishes. LAMP 2 will begin in St. James, St. Ann, Westmoreland, Hanover and Trelawny during this fiscal financial year. NHT will also deliver 1,502 titles later this year. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, I am sure there can be no doubt now that this Government is going for growth and development. We are working for the people. (Applause)

The National Housing Trust. Much has been said in this Debate about the National Housing Trust. The NHT's mandate has not changed. The agency continues to provide affordable housing with emphasis on middle and lower income contributors. The Trust's asset base is currently at $205 Billion. The National Housing Trust is solvent and secure.

Mr. PRYCE: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: Over the course of its thirty-eight years, the NHT has provided over 173,000 mortgages to its contributors.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: The Opposition Spokesman on Finance raised the

question of could we up the NHT loan. I just want to - I'm giving you an honest explanation why it cannot be done now, because they are engaged in doing other things. When the Government of Jamaica signed off on the agreement with the IMF, one of the conditionalities was for the country to reduce its national debt. In this time of need, the country turned to the NHT. The NHT was called upon to contribute $11.4 Billion per year, over four years and that the Government would look at lands owned by the State and where it is suitable for housing development, the NHT would get some of those lands. The Trust has honoured the first year of this requirement.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

The PRIME MINISTER: I want to make it clear because I want to be very honest. We have nothing to hide. Jamaica is in a better place today because of the role played by the National Housing Trust. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: I know that - I know Michael Manley. I knew him well. He was my mentor. The National Housing Trust was established by him as an instrument for national development. He would be proud of the role the Trust continues to play in assisting to balance the books, while balancing people's lives. He would be proud of the role the NHT continues to play in national development while working for the people.

Mr. Speaker, during the last fiscal year, the NHT spent over $22 Billion on housing construction and mortgage financing. Last year the Trust made refunds to over 150,000 contributors totalling $3.8 Billion. (Applause) Over 7,500 mortgage loans were provided to contributors. The NHT built 2,100 housing solutions during 2013/2014. Through the Joint Finance Mortgage Programme the NHT provided over $3 Billion in loans to contributors through our private sector partners. (Applause)

The Trust, through the Youth Upliftment Programme, they encouraged young people living in our inner cities. This year the NHT will contribute a total of $32 Million to the YUTE Build Initiative to finance the training of 100 inner-city young people in construction-related... (Applause) These are all promises made and promises kept. Through the NHT this Government is going for growth and development, we are working for the people. This year the progress will continue. The First Step Programme under which workers in the sugar and tourism sectors benefitted last year will continue. The inner-city housing projects also continue. The Trust will commence preliminary works. These preliminary works are for Majesty Gardens Phase II and Frog City off Maxfield Avenue. (Applause)

I spoke earlier about the NHT mobile service and I launched the service in Mile Gully and it is now on the road. NHT has also developed a diaspora strategy. We are creating opportunities to give Jamaicans everywhere in the world, a chance to become NHT contributors and to receive NHT benefits. This year the Trust will be using a portion of its surplus, normally used for grants and subsidies, to provide assistance in four main

areas. Two Hundred and Eighty Million Dollars ($280M) has been set aside for this effort. The areas that will benefit are the improvement of infirmaries, assisting with the provision of shelter for street persons. (Applause) Shelters where they can go and have a bath, get a meal, a warm meal; assisting with the maintenance of indigent housing and providing help to the families of the members of the security forces who have lost their lives or suffered major injuries in the line of duty. (Applause) National Housing Trust is working for the people.

Mr. Speaker, I now speak to Jamaica's position in the Community of Nations. Jamaica's foreign policy has always been based on mutual respect. We have always maintained a progressive non-aligned and forward thinking foreign policy. (Applause) We will not divert from this position. (Applause) When we took office in January 2012 this Government had to put a lot of effort into restoring Jamaica's good name internationally. (Applause)

Mr. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear, Dudley, mash it *dung!*

JAMAICAN DIASPORA

The PRIME MINISTER: We were on very shaky grounds with many of our traditional partners. Many Jamaicans living overseas told us how embarrassed they were at what was happening in Jamaica. We promised that we would fix it, and we have! (Applause) Jamaica once again enjoys close fraternal relationships with all our traditional partners. (Applause) Now members of the Jamaican diaspora communities are once again proudly holding their heads high and asserting themselves. I am a Jamaican. (Applause)

The Jamaican Diaspora Conference in June last year was the largest and most successful to date. Many of the participants said that they are once again proud to be a part of the process of building their homeland, Jamaica. (Applause) The momentum should not be lost. We must all commit ourselves to making them feel at home again.

For Jamaica to generate sustainable economic development, it is important for us to deepen and strengthen our relationships with other countries, be they our closest neighbours or friends in faraway places. We have been known for our principled and reasoned positions. We have gained respect for our steadfastness and fidelity of our positions on matters of national and international importance. We have not shied away from being bold. (Applause) We have not been afraid to be standing alone or to stand up for principle where it is required. Under this Government Jamaica will continue to have a strong voice in international affairs. (Applause)

In recognition of emerging global challenges, we have deepened an accelerated economic diplomacy. We will continue to seek opportunities that maximize our economic potential. Jamaica remains grateful for the extensive development assistance we have received from our bilateral and multilateral partners. (Applause) We recognize the value of these contributions. We have spent a lot of time and effort working

closely with our longstanding traditional partners. These include the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan and the countries of the European Union. We have maintained excellent relations with them over the years. We also continue our friendly relations that we developed over the many years with Venezuela and with Cuba. (Applause) We have implemented many projects with the support of the PetroCaribé Fund. We thank the government and the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for this support. (Applause)

We continue to enjoy good relations with the People's Republic of China and will remain committed to the One China Policy. (Applause) Current investment flows are fruits from seeds of solidarity sown decades ago with many countries around the globe. Our close relationship with the United States of America, with Canada, with our European partners, name it, Latin America, the Caribbean of which we are a part, nothing is going to stop Jamaica moving forward and continuing to have close working relationship with foreign countries.

Jamaica continues to strengthen the bonds of friendship with the BRICS countries as well as other countries on the African continent. (Applause) Jamaica is committed to the development of a strong region. We will continue to play our part to ensure that we have a dynamic Caribbean Community. (Applause) In this context I wish to once again express my profound regret at the passing of a strong advocate of Caribbean Regionalism, Professor Norman Girvan. (Applause) His entire life was dedicated to building regional institutions and advancing the cause of the people of our region. We will miss him.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the dedicated team at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, those at our overseas Missions for the sterling work they continue to do in keeping Jamaica closely linked to our bilateral and multilateral partners globally; and we want to thank our partners for their support and their contribution.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, when all is said and done, despite the difficulties that we still face as a nation, Jamaicans know that our country is now in a better place than it was in January 2012, when the people returned us to office. We remain focused on stabilizing the macroeconomic framework while cushioning the pain from that process and establishing a platform for stability and growth. The Government honestly and truly does not have the fiscal space to do all the projects that need to be done but we are doing many good things. We want to thank those who are, while we are pushing forward for growth, development and employment, we want to thank the private sector for also pushing more jobs in this country. And I want you to applaud them. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we are finding solutions. We are going for growth and development. We are working for the people. Challenges there are. It has not been easy, Mr. Speaker. We are approaching the corner. Once we turn that bend, we, like the sprinters we naturally are, will power down the home stretch. (Applause)

Taking the corner, Mr. Speaker, requires the greatest care, the best technique, concentration, focus and enduring strength. (Applause) The extra push required will not be in vain, Mr. Speaker. I appeal to my fellow Jamaicans stay with us, if I have to climb the mountain for this country to be better, like Caleb, I say this evening, I will climb that mountain for my people. (Applause)

In situations like ours growth and development processes are complex, they do not happen overnight. As I have demonstrated today, Mr. Speaker, Governance is a demanding process. We all have to work long and hard to see success. This Government is working to get our nation where it needs to go. We are building a stronger economy which borrows less, produces more and delivers more growth and a better quality of life for all Jamaicans. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I share - I feel the pain of our Jamaican brothers and sisters when they feel the pain, when they suffer. I know the pain. I know the agony. As their leader it will never be lost on me. I have dedicated a lifetime of service to my country and my people. I will never leave them now nor will I give up now. The road may be rough but I am going to get it smooth.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we must remain resolute. We must remain confident. We must work for positive outcomes as we go for growth and development, working for the people together. (Applause)

We are working together with our communities, working together with our private sector. We are working together with our international partners. We are working together with civil society. We are working together with all stakeholders. This gives me hope for the present and the future.

I felt that hope at the Prime Minister's Youth Awards Ceremony. I felt that hope. We saw some of the finest examples of what our young people can do when they apply themselves with courage, discipline, dedication and determination. (Applause)

There is hope, Mr. Speaker, I see positiveness. I see seeds being planted and growth appearing. I see a bright future ahead of us. We cannot throw away our sacrifices and our gains now. We must all work that much harder. We must stay the course. It is time.

We already know that in the four last letters in the word 'Jamaican' are 'I' 'C' 'A' 'N'. I can. I know I can! And yes, we can! And yes, we will! And yes, we shall! We are Jamaicans, and today we pledge anew in our hearts, our love and commitment for Jamaica, land we love. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, our hopes are high! Our faith is great! Our courage is strong, and our dreams for this beautiful nation will never die. (Applause) This is a call to action, a call to accountability, a call to efficiency and unselfish participation.

This is a call to action. A call to believe the unlikely, to do the unthinkable, while we face what may seem unbearable. If it is a pace, we will run it. If it is a mountain - as I said before, like Caleb, I will climb it. If it is a stone, we will move it. Stand with me, come

with me, walk with me, Jamaica, walk with me in the interest of our country! Let us work together to build a bright and glorious future for Jamaica, Land we love.

I leave you with the words of the Rt. Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey:

"Up you mighty race, you can accomplish what you will"!

God bless you. God bless you.

(Applause)

Standing Ovation/Thunderous Applause)

(The Speaker gavels)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, after that presentation, we can do no further business this afternoon. I therefore move for the adjournment of our Parliament until tomorrow the 30th of April at 2:00 p.m.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do adjourn to tomorrow, Wednesday, 30th of April at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The House adjourned at approximately 5:10 p.m. until the 30th of April at 2:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, April 30, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:25 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House
Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM McNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and

Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern

MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern

MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern

MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central

MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Hugh Carl Buchanan.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- Tourism Product Development Company Limited (TPDCo.) Annual Report for the year April 2011 to March 2012

- Corrigendum to the Ministry of Finance and Planning Ministry Paper No. 44/14 titled:
  "Revenue Measures for the Financial Year 2014/2015"
  which was laid on the Table of the House of Representatives on April 17, 2014 and this was withdrawn from yesterday's announcements.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

Be it Resolved that this Honourable House of Representatives approve the plans and programmes being pursued by the Government in respect of Ministries which were not included in the debate on the Appropriation Bill and further approve the policy projections as announced for the Financial Year 2014/2015.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I wish to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days I will ask the Honourable Minister of Finance and Planning the following questions:

Question 1:

What is the total amount of funds collected under the PetroCaribé Programme with the Government of Venezuela?

Question 2:

Have all these funds been paid into the PetroCaribé Development Fund (PDF)?

Question 3:

Has Petrojam made all its payments to the PDF in foreign exchange (US dollars)?

Question 4:

What is the total amount of funds so far repaid to the Venezuelan Government Agency, PDVSA? Please disaggregate payments by principal and interest.

Question 5:

Please provide a comprehensive list of all loans and grants issued by the PDF since the inception of the fund, and indicate the status of each loan, setting out the principal value of the loan portfolio and the specific classification of each account in accordance with International Financial Accounting Standards.

Question 6:

How are loans valued on the Balance Sheet?

Question 7:

What is the total value of non-performing loans on the Balance Sheet of the PDF?

Question 8:

How are non-performing loans represented on the Income Statement? Are loan loss reserves set aside for bad debt? If so, how much is set aside? How are delinquent loans represented on the Balance Sheet?

Question 10:

Is Petrojam in arrears in the transfer of funds or loan payments to the PDF? Please state whether the transfer of the proceeds under the PetroCaribé arrangements are in accordance with established procedures. Does Petrojam have a loan from the PDF? Is Petrojam in arrears in payments on any loan with the PDF?

Question 11:

What are the cash balances and other liquid assets such as investments made by the PDF?

Question 12:

What are the procedures that govern the transparent management of the PDF?

Question 13:

Has an Independent Risk Assessment of the PDF been done?

Question 14:

If the Risk Assessment was done, what was the outcome? Was it favourable or unfavourable? What are the conclusions of the Risk Assessment with regard to the sustainability of the PDF?

Question 15:

Will you make a copy of the Risk Assessment available to Parliament?

Question 16:

Are there any delinquent loans in the PDF Portfolio for which the PDF has sought Government Guarantees?

Question 17:

When was the last Audited Financial Statements submitted to Parliament?

(HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took his seat.)

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BUDGET DEBATE

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we intend to conclude the matter at Item 8 on the Order Paper. This matter is going to be dealt with by the Minister of Finance who will be closing the debate.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

(Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, in rising to close this debate, I'd like to acknowledge the contributions of all the participants.

The Most Honourable Prime Minister yesterday set out with clarity the record of this administration in mobilizing the nation around the Economic Reform Programme which is on track and which has already returned the Jamaican economy to growth. Simultaneously, she indicated the effective steps taken by the administration to protect the poor and vulnerable and to ensure that each sector makes its contribution to the national effort.

Minister Roger Clarke is to be congratulated along with his team and the farming community as a whole for the phenomenal growth that the country is witnessing in agriculture. (Applause) Food security continue....

Mr. SHAW: Only want Visa now too.

Dr. PHILLIPS: You soon need a Visa fe go up to…. and Craig head. (Laughter)

Food security continues to be a major plank of our Economic Reform Programme, Mr. Speaker.

While there is much that has divided us in this debate, there has nevertheless been a consensus around two critical issues. And I dare say, two critical national imperatives:

First, the need to reduce our public debt, which is far too high and has become a stranglehold on our national economy; and,

Secondly, the urgency of restoring the economy to a path of sustained growth and job creation.

That a national consensus should exist around these two critical priorities, Mr. Speaker, is a good thing, and it can only redound to the national good that thepriorities of debt reduction and economic growth have been the central themes in this debate.

It is indeed unfortunate, that throughout our history in modern Jamaica, a consensus around the essentials of our development path and the strategies that we need to pursue to achieve our developmental goals has eluded us as a nation.

The truth is that we have too often allowed the pursuit of partisan political advantage, as well as, the narrow self-interest of different social and economic groups to weaken and divide the national effort. (Applause) This has certainly weakened the level...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Charles)

Dr. PHILLIPS: This has certainly weakened the level of social cohesion required for nation building.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: This sense of togetherness, Mr. Speaker, this sense of being part of a joint endeavour and a common mission is what the political economists refer to as social capital and it is unfortunately in short supply in Jamaica.

A survey conducted a few years ago by the Centre for Leadership and Governance at the University of the West Indies highlighted the fact that some 73% of Jamaicans said they trusted no one but themselves and believed that most people would take advantage of them. This survey - that same survey also revealed that 60% of the population have the view that they could only trust themselves.

In the context of our economic reform programme and all the difficulties and sacrifice that it involves and which will persist for some time, these difficulties and sacrifices, there is a special responsibility which we in this House will have to accept to help build social capital in the country (Applause) and to help build a sense of common purpose.

It is against this background that I want to urge all of us that having agreed on the national objectives, let us have honest debates, stripped of the dishonest and debilitating search for partisan advantage or sectional interest.

I want to look in greater detail, Mr. Speaker, on the contributions of the Opposition Spokesman on Finance and the Leader of the Opposition, and I propose to address five areas in closing this budget exercise.

I should remind also, Mr. Speaker, that this is the last - in keeping with the new fiscal

rules, that we are going to be having this exercise in the month of April. We are committed to having this exercise before April 1 start of the fiscal year and I dare say that at some point, we'll have to arrive at some agreement as to how we can reduce the amount of time taken in the budget approval exercise. You'll have to talk.

(Dr. Phillips pointed to both Mr. D. Smith and Mr. Paulwell)

I think, I think - we can't afford to take one month in this whole exercise; we have to find a way to make it more business-like, more useful. But I propose to address five areas.

- Trust, an issue raised;
- Arrears in Government;
- The debt issue of foreign exchange markets; and
- Issues relating to Taxation. In that order.

You want the tax first? Okay.

(Laughter)

Hold your breath.

(Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, trust issue number one. It is indeed ironic that one allegation made directly against me by the Opposition Spokesman on Finance and repeated by the Leader of the Opposition concerns the - a supposed breach of a commitment regarding "no new taxes". Let us examine it because I also got the newspaper.

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Is the same one?

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, I think this is my copy.

(Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, the headline says: January 8: The headline which appeared in the Daily Gleaner and I should remind that I did not write the headline - says: "Big Relief - No new taxes says Phillips; reform, cutting debt on the main Agenda".

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, all those words are the words of the editor not mine. Neither did the article indicate the context in which I spoke. I was responding to a question about the imposition of GCT on petroleum.

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Wait a second, hold on. My words, Mr. Speaker, can be found in the body of the same article, and I now quote them verbatim for this Honourable House.

> *We don't have plans for taxation, we have plans for tax reform generally, but we will have to maintain our deficit targets.*

In another part of the same article, I am again correctly quoting as saying;

> *The revenue targets have been missed slightly in relation to taxation, but we are going to have to maintain our 7.5 per cent primary surplus as it is the only way we are going to pay down this debt.*

I accept that I could have and perhaps should have insisted that the *Gleaner* print a retraction of their headline. I spoke to them on this matter and in their own way they presented a retraction in the *Sunday Gleaner* of that same week - no of January 19th. 'Tax on fuel not an option' that article is headlined.

My point, however, is that the debate would have been far more honest if we had gone beyond the headline. (Laughter)

(Applause) And if some care, even attention had been paid to what I actually said, far from representing any breach or promise, the budget represents a fulfillment of every undertaking made by this Government. We have lived up to our word in every respect. (Applause)

It is in fulfillment of our commitment to meet our wage obligations to public sector workers that more than $161 Billion in the budget is provided for wages and 4 Billion of that is in fulfillment of obligations that the previous administration tried to walk away from and had to be ordered by the courts to fulfill. (Applause)

In presenting this budget, we have fulfilled obligations to public sector workers, bondholders, pensioners and others who have had to make a sacrifice and who have demanded of us that we meet our obligations under the Economic Reform Programme. (Applause)

This budget fulfills Jamaica's obligations to maintain 7.5 per cent primary surplus. We sign up to it in the extended fund facility and we have met the targets. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Trust Issue II, because the truth is, the Opposition Spokesman on Finance is in no position to lecture us or anyone for that matter on matters of public trust. (Applause)

No one on this side promised workers unrealistic wage increases in elections campaign and then walked away from it as that administration did... (Applause) ...telling workers **take it or leave it.** We didn't do that. We did not sign up to an agreement with the multilateral lending agencies led by the IMF, committing Jamaica to deliver a 6.8 per cent primary surplus in 2011/2012 which was revised downward to 5 per cent, but they were still able only to deliver an output of 3.1 percent when they were in government.

We did not sign up to a Jamaica Debt Exchange and then put bondholders at risk and pensioners at risk of default because of the failure to meet obligations under the programme.

Mr. CHARLES: Get to the point.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I thought he wasn't hearing anything. (Laughter)

No one on this side, Mr. Speaker, implemented, and it is good that they passed this law, the fiscal responsibility framework with great fanfare in 2010 and then proceed to break all the procurement rules on fiscal controls, by ordering buses without Cabinet approval and without budgetary provision.
You cannot come and claim credit...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I soon come to that. You cannot come and claim credit for initiating fiscal rules and fail to acknowledge that you break your own rules. You know, Jamaican people said, **mout mek fe chat,** but nuh suh.

Mr. Speaker....

(Heckling by Members)

Mr. CHUCK: Is that the foundation for social capital?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, no, you notice my tone, my tone is just to make the facts speak for themselves. We can have a debate about it; we have had a debate about it. You have had a debate about it.

Mr. Speaker, what needs to be understood, is that there are real cost, there are real cost to these failures of decision making, there are real costs to this type of irresponsibility.

The insistence by the IMF, that wage restraint agreements should be a prior action in this extended fund facility was a direct consequence of the previous administration's failure to meet its wage to GDP obligations under the programme.

The 7.5 per cent primary surplus which is high, it is high, in the current programme, was necessitated by the failure under the previous programme to meet the primary surplus target in 2011/2012. Their failure imposed on this administration the need to raise 4.4 per cent of GDP in additional revenues over two years.

The major revenue package as a pre-condition to the Fund Programme is part of the cost that Jamaica had to bear because of the failure of the previous Government to meet their obligations. These and more are the concrete cost that Jamaica has had to endure, Mr. Speaker, because of the failure to implement decisions and obligations committed to.

The $60 Million of the EU grants that Jamaica was unable to draw down, grants that we were unable to draw down, in 2012, Euros and 60 Million Euros that we were unable to draw down is a direct consequence of the collapse of the Stand-by Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, against that background, I am astounded to hear the Opposition Spokesman said that the IMF has given Jamaica a bligh, 7.5 per cent primary surplus is not bligh, fifteen plus pieces of legislation, path-breaking legislation to be passed in one year, we have had to work even in this House to bring legislation quicker than we would want to get through. It is not a bligh. Wage restraint for public sector worker is not a bligh, a national debt exchange in less than two years after the previous debt exchange was undertaken is not a bligh. But what is most distressing about the Opposition Spokesman's characterization is the ease in which he would impugn the reputation of the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral institutions in believing that they simply play to favoritism and give out blighs. No wonder he thought that we could sign up to agreements and simply walk away.

It is clear that the Opposition did not understand then that there are consequences to commitments given and not honour. They did not understand it then, and apparently they do not understand it now. (Applause)

This is problem that also affects the Leader of the Opposition he accuses...

(Heckling by Members)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, it is not to do with - as people I have no problem with them. I mean, I have no personal issue. But I think that we need to understand, and we need to try to recognize, that, we can't just come here and chat. We have to try and make what we said accord with what actually happened and what took place. (Applause)

When the leader of the Opposition accuses JUTC and the Minister of Transport and Works as being incentive to the plight of the sub-franchise holders, he is missing a critical part of the issue. It would be fairer if he were

to acknowledge the role of the administration that he led in understand cutting the financial foundations of the JUTC.

Mr. HENRY: No, no, you are undercharging the fare.

(Heckling by Members)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hear me now, don't worry I will talk to him for you.

Mr. Speaker, no, I am talking about the same load. Leave out the subsidize fares for a minute. When you borrow...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Charles)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Look here man, mek dem guys here talk, for you. (Laughter) You are my friend but mek dem talk for you.

When you order 96 million Euro worth of buses, the loan must be repaid, and in fact, the only way you can repay the loan or the best way to repay the loan is to have paying customers use the busses, so that you earn the money, to pay back for the loan.

(Heckling)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Him sey him neva tek a JUTC.

(Cross talk)

Not only did they order the buses, Mr. Speaker, but they gave out more than over the two years, 10/11, 11/12, over 1,000 licenses to some sub-franchise holders. So that, you secure more debt and you reduce the revenues to the company, and the only way it can be paid is by the taxpayers, many of whom live in places... (heckling) ...like Eastern Westmoreland, Paul Island, Prattville, Mr. Speaker, places you know - they don't tek those buses.

And so, to come and lambaste the JUTC and the Minister...

Mr. DALLEY: And the Government.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...and the Government, for trying to bring order to the transport arrangements in the Kingston Metropolitan transport region, so that the loans can be repaid and that to accommodate at the same time some order in the system, is not to have a balanced discussion. That is typical of the old-style politics. (Applause) And the Leader of the Opposition promised to give away as much as possible and to saddle the taxpayer with more debt.

Mr. HOLNESS: That is the old style politics.

Dr. PHILLIPS: That's what you are practicing.

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

Dr. DAVIES: It's all right, don't tek all of it, you know. I coming after you. (Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Okay. He will tek... (Inaudible) (*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: All right, a gwine put on me helmet!

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I want to say something about the arrears question. In fact, in the Fiscal Policy Paper tabled in the House on April 17, there was information provided, which, if it had been referred to, would have placed on record and acknowledged, that not only did the Government acknowledge and I

acknowledged that arrears exist, but also, Mr. Speaker, for balance it would have been recognized that there was a plan in place for addressing this issue.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes!

Dr. PHILLIPS: In opening the Debate I also made very clear what the level of arrears was and the challenge that we have a high level of arrears, and the challenge that they pose for this Administration, and indeed, posed for the previous Administration.

For the record, the plan to extricate the country from the arrears build-up has a number of elements. One, controlling the growth in the stock of arrears over 90 days by placing a cap on the sum which existed as at March, 2013. This cap is one of the quantitative targets in our Extended Fund Facility Agreement, and on which we report during each quarterly review.

We are making also direct payments from the - through the Central Treasury Management System, to suppliers of goods and services, thereby reducing the risk of the diversion of resources from ministries, departments and agencies.

We are withholding all statutory deductions, NIS, NHT, PAYE and Education Tax from Central Government ministries, departments and agencies, educational institutions, Regional Health Authorities, and transferring these amounts directly to Tax Administration Jamaica. And we are monitoring on an ongoing basis the high-risk expenditure in areas such as electricity, droughts, statutory deductions, to manage any threats of arrears build-up.

We have made changes, Mr. Speaker, in the management and the dispensing of pharmaceuticals in the public health system. All public sector pharmacies are to be taken over by the NHF, with the take-over of the pharmacy at the Bustamante Hospital for Children, the pharmacies at KPH and Victoria Jubilee, Port Maria, Percy Junor, Cornwall Regional hospitals are to follow. The plan is for a complete take-over by the NHF of the pharmacies by the end of 2015. The value of the assets in the pharmacies at the point of take-over will be used to set off existing arrears for drugs and medical supplies to the NHF.

This is a critical area, and we are increasing the budget for drugs and medical supplies on an annual basis, in line with inflation, as was done in this current Budget, where the provision moved from Three point Seven Billion ($3.7B) to Four point One Billion Dollars ($4.1B) or 9 per cent.

We are working with the suppliers to set off arrears against their tax liabilities. It's not true to say that the Budget is increasingly put together - and I am quoting the Opposition Spokesman here - while ignoring the buildup of arrears or late payments. That is a misleading statement, Mr. Speaker, and I don't know what was the effort made to ascertain the facts.

The fact is that notwithstanding the tightness in the Expenditure Budget and the several competing demands, approximately One point Five Billion ($1.5B) has been provided in the 2014/2015 Budget, and that follows a similar amount which was allocated

in the Supplementary Estimates approved in February of the last financial year, directed to the reduction of the arrears.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: This year, last year just done.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels - 3:03 p.m.) The Minister's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended sufficient to allow him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the Minister's time to be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

(Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Regarding the NHT and the Withholding Tax arrears, we are working out - with the Withholding Tax - we are working out a four-year plan with the financial institutions to reduce those. You know that the rate - that the Withholding Tax is something you inherited, has existed a long time - I have inherited it, and likewise the NHT amounts which are not technically speaking, arrears, have existed from the mid nineties. It is a problem that we all have to grapple with. What we have to understand, though, is that we have to work solutions. And I would hope that the day will come when collectively - and I see signs of progress, particularly in the PAAC - that constructive proposals can come. Because this debt is a problem - it's not a PNP debt or a JLP debt, it is Jamaica's debt which all of us have an obligation to lift off the back of the country.

(Applause)

Let me now turn to the issue of the debt itself. I was struck more by the Leader of the Opposition, but also by the Opposition Spokesman on Finance, that there is this tendency to treat the debt as if it belongs to one side or another side in its accumulation. The truth is that, that is an unproductive gain. There is more than enough responsibility to be spread all around over the past four decades.

At a time when there was no highly developed domestic debt market, Jamaica's external debt doubled in the latter half of the seventies. This has often been cited. What is perhaps less well known is that this external debt again doubled in the 1980s. On the basis of strong inflows from multilateral financial institutions and from friendly governments, Jamaica's ratio of public debt to GDP peaked at over 200 per cent of debt to GDP in the mid eighties.

In the context of fiscal consolidation, beginning in 1984/85, and successive Paris Club restructuring of bilateral debt, the debt to GDP ratio was set on a downward trajectory from the late 1980s to the mid 1990s. By 1996/97, and following the successful completion of a three-year Extended Fund Facility arrangement with the IMF, the debt to GDP ratio had fallen to under 90 per cent.

The cost of rescuing depositors in failed financial institutions, through FINSAC, pushed this ratio to almost 125 per cent by 2002/2003. Following this, and in the context

of our own economic programmes designed at home and monitored by the IMF, the debt to GDP ratio was steadily worked down, and went down 113 by 06/07 and 109.43 by 2007/2008.

In the four years from the end of 2007/2008 to the end of 2011/12, the external debt denominated in foreign currency went from Six point Two Billion ($6.2B) to Eight point Six Billion US Dollars (US$8.6B). During the same period the Jamaican dollar depreciated by about 22 per cent, and the Two Billion Dollars US in reserves left by the Administration in place in 2007, had not grown, despite massive inflows from multilateral financial institutions in 2010/2011.

It cannot be overemphasized, Mr. Speaker, that it was our failure to complete the 2010 Standby Agreement with the Fund, following massive inflows from the multilateral financial institutions, that laid the basis for a sharp reversal of flows from these institutions, a protracted 16-month period of negotiations for the current Extended Fund Facility, and the resultant decline in official foreign exchange reserves and exchange rate depreciation that was cited by the Opposition Spokesman on Finance.

You know, one of the points I really should make though, in all of this recounting of the debt story was not mentioned there. In 1989 we inherited an IMF programme; we completed it, reduce the debt and as then Prime Minister PJ Patterson put it, we said bye-bye...

Government MEMBERS: Ta-tah.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...ta-tah to the International Monetary Fund.

Mr. SHAW: Hello to the International Capital Market.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Okay, you said hello to the IMF and ta-tah - and they said ta-tah to you.

(Applause/Laughter/*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. PHILLIPS: But you run into it. But the fact is that we inherited a programme, and we are going to perform like we did in the ‘90s and we are going to recover Jamaica's sovereign and... (Inaudible) ...with performance, not to abandon it.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition Spokesman on Finance also claims that Jamaica borrowed loans of $330 Million from the World Bank in November 2011, as evidence that trust had not been broken with the multilateral financial institutions. The reality is that only US$100 Million was actually disbursed.

Despite this, it needs to be explained why, by then, there had been no reported reviews by the IMF Board for almost one year. Why the IMF staff indicated their inability to approach their Board regarding progress and under the SBA, and why external flows had dried up, relative to the 2010, despite the flows of $100 Million disbursed in November 2011. It needs to be explained why by then there had been no reported reviews by the IMF Board for almost one year; why the IMF staff indicated an inability on their part to approach the Board of the Fund, regarding progress made by Jamaica under the Standby Agreement.

Dr. DAVIES: Because there was no progress.

Dr. PHILLIPS: And why it is that, given all the expectations of 2010, external flows to Jamaica had dried up?

In fact, Mr. Speaker, official loans and grant flows from all sources declined from some $1.2 Billion in 2010 to $595 Million in 2011 and $267 Million in 2012, the first year of this Administration.

In 2010, Mr. Speaker, our development partners not only met the commitments that they had made, in fact, they front-loaded the disbursements. Actual disbursements in 2011 were US$919 Million, compared with the commitments that had been given of $870 Million. By 2011, however, disbursements of Budget support had declined to $195 Million.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Dalley)

Dr. PHILLIPS: That's what we mean when we said it had gone awry.

Mr. DALLEY: Yes, awry.

Dr. PHILLIPS: In 2012, the first year of this Administration, Budget support was a paltry US$500,000...

Government MEMBERS: What... What!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...relative to earlier commitments of $345 Million. It was because of that situation why the Leader of the Opposition, as Prime Minister, went to Mandeville to talk about bitter medicine.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Ohhhh!

Dr. PHILLIPS: But we shouldn't come here and then suggest that because of the difficulties that had been involved in correcting the situation, it somehow represents a dereliction of duty or some feature of lack of care on the part of this Administration. We are trying to rescue a wreck...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right.

Government MEMBERS: Yes!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...that was left by that side.

(Applause)

Mr. SHAW: How you sound like you tracing so.

Government MEMBER: He should be locked up.

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Speaker gavels)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the Opposition Spokesman is pleading for mercy.

Mr. DALLEY: Yes.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I am trying to make the point. Seriously, let us just have a straight discussion about the real problems that the country faces. That's what I am seeking.

Mr. CHUCK: By shifting blame; by shifting blame.

Government MEMBER: You be quiet.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. CHUCK: Blame game.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker... with the stock of public debt increasing from $923 Billion at the end of '06/'07, $1.6 Billion at the end of 2011/2012, the ratio of debt to GDP again increased to 131.9 by the end of 2011/2012. On the basis of these official Government of Jamaica statistics, the debt to GDP ratio peaked at 135.64 at the end of 2012/2013 before being brought down to 131.9 at the end of '13/'14.

The IMF's measurement for purposes of the current Extended Fund Facility adds PetroCaribé debt and domestic guaranteed debt to the Government of Jamaica's official measurement. We were forced to use PetroCaribé and other resources for funding in the period prior to the Extended Fund Facility being approved by the IMF Board which led to an increase in the debt stock. What is good about the programme is that the debt-to-GDP that stood at 149.4 per cent at the beginning of the current Extended Fund Facility - that is the end of 2012/2013 has declined to 139.2 per cent at the end of 2013/2014. It has been difficult, Mr. Speaker; it is coming down.

Mr. SHAW: You are still using one thirty nine, why?

Dr. PHILLIPS: And still using 139, and I will explain it to you.

Mr. DALLEY: One thirty nine point two (139.2).

Dr. PHILLIPS: One-thirty-nine point two (139.2).

Mr. SHAW: The IMF - 42.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, not the IMF in the Bill... not the IMF. That number is in error; that number is in error, yes, yes...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that by whatever measure used, there has been a clear decline in the burden of public debt already being generated... (Applause)

The initial success of the programme, Mr. Speaker, underlines the importance of the perspective that it is critical to avoid the negativity and the futility of looking back in anger and trying to ascribe blame. You want to hug up one part of the blame. And what I am saying is that Jamaica... Jamaica...

Mr. CHUCK: Move on.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, man; I am trying to explain to you, not with anything... but because we want you to come along too. We don't want to leave you out.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Dem say we should leave you by the wayside.

Mr. Speaker, that we have a programme at all, with all its challenges, is testimony to a successful effort to rebuild trust with our International Development Bank, not least of all, by the faithful adherence to our commitments under the programme.

Breaking from tradition, the IMF provided a part of its financing as budget support. Late in 2013, the European Union became the first of our international partners to resume Budget support. The World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank have subsequently resumed budget support.

Just yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the World Bank approved a Country Partnership Strategy Report for Jamaica, that will facilitate growth and further disbursements under that institution's commitment to Jamaica. (Applause)

The World Bank has also indicated its support in three key areas: first, in modernizing the public sector. Activities in this regard will focus on:

- the implementation of the new Debt law;

- support for the reform of the Public Pension System and the Public Sector Investment Programme;
- improving Customs Administration, and standardization of the Kingston Port; and,
- continued support in Public Private Partnerships in energy, transport, waste water treatment and education.

The second critical area of our cooperation with the World Bank, Mr. Speaker, involves the creation of an enabling environment for private sector groups. Activities in this aspect of our corporation will include:

- the fostering of investments in high potential sectors, such as logistics and agriculture;
- helping to improve the business climate by reducing the time needed for an entrepreneur to register a new business, obtain construction permits and pay taxes;
- the provision of digital training opportunities for the youth; and,
- the establishment of regional incubators for businesses.

The other area involves building social and climate resilience to include:

- strengthening the government's social protection programmes;
- supporting the development of a comprehensive framework for disaster and climate risk management;
- ensuring that there is an increase in the number of Jamaicans benefiting from social assistance programmes; and,
- the number of households with access to critical basic services: water, electricity and solid waste collection.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: It is primarily a loan - primarily a loan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say something. I am pleased that... on the question of foreign exchange.

Mr. SHAW: Before you... I want you to clarify the number.

Dr. PHILLIPS: The number refers to the reconciliation of the actual out-turn in relation to PetroCaribé - utilization of PetroCaribé resources, which makes - and the GDP numbers which make the specific outturn, 139. When you spoke, I had the Debt Management Unit, not the Economic Management Unit go through the numbers and the reconciliation has been done. I can give you the table.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I think it is just important that the - just so you understand and everyone else - that the Public Debt Management Annual Report '13/'14, speaks specifically - it says: Under the EFF definition, the total stock of debt is $2,137.5 Trillion, or 144.9 per cent of GDP at the end of March, 2014. I just want to make sure that this clarification relates to - is a question of the calculation of the GDP itself. Is it a different calculation?

Dr. PHILLIPS: And the... no, the numbers will be adjusted, and the actual utilization of the resources under the

PetroCaribé which is the numbers that had to be reconciled.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Shaw)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, but the amount that you used varies the projection, as against an actual outturn.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome the fact that the Opposition spokesman on Finance has chosen to join the debate on the exchange rate. Having stated, however, that there are many arguments in favour - and I'm quoting him:

> *"There are as many arguments in favour of a fixed exchange policy as there are for a floating exchange rate or a carefully managed floating exchange system*."

He proceeded to outline only the benefits, supposedly, of stability and predictability of a fixed exchange rate.

It is true that a reflectively stable as distinct from fixed exchange rate moderates the rate of price increases of imports and facilitates predictability in the economic environment. We too, indeed, everyone, seeks a stable exchange rate. In proclaiming the virtues of a fixed exchange rate, however, the Opposition spokesman on Finance points to the experience of the mid 1980s, but in his account some simple facts escape from view.

For one thing, although the Opposition spokesman does point it out, when the rate was fixed at J$5.50 to US$1 in the auction system, this represented a significant devaluation from J$1.78 to US$1, which was the value in 1980. Secondly, while he's quick to cite the negative international environment of 2008-09, he makes no references to the fact that there was a buoyant market in relation to aluminium prices or that the increased oil prices of '83 and '85 had been reversed in the period '86 to '89; and he doesn't ascribe any significance to that fact in trying to explain the rates of growth between 1986 and 1989. That at least would have been a more balanced analysis.

Mr. SHAW: That's a little weak.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Maybe, but it is true. You can't claim...

Mr. SHAW: And a little bit superficial.

Dr. PHILLIPS: You cannot claim negative...

Mr. DALLEY: Yuh wake up.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...international environment explaining away all your failings of '08, '09 and not recognize that you had a buoyant international environment taking place in the mid 1980s. It's not a quarrel. It's just a fact.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Now, equally, when he touts the auction system for honesty's sake, let us not forget the large build-up of arrears to purchasers or put another way, the inability of the auction system to meet all the legitimate demands of purchasers.

Dr. DAVIES: Or put another way ICD and Grace were taken out of the box.

Dr. PHILLIPS: We shouldn't ignore the fact that some large users of foreign exchange were taken out of the market altogether nor should we forget the explosion of the blade-market in foreign currency and the rigid police enforcement of exchange controls. When yuh travelling it was what - $50 that you had to get stamped in your passport.

(Cross talk)

Let us not be under any illusion, Mr Speaker....

(Cross talk)

The issue - hold on - the issue is not policing of the foreign exchange system, draconian or otherwise. That's not the issue. The issue is that fixing the exchange rate involves an administrative choice as to where to fix it and that you have to be able to ensure that people who want it can get it when they want it at the official fixed rate. That means that you have to have a supply commensurate to the demand.

The Opposition Spokesman may be tempted to defend his fixed exchange rate by a return to exchange control. I don't know if that is what he's proposing, but if there is one thing we learned from the late 1980s onwards is that no matter how draconian - and the 70s - no matter how draconian the regulations and the sanctions, exchange control is as expensive as it is ineffective; people will buy foreign exchange at whatever price it is available to them when they need it. That is not a lesson just from here. Our economy is subject to the same rules of the market and of economics as we see in other jurisdictions.

What is particularly surprising is that the Opposition Spokesman on Finance discussed the issue of the exchange rate without any reference to the chronic imbalances in the current account of our Balance of Payments. The exchange rate system has strong implications for the balance of payments. In a small and vulnerable developing economy like ours, subject to natural shocks and productivity differentials as compared with our main trading partners in the developed countries, these differentials almost guarantee that our inflation rates will exceed that of our developed trading partners. Without any capacity to correct this imbalance through exchange rate adjustment, you're left with the improbable prospect of increasing productivity faster than the rate of increase of your trading partners. There has to be some flexibility, Mr. Speaker.

There are other economies in the region that have been held up as examples of the benefits of fixed exchange rates. These economies have now lost competitiveness to the extent that their foreign exchange earnings and official reserves have declined precipitously and public debt has climbed alarmingly. I wouldn't want anyone to misunderstand what I'm saying, Mr. Speaker. Nobody and certainly not us, wants protracted exchange rate instability. The benefits of devaluation that result in a switch from consumption of foreign goods to domestic products is not instantaneous, but we are witnessing some of the benefits now. Perhaps we are seeing some of these benefits most clearly in what is happening in the agriculture sector where opportunities are being created for the replacement by local production of the huge almost US$1 Billion of imported food which comes into the country.

The adjustments will allow and, in fact, is already allowing Jamaican farmers and producers to replace imported food stuffs. When you talk about the Irish potato that your farmers in your communities are producing now, part of that is the result of this

adjustment. There is no doubt that it causes hardship, first of all, but if we want to get to that point where we can eat more of what we grow and grow more of what we eat; these are some of the adjustment that have to take place. We have to balance the benefits of stability with the opportunity for increased output and employment. There is attractiveness to stability, but its pursuit must not be at the expense of productive opportunities especially when we all share the concern about poverty, unemployment and low growth. The agro parks that we talk about, Mr. Speaker, which are producing, provide opportunities not just for farmworkers but for agronomists, for people who do the marketing, for people who the transportation, we're putting Jamaicans to work here and not just farmers in Iowa and Kansas and Ontario and other places. (Applause)

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Colorado.

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: While relative exchange rate stability is desirable, this is not a product of the exchange rate mechanism. Whether fixed or managed float, stability has to be the product of the quality of the macroeconomic programme.

(Cross talk)

That is why we must stay the course in fiscal adjustment towards debt sustainability.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that the adjustment entails great difficulty and we understand that it entails hardship for many people. We don't delight in this fact. Indeed, we have done everything within our power and within the resources to cushion the impact of the adjustment on the most vulnerable sectors of the society. It is because of the concern, as the Prime Minister outlined yesterday, that we have increased the payments to PATH beneficiaries by 15 per cent last year and 15 per cent again is provided for in this budget. (Applause) We have increased the minimum wage twice.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Charles)

Dr. PHILLIPS: We have made provision - devaluation in one of the years has been 156 per cent.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Charles)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Even you can give him the lesson about what the rate of inflation has been.

(Cross talk)

Mr. DALLEY: *Gwine* put some tax on the dye. Put some more tax on the hair day.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: All right.

Mr. DALLEY: And you need to put the black on that side

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: We have provided an additional $500 Million for pensioners. We have increased in this budget the income tax threshold...

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...by $49,920, which will see benefit of over $12,000 to taxpayers, each taxpayer. We're expanding the School Feeding Programme. We've provided a transportation subsidy for students in the PATH programme.

(Cross talk)

This, Mr. Speaker, is not the heart of what we seek to do, but it is intended to cushion the impact of the adjustments. All of this was provided in a budget that in real terms is the same as it was last year. We've carved out a greater share for social protection and for the benefits to protect the poor. (Applause) What I want to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, is that this programme is beginning to show evidence of success.

The latest labour force survey conducted by STATIN, and which was released today, indicates that between April 2013 and January 2014 the unemployment rate fell by approximately 3%.

(Applause)

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Thirteen point four per cent down to sixteen point three per cent in April 2013. This is, Mr. Speaker, increase in the labour force.

Mr. CHARLES: Where they are working?

Dr. PHILLIPS: They are working in agriculture, working to grow the construction, people working on highway, they are working and they are working in call centres; they are working all over. We don't have to cry down the country and its progress just to make a political point.

(Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: Three day work, one day man done.

Dr. PHILLIPS: It goes without doubt, it goes without doubt, there is no dispute that there still is too many unemployed. We are not claiming that we have solved the problem. There are still too many persons that not looking for work and that has been a long one and the reality in Jamaica. But we have to muster the national resolve to change that reality. (Applause) Part of the problem - and I believe I am saying this with the utmost sincerity and it is not directed at you, I think it is directed at many, many people in the country, we have been down for so long that we don't even believe that we can get up and can - getting up we explain why it's not and we can't get up. We have to stop doing that and we have to rid ourselves.

I tell you, something happened to me. I had the occasion to go to the IMF annual meeting last year, it was held in Panama, and when I got to Panama City and when I go in the airport or travelling, you see construction taking place in almost every square meter of lot and I said to myself, my goodness, this is what 10% growth looks like, because the truth is, seeing makes a graphic statement of what it looks like. It is not something that we have seen here since maybe the fifties, but we need to believe that we can do it too because nothing wrong with we; we can do it.

Mr. SHAW: We have done it before.

Dr. PHILLIPS: In the fifties and sixties.

Mr. SHAW: And in the eighties, too. Cuba was 6% between '86 and 1990, 6%.

Dr. PHILLIPS: For 20 years.

Mr. SHAW: You guys don't know 6% growth. You have never had it.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. SHAW: You keep quiet.

(The Speaker gavels)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SAMUDA: Panama is giving incentive that we eliminate and that's the difference.

A Government MEMBER: Bout yuh have job growth!

Dr. PHILLIPS: In addition to the evidence provided in the labour force survey, I don't want to suggest that there are no difficulties because the US, the report of the solar requires partner, with the US economy…. highlight still the fragility of the global but we have to be confident in our collective ability as a country to endure such constant make up and to be able to fashion responsiveness if they come and to keep moving forward.

But we also had yesterday, Mr. Speaker, further evidence that the programme is working.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yes!

Dr. PHILLIPS: The survey of Business and Consumers Confidence for the first quarter showed significant increases over the closing quarter of 2013. In fact, to quote the survey it says:

> "There have been only three surveys since 2001 in which firms held a more positive assessment of their current profit situation".

When asked about prospects for the year ahead, 57% of the firms expected improvement in the first quarter; 4% last quarter and highest percentage in two years. In speaking to investment, the survey indicates for the second quarter the recorded number of firms, and this is the important part, Mr. Speaker, for the second quarter the recorded number of firms expressed their intention to increase their investments in their own business in the year ahead so that there is no pulling or taking advantage of future economic opportunities.

We would like to be higher but there are signs, Mr. Speaker, and we welcome these signs.

Mr. CHUCK: You coming to me now.

Dr. PHILLIPS: When you get to give your speech you structure it how you want it. (Referring to Mr. Chuck)

Mr. Speaker, there has been much public commentary since I opened this Debate surrounding the revenue measures which were announced. It is noteworthy that this revenue package is… upon the smallest share of GDP amounts to approximately .4% and contrasts sharply with the 4% of GDP of forty plus billion dollars in revenue measures that the Opposition Spokesman announced in the fiscal year 2009/2010 and he probably still holds the record I believe.

Mr. SHAW: With NHT loans running six two.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Single year.

Mr. SHAW: Loans 62, yours is $62 Billion with NHT. You hold the record.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Not one year.

Mr. SHAW: You are not just papa tax, you are grandfather tax now.

Dr. PHILLIPS: NHT is not a tax; NHT is where there is distribution. But be that as it may, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the $55 Billion of new revenue measures taking out the $1.2 Billion which is really a

tax borrowed from the Maintenance Fund to the Consolidation Fund representing approximately 1% of the total expenditure in this year's budget. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, we take pride on this side that we are an administration that listens.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Dr. PHILLIPS: We have done this. We have single year, we have made adjustment from the wider community of Jamaica. Indeed, I have always invited suggestions, said as much, the post-budget press conference this year.

Let me turn now to some amendments which we propose to make, given some of the constructive feedback received.

Mr. SHAW: Thank you very much! (Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: In relation...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SHAW: I am just acknowledging the…

Dr. PHILLIPS: In relation to the modification of the duty regime on the fees for motor vehicles because of the oversight pick-ups were not specifically mentioned in our original announcement. I want to emphasize that pick-ups will be included mainly for productive purposes.

Mr. SHAW: That's the 10% reduction?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes. I want to make it clear - hybrid vehicles that were not specifically included will not attract special consumption tax. (Applause) We want to encourage energy conservation. We don't produce - we produce very little energy of our own and we want to encourage the use of…

Mr. SHAW: It will attract GCT?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes, everything except in relation to the insurance industry.

I want to at the outset, Mr. Speaker, to express particular appreciation to the Insurance Association of Jamaica. The Association has presented alternative to the industry premium tax and an investment tax which will preserve the revenues with less impact on operations of insurance companies. They made these suggestions in accordance with the highest petition of patriotism without fanfare, without accusations or threats or anything else and I want to pay tribute to them because clearly this is an instance where national interest has triumphed over narrow self-interest. (Applause) As a consequence, the increase in the premium tax for the regionalize and non-regionalize insurance companies to 5% and increasing the investment tax to the insurance companies to 20% have now withdrawn and instead will be an increase in the rate that applies to the after tax by an additional 75 basis points to 1% for life insurance companies only. This measure is intended to be temporary and will last for one year. The potential revenue intake will be approximately $900 Million approximately the same as was intended. (Applause)

In relation to the alcohol regime to - specific consumption tax on all alcoholic beverages, we have deferred the implementation of this measure for one month for the tourism industry only. This is in

response to request from the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association for additional time to discuss the implementation of this measure by the tourism industry. This will result in a revenue loss of approximately $36 Million. But I would also like to pay tribute to the JHTA which I met yesterday along with the Minister of Tourism and other officials from both ministries. They have approached the discussion with a spirit of openness and the recognition of the need for the country to secure the necessary additional revenues. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, now to the question of the levy on financial institutions computed on the basis of withdrawal for deposit-taking institutions and encashment of security deals. As I had said before, Mr. Speaker, we take pride on this side that we are an Administration that listens. We have done so in previous year and made adjustment in response to better suggestions from the national economy. Indeed, I indicated my intention to include all the revenue measures whether or not in the post-budget press conference and in a meeting I had with the trade unions. Then as now, I am only too conscious that the progress we have made with our economic reforming programme and in rescuing the Jamaican economy from its precarious stage was only possible because we have been able to build a national consensus about the need to take Jamaica out of the stranglehold of it. (Applause)

It was this consensus that made the national community respond as they did and make the sacrifices that have got us where they are. I am referring here to the sacrifices made by public sector workers who agreed to a further three years of wage restraint by bondholders, by creditors, pensioners, *et cetera.*

Mr. Speaker, I want to place on record my appreciation for the numerous calls and messages that I've received directly and through the press, which supported the revenue measures and commended the creativity and consideration, which guided the proposals. Some went further to say, 'don't change, go ahead, I believe we should make it stick'.

However, the primary objective of the Cabinet, the Prime Minister and myself is to maintain the consensus that we have built in the national community. (Applause) And to carry every one of our stakeholders with us as we move forward.

Despite the broad base of support and understanding, we don't think that we have all our stakeholders on board. In this situation, we have to be mindful that we still have a political culture in which desperate people seeking to restore political fortunes...

Mr. DALLEY: Desperados!

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: ....may choose to do so at the expense of the future of the country.

Mr. SHAW: Why you don't.... (Inaud)

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No! What happen? Last week, Mr. Speaker, last week, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition let off a broad side against the JUTC.

(Heckling by Members)

I am not saying that he directed anyone, but on the weekend some chose to fire shots into the JUTC buses.

Mr. DALLEY: Always.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Words have consequences and our political culture still has a far way to go. It's not worth - it's not worth rupturing our community over $2 Billion in a $550 Billion budget. Not worth it. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is our belief that the Economic Reform Programme on which we are embarked should simultaneously herald a rebirth of a political culture, which no longer praise on ignorance and misinformation or seeks narrow political interests.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me turn to some amendments which we propose to make, given some of the constructive feedback that we have received. We propose to replace the levy on the banks and financial institution with two measures.

First, there is a withholding - the introduction of a Withholding Tax on insurance premiums paid to non-residents by Jamaican residents. The first being the introduction of a 15% Withholding Tax on all Insurance Premiums, paid by Jamaican residents to nonresidents, premiums paid to non-residents by registered Jamaican insurance companies will be exempt. The objective of this measure is to assist us in improving compliance while we strive to protect the most vulnerable.

As part of their tax management strategy, large Jamaican companies have been increasingly purchasing insurance from overseas insurance companies. A common tax avoidance scheme employed by these firms is to create a captive insurance company in an offshore jurisdiction. The captive charges the local operating company and insurance premium, which is treated as an expense and is totally deductable from the Jamaican corporation income tax.

The imposition of the 15% tax on such payments would immediately mitigate the benefits these captive arrangements enjoy and increase tax compliance. It would also bring this in line with interest payments made by resident Jamaica companies other than banks to overseas lenders.

The proposal to exempt local registered insurance companies from this tax would not penalize the payment of reinsurance premiums. (Applause)

The second measure, Mr. Speaker, relates to the GCT Act to improve the rules related to imported services.

The General Consumption Tax which was introduced in 1991 provided for a tax on imported services. This was amended in 2003 to strengthen the mechanism for the effective collection of the GCT.

The Cabinet in 2009 noted that there were additional loopholes and sought to address these by approving amendments including streamlining the treatment of imported services.

To ensure policy continuity within the context of tax reform, these amendments are now being undertaken. Unlike imported goods, most services imported into Jamaica are not subject to GCT. Registered taxpayers who provide services are at a disadvantage to

non-resident service providers since the Jamaican service providers must charge GCT, whereas non-resident service providers are not generally required to do so.

Dr. DAVIES: This applies to the… (Inaud)

Dr. PHILLIPS: It would.

Dr. DAVIES: It would?

Dr. PHILLIPS: It would.

Dr. DAVIES: Okay.

Dr. PHILLIPS: The absence of GCT on imported services encourages domestic consumers to substitute imported services that are not subject to GCT for domestically supplied services that are subject to GCT. (Applause) It discourages the domestic production of services since domestic suppliers may not be able to pass on the cost to consumers who are able to switch to imported services. It discourages domestically produced services by some Jamaican businesses.

This move is to remedy the imposition of GCT on imported services; is designed to stem future revenue losses from this source as purchasing services offshore is becoming increasingly common. It will also stimulate the development of a domestic service sector as part of the overall goal strategy. The yield from both of these new measures and - that is to say the levy on insurance payments and the modification to the GCT Act is estimated to be $2.3 Billion. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that this will require more administrative effort than our previous proposal.

Mr. SHAW: Domestic?

Dr. PHILLIPS: It does. It does. But you start so much 'ting and den give up haf way.

(Laughter by Mr. Robinson)

(Laughter by members)

Mr. DALLEY: He's famous for that.

Dr. PHILLIPS: That is why....

A Government MEMBER: Highway 2000!

Dr. PHILLIPS: That is why the other measure which we are withdrawing has particular attractions. But, Mr. Speaker, what we want as we move forward in what we admit is a difficult economic reform process, we want the whole country to work together, we want everyone to be on the same side. (Applause)

Tough though the Programme is that it is administratively challenging. We want revenue you know, no doubt about it, it requires more effort, but we are making the adjustment because we want to pull everyone, including you... (Dr. Phillips speaking to Mr. Samuda) ...including Pearnel, to understand the necessity of the Economic Reform Programme.

(Heckling)

Mr. CHARLES: I did Economics 101, you know.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Good!

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Excellent!

Mr. Speaker, No, we want you. We want you. No, we want you. We want you. (Dr. Phillips refers to Mr. Charles)

Dr. DAVIES: How do you decide when you hear?

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, tough though the Programme is, it is bearing fruit. We have seen a return to growth. (Applause) Inflation has been curtailed; debt is going down; the unemployment rate is on a downward trajectory; agriculture is looking up; there is growth in tourism; there is expansion in the DPO sector; the animation sector is showing growth; the construction sector is showing positive signs....

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes! Yes!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Business and consumer confidence is looking up, Mr. Speaker. (Applause) Our international partners are committing to more support. It is time, Mr. Speaker, for Jamaican business people to invest more in Jamaica. (Applause) It is time for all of us to recognize the good things that are happening and not just to be paralyzed by the fact that challenges still remain. (Applause)

We need to pull together, Mr. Speaker, and not be distracted by the naysayers. It is time, Mr. Speaker, that we move to a national resolve to continue to eschew our lust for political power and our pursuit of political interest or sectional interest. It is time for every single Jamaican to keep front and centre before us the national interest in building our economy and cutting down our debt. (Applause)

There are some big hurdles which remain. We must get Public Sector Transformation right and get rid of so much of the bureaucracy that provides a blockage to those who want to invest and produce. (Applause)

We have to raise the level of tax compliance and pursue the people who see it as their business to avoid tax. And the truth is there are too many who still see the only good tax as one that is applied to the poorest and the most vulnerable among us. (Applause)

We must work towards sustaining the educational gains of the past year and not only providing access to a few. We must continue to be fiscally responsible. We must live within our means, so that we can continue to reduce our debt... (Applause) and we must do all of this in the context of a fragile work economy.

But, as we do this, Mr. Speaker, let's not forget the sacrifices of those who have made it possible for us to get even this far.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear! (Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: The public sector workers, the pensioners and the bondholders, the ordinary Jamaicans who have seen their purchasing power limited and constraint. God forbid, Mr. Speaker, that we should ever abandon our commitment and our resolve. Jamaica deserves better than that. (Applause)

Our resolve must be that come what may, we will continue the path of economic development. (Applause) Our resolve must be that if there are shocks unforeseen, we have to continue to believe in our ability, our ingenuity to weather those shocks and continue moving forward. (Applause) Our resolve must be to reach out to those who don't understand and to explain as best we can. Our resolve must be to resist this cynical political responses that we have been

conditioned to by years and years of excessive partisanship. (Applause) Our resolve must be to achieve this.

Mr. Speaker, we have another year before us, it is our intention to keep the good ship Jamaica, moving forward and upwards. May God bless Jamaica, Mr. Speaker.

In closing I move that the Bill, the Appropriations Bill be read a second time. (Applause)

(Standing Ovation by Government Members)

(Messrs Davies and Dalley embrace Dr. Phillips)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Audley… (Inaudible)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Shut you mout!

(Laughter)

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be read a second time.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Bill entitled:

"AN ACT to apply a sum out of the Consolidated Fund to the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 2015, and to appropriate the sums granted in this session of Parliament",

read a second time.

The SPEAKER: The House will now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider the Bill clause by clause.

COMMITTEE STAGE

The CHAIRMAN: Clauses 1, 2 and 3 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Schedule put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Title and Enacting Clauses put to the Committee and greed to.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage without amendment.

Motion put to the Committee and greed to.

(Applause)

RESUMPTION

The SPEAKER: I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage without amendment.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill be read a third time and passed.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be read a third time.

Motion put to the House and agreed to.

(Applause)

Bill entitled:

"An Act to Apply a sum out of the Consolidated Fund to the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 2015 and to appropriate the sums granted in this session of Parliament",

read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intend for us to do any further business, so I move for the adjournment.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind colleagues of the launch of the Internship - Parliament

Internship Programme that will take place shortly after the sitting ends, and we are inviting all Members to attend.

I move for the adjournment of the Parliament until next Tuesday, May 6, 2014.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do adjourn until Tuesday, the 6th of May at 2:00 p.m.

Motion put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned. (Gavels)

The Honourable House adjourned its sitting at 4:15 p.m. until May 6, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

TUESDAY, May 6, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:20 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

HE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM McNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Raymond Pryce.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House, a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Papers No. 64 - 65/14**
  Cabinet Agenda Issues dated April 7, 2014 and April 14, 2014
  (Cabinet Offices)
- **Ministry Papers No. 66 – 68/14**
  Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining
  1) International Centre for Environment and Nuclear Sciences (ICENS)
  2) National Commission on Science and Technology (NCST)
  3) Scientific Research Council (SRC)
  4) EGov Jamaica Limited (formerly Fiscal Service Limited)
  5) E-Learning Company Jamaica (E-Lam)
  6) Postal Corporation of Jamaica (PostCorp) and Post and Telecommunications Department (PTD)
  7) Spectrum Management Authority Limited (SMA)
  8) Universal Service Fund Limited (USF)
  9) Government Energy Inspectorate Electricity Division (GEVED)
  10) Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica (PCJ)
  11) Petroleum Company of Jamaica (PETCOM)
  12) Petrojam Limited (PETROJAM
  13) PETROJAM Ethanol Limited (PEL)
  14) Wigton Windfarm Limited (WWP)
  15) Rural Electrification Programme Limited (REP)
  16) Bauxite and Alumina Trading Company of Jamaica Limited (BATCO)
  17) Clarendon Alumina Production Limited (CAP)
  18) Jamaica Bauxite Institute Limited (JBI)
  19) Jamaica Bauxite Mining Limited (JMB)
  20) Seismic Research Unit-Earthquake Unit (SRU/EU)
  21) Electoral Office of Jamaica (EOJ)

The SPEAKER: And before we go into Public Business, let me - join me in welcoming our many visitors here today, especially our Senators and former Members of Parliament.

(Applause)

PUBLIC BUSINESS

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we will now have a contribution from the Member from East Kingston and Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining.

(MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

The SPEAKER: Minister Paulwell.

(Applause)

SECTORAL DEBATE

Mr. PAULWELL: I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I start my presentation with a quote from Julius Caesar:

Opposition MEMBERS: What! What!

(DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. PAULWELL:

"There is a *tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such* a *full sea are we now afloat. And we must take the current when it serves, or lose our ventures."*

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right.

(Applause)

Mr. HOLNESS: You know who said so?

Mr. SHAW: Flood can drown you too, you know.

(Laughter)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, in many ways Jamaica is at such a tide and my Ministry, the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining is taking the current when it serves; and has every reason, Mr. Speaker, to be proud.

The policies of this Ministry have led to the price of telephone calls being the lowest in the region at less than $3 per minute. (Applause) Not many people will recall that in the year 2000, the price per minute was J$127.

The Ministry renewed, Mr. Speaker, existing telecom licences and granted new ones which earned for the country, J$12.6 Billion. (Applause) And I will engage the Member in a discussion to illustrate to him - the spokesperson on ICT - that we got more than value for money for these licenses. The Member from St. Catherine....

A MEMBER: South Central.

Mr. PAULWELL: …South Central.

Mr. Speaker, despite the howls of protest when initially introduced by this Ministry, the Universal Service Fund (USF) has collected approximately J$12 Billion from the Universal Service Charge. (Applause) This money is being used to unleash internet access and technology in every nook and cranny of our dear country, Jamaica.

(MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston Western, entered and took his seat.)

The Ministry has continued the build-out of the National Broadband Network, connecting secondary schools, select post offices, libraries and hospitals. Mr. Speaker, one hundred and seventy-seven (177) Community Access Points (CAP) have been established across the length and breadth of this country. (Applause) This has brought thousands of Jamaicans into the world of the internet. (Applause)

This Ministry has brought electricity for the first time to thousands of Jamaicans in

communities such as Plumwood in South Manchester, Adams Valley in North West Manchester; Top Conolly in West Central St. Catherine, Powell Town in South East St. Elizabeth, Louden Hill and Airy Castle in St. Thomas.

(Applause)

Mr. SHAW: Bwoy, you start off strong man!

(Laughter)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, man!

(Laughter by all) (Inaudible comments)

(Laughter)

Mr. PAULWELL: I have to lift the energy in the place. 'A don't finish yet! A don't finish yet!'

Fishers Spring and Bodles in South West St. Catherine...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right.

Mr. PAULWELL: ….just to name a few.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Warmington)

Mr. PAULWELL: A coming to you soon.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Warmington)

Mr. PAULWELL: In addition, Mr. Speaker, to date, I have signed 166 licences of a total of 193 applications with a combined capacity of over 2.6 megawatt for net billing. This will avoid the importation of 35,000 barrels of oil annually, a saving of US$3.5 Million.

(Applause)

(MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, the Government's Energy Conservation and Efficiency project is well underway. This project is transforming energy usage across the entire public sector. For example, at the National Housing Trust we spent - this Government - $1.1 Million to install solar control film. After one (1) year, Mr. Speaker, the consumption at that office was reduced by 87,000 Kwh... (Applause) ...representing a cost savings of $3.5 Million and a simple payback of four (4) months. Money spent. And we have been able to achieve the success desired. (Applause)

Also, Mr. Speaker, at the Development Bank of Jamaica (DBJ), we spent $2.3 Million in again, in solar control film and after eight (8) months, the consumption was reduced by 49,000 Kwh representing a cost saving of J$2 Million and a simple payback of seven (7) months. That's an accomplishment.

(MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

And I'm sure the Ministers of Finance and National Security will be pleased to know that we are in the police stations. At the Spanish Town Police Station, we invested $360,000 in solar control film. After five (5) months, total

consumption was reduced by 6,758 Kwh representing a total cost saving of $271,000 and a simple payback of seven (7) months.

(MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

(Applause)

Mr. PAULWELL: Last year, right here in this House, we committed to the introduction of ultra-low-sulphur diesel for the transportation sector. I said so right here that it will be introduced on the 26th of June, 2013. Mr. Speaker, I can say mission accomplished in relation to that.

(Applause)

This Ministry assisted in achieving the first sale of goods under the PetroCaribé Trade Compensation Mechanism with the sale of clinker by the Carib Cement Company to Venezuela valued at approximately $8.5 Million.

(Applause)

And Mr. Speaker, I'm not claiming credit for that alone because this represents joined-up government at work. (Applause) Because, as we all know, our Prime Minister led this effort; she was the one who engineered to make sure that we were able to benefit from this trade compensation mechanism. And her travels to Venezuela have paid off.

(Thunderous applause)

We are working, we are working, and we are working. (Applause)

I have to acknowledge the support of the Minister of Industry and also the Minister of Foreign Affairs in this matter.

Mr. Speaker, this Ministry has launched the 'Tablets in School Pilot Project' with the award of four (4) contracts valued at $800 Million for the procurement of 27,000 tablet computers for 38 institutions in this country. (Applause) And, Mr. Speaker, this Ministry's policies have seen to the continuation of full production at the Ewarton Alumina Plant employing hundreds of Jamaicans.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry promised last year that we would not spend another dime on the operations of JAMALCO. We promised that CAP would no longer require budgetary support. For the first time in many years, since May of last year, the Government of Jamaica was not called upon to fund the operations because we have put in place a new arrangement.

(Applause)

And finally, in this brief summation of our solid achievements, this Ministry piloted, because we are responsible also for the ECJ, a Cabinet Submission on Campaign Finance Reform and I am pleased to announce that the Cabinet has approved the issuing of drafting instructions for campaign finance legislation. This will bring greater transparency to the financing of our election campaigns. Mr. Speaker, this is truly a monumental and historic step that will that will ensure that our Governments are not elected and controlled by special interests, but will be Governments by

the people, from the people and for the people. (Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, I rise as a proud Minister, and in support of the motion in my name, to commence this historic Sectoral Debate at a truly critical point for our country, our economy and the well-being of our people.

Mr. Speaker, as is evident, my Ministry has been working to break out of the fiscal shackles and build a platform for sustainable growth. It has not been easy. It will not be easy. No one promised us that it would be so. We will have to take tough and unpopular decisions. We will have to stand up to those who would seek to promote hidden agendas. But we will face any storm and climb any mountain because we are determined to transform the Jamaican economy and bring empowerment to our people. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, as I navigate this period of my own political life, despite the criticisms, I remain transfixed on the end goal, building a platform for sustainable growth. I thank the Almighty for surrounding me with His everlasting grace and favour. My faith is buttressed by Psalms 94 vs. 19:

> "When doubts filled my mind, Your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer."

(Applause)

I owe a debt of gratitude to my leader, the Most Honourable Prime Minister for her unwavering faith and confidence in my ability to lead this important Ministry. (Applause) The Prime Minister knows why I support her religiously because her commitment to this cause is undergirded by a deep and uncompromising philosophy of ensuring that the poor of this country are given pride of place, that they are protected, that they are provided for, that we look out for them and in every decision she makes at the Cabinet she ask the question, How will the poor benefit? (Applause) I share a similar background to the Prime Minister and that this is the reason why that commitment and philosophy is shared by me equally.

So, Prime Minister, thank you very much and I know that you have set a goal of reducing the price of electricity and we are committed to reducing the price of electricity in this country.

(Applause)

I want to thank my family for their abiding love, my children, they bear the brunt of my decision to serve in public life. (Applause) And I want to thank some special friends of mine. You know, the Member from Clarendon, Central when he spoke some weeks ago he spoke about being on probation for a little while before he went and do something. I just completed my first year of probation. And I want to thank Ashley who is here, who is supporting me and continues to do so. (Applause) The Minister of Agriculture is from Central Westmoreland, I better not make that mistake because Westmoreland is a parish that has been faithful...

Mr. BUCHANAN: Yes, talk about Westmoreland - important place.

Mr. PAULWELL: Central Westmoreland. So I want to thank all my friends and there are many in the audience too

many to mention. But you know who you are, I want to thank you very much.

I want to thank my Cabinet colleagues for their support, their counsel and their camaraderie.

Mr. Speaker, forgive me, but the real fulfillment and inspiration for my involvement in public life are the people of East Kingston and Port Royal. (Applause) I want to thank my Councillors, I see former Member of Parliament, Marjorie Taylor here. Marjorie we love you, so happy that you are here. (Applause)

I want to thank my Constituency Executive, the Cluster Managers, Youth Leaders, Women's Groups, NGOs, the Ministers Fraternal, the Educators, the educators, the educators (Applause) and the children of East Kingston and Port Royal, thank you very much for your support, (Applause) and I promise and pledge to continue being the best MP that you can have at this time. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I also thank the Jamaican people for their support and their words of encouragement, especially recently, as I interact with them on a daily basis. Their deep sacrifice, their resilience, their patience and lofty hope for the future undergird my determination to make Jamaica a better place for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I have to salute my Minister of State, the Honourable Julian Robinson... (Applause) ...for his loyal support and determination in assisting with the transformative work of our Ministry. I wish also to acknowledge and to thank, in a very special way, the able leadership of my Permanent Secretary, Ms. Hillary Alexander. (Applause) And the dedication and commitment of the leadership and staff in the Ministry. In my ministry it is a family, we work hard, we play hard and when we go through issues, we go through them together and all the achievements that I have announced today I share them equally with the staff of the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining. (Applause) And of course, Mr. Speaker, I have to thank my personal staff, I too have somebody at home who takes care of me Miss Rema and I have my security, I have...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. PAULWELL: Miss Rema, Ms. Rema. Ms. Rema can do the hominy corn porridge. And of course, my security and driver and personal staff at the Ministry and so on.

Mr. Speaker, I salute my colleagues on both sides of the House, especially in my role as Leader of Government Business. We have had a most productive legislative year in which we passed a record forty (40) Bills in the last calendar year, and thirty one (31) for the last legislative year.

(Applause)

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleagues on both sides would readily join me in commending you for your calm demeanor and sagacious counsel that has ensured stability.

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. PAULWELL: Every Member got a tablet last year just google it and you will find

the meaning. Ensure stability and balance in our proceedings.

In the same breath, we thank the members of the Parliamentary staff for their tireless efforts in ensuring efficient proceedings on behalf of the Jamaican people. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in this presentation, I will give an update on developments in the Science, Technology and Innovation Sector. I will then place in the record of Parliament, the facts as they relate to the 381 Megawatt Baseload project, and the way forward. I will lay the basis for changes in our energy mix particularly relating to the bauxite alumina industry. And finally, I will then give a detailed update on developments in that industry. And I am trying to set an example in leading this first phase; and you have noted the starting time and I am sure you will allow the House Leader a little leverage because I opened the debate. Very well, we are moving quickly.

Mr. Speaker, half a century ago, the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jnr. had this to say:

> "The greatest need of modern man today is to keep the moral and ethical ends for which he lives abreast of the scientific and moral ends for which he lives. It is the maintaining of these means for those ends that research and development continues to drive the engine of life's endeavour".

What he said then, Mr. Speaker remains true today.

Statistical data from UNESCO in 2004, indicate that the spend on Science, Technology & Innovation, as a percentage of GDP in some advanced economies is as follows: Firstly in Japan it is 3.2 per cent, South Korea - 3 per cent, USA - 2.7 per cent, and Singapore - 2.4 per cent. CARICOM territories fail in comparison where our average spend is 0.13 per cent of GDP. The data further indicates that the OECD groups of countries spend some 30 per cent of their budget, public & private combined, on Science, Technology & Innovation and earn 50 per cent of their GDP from that thrust. We in CARICOM spend some 0.1 per cent of the total and we earn less than 1 per cent of GDP from it.

Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing much about the knowledge-based economy and the need to align training and education with the expected needs for development, especially with the logistics hub on the horizon. (Applause)

Seventy per cent (70%) of the jobs in the future will require knowledge in the areas of STEM, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; and the global reality is that emphasis must be placed on these areas at all levels of education. The Minister of Education and the entire Government we share this; all levels and types of training and into the psyche of the working public. Currently, we are inadequately prepared to achieve these standards. It is estimated that 7 out of 10 workers have neither training nor certification for the jobs that they do.

Mr. Speaker, STEM has to be our focus. STEM has to be our imperative if our upcoming projects are to impact our people by way of jobs and careers. It is STEM, Mr.

Speaker that is proving to be the anchor for all developed countries, bar none. It has been shown, and note the countries I earlier referred to that Science and Technology are indeed the main driver of innovation, entrepreneurship and wealth creation.

Mr. Speaker, globally, industries driven by STEM and innovation generate significant incomes. Some of these industries are: Health & Wellness tourism - $500 Billion; the Nutraceutical Industry - $250 Billion; Information and Communication Technologies - $3 Billion, the Pharmaceutical Industry - $400 Billion and Agribusiness - $33 Billion. Mr. Speaker, the time has come for us to take even a minute slice of these very large pies.

We intend to use the integrated institutional joined-up approach to enable a more efficient implementation of our National Science Policy. We intend to have a joint inter-ministerial policy integration of critical ministries to streamline the applications of Science and Technology in development and to make them accessible to all levels of society.

Mr. Speaker, we must have a national conversation on Science & Technology. As such, last week the Most Honourable Prime Minister made certain announcement and she has decided to establish a national integrated focal point to engender the development of a national culture for Science and Technology in the Jamaican society.

(Applause)

These measures will demonstrate the practical manifestation of our Government and we have created the position of a National Director General of Science and Technology which shall drive the implementation of the policies laid down by our National Commission on Science and Technology. And the Prime Minister is the Chairman of the NCST. The NCST has not been in operation for a while; we are now putting back that in place to ensure that it can be the umbrella organization to facilitate STIs in Jamaica.

In the first instance, we shall be seconding Professor, the Honourable Errol Morrison, OJ, who currently is the President of the University of Technology and world renowned scientist and medical entrepreneur, to spearhead this initiative in the Ministry... (Applause) ...and he will come on board on the 1st of June this year.

Mr. Speaker, our Government has made no secret - Mr. Speaker, I turn to the question of Energy. Our Government has made no secret about advancing the critical matter of the energy agenda.

On this issue of energy, there is common agreement amongst all of us as Jamaicans, here in the Parliament and outside, the price of forty-two US cents (US$0.42) per kilowatt hour is too expensive, it is too high.

Mr. SHAW: It's heading for fifty cents! It is going to fifty cents!

Mr. PAULWEL: It is too high. And that has to be a joint preoccupation on our part.

The Government is committed to reducing that price. At today's price of forty-two cents, our consumers are burdened and our businesses are uncompetitive.

Mr. SAMUDA: We are not burdened, we are dying!

Mr. PAULWELL: This has to change. Our growth and future development, as a nation, are directly dependent on affordable energy.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the intense public interest and debate surrounding the 381 megawatt project. Given the importance of this project to national development, I wish to clarify some issues before announcing the way forward.

Mr. Speaker, the quest for lower electricity prices has, as I mentioned before, spanned various Administrations. The process to develop base-load capacity, utilizing natural gas to be transported here in a liquefied form, started with our Administration in around 2001/2002. When I returned to the Ministry in 2012, there existed a government-sponsored broad- based LNG Steering Committee, chaired at that time by Mr. Christopher Zacca, who was then working as Special Advisor to the then Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, while retaining the Committee, for good order I required that all members of the private sector on that Committee submit a voluntary declaration to state that there was no existing conflict of interest or potential therefor.

(HON. COLIN ALFRED A FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

After ten months, and having cost the taxpayers of this country over Three point Eight Million US Dollars (US$3.8M), in and around October that year when it became...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PAULWELL: Well, they had to employ consultants and they had to conduct bids and try to procure at that time the floating and storage re-gasification unit - so it cost the country Three point Eight Million Dollars US (US$3.8M).

It was quite clear to me by October of that year that we were getting nowhere, because the price that was being quoted was too high. And so, that Committee was disbanded. And as a result of that we actually saved - the balance of Two point Two Million US (US$2.2M) was returned to the Minister of Finance - to the Ministry of Finance.

(Inaudible comment from Mr. Shaw)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, a new process to procure generating capacity was commenced by the OUR, having been formally assigned this responsibility through an amendment to the JPSCo licence. The Members can recall that before now the OUR wasn't the body that had procurement, but after the project that saw the preferred bidder being ExMar being announced, and with those controversies, the then government shifted the policy and made the OUR the procurer of these large-scale generations.

(MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western, entered and took his seat.)

The OUR went to the market in 2011 for 480 megawatts. There was a requirement for additional generating capacity of 360 and the remaining 120 at a later date. That time the JPSCo was the sole bidder but they were unable to conclude the process to the satisfaction of the OUR.

Forgive me if I just take you back, because I think we need to appreciate the various starts and indeed stops to this attempt, and why certain things happened in the way they did, especially recently.

So the JPSCo was the sole bidder. The OUR aborted that process. And in 2013 the OUR announced that it would allow unsolicited bids for 360 megawatts of capacity. This again was unsuccessful, because all the bidders who submitted unsolicited bids did not have viable projects, as determined by the OUR - not me, the OUR.

The OUR, having disbanded that process, decided that it was going to go back to the market by way of a limited tender, a new process to start. At that same time EWI, that is, Energy World International entered the fray. So it was at the end of one process, just before a new process was to commence.

The Government of Jamaica received a proposal from EWI, which was recommended to the OUR. The OUR decided to accept the recommendation of Cabinet and with the concurrence of the National Contracts Committee. So the OUR went to the National Contracts Committee, said to the National Contracts Committee, the Cabinet has recommended that as we get into this new phase we include EWI, and the NCC said, yes. That is all a part of the facts.

They also said that you should allow those bidders who had submitted under the unsolicited proposals. So EWI along with the other bidders entered this new procurement phase. I don't think the country is aware of that because people are giving the impression that a phase had started and we parachuted EWI into the phase. So this is what happened. This is what happened.

It is critical to understand Mr. Speaker that the procurement process, because of the amendments...

(*Sotto voce* comments from Mr. Mair)

Mr. PAULWELL: ...and I am sure the Member wants to hear this - that the procurement process is entirely managed by the OUR since the change in 2011, and as an independent regulator, they guard that independence fiercely.

Mr. MAIR: Interim Director General!

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet found it necessary to recommend EWI to the OUR, due to a number of critical factors.

I think it's very important because people are saying why the Minister stick his neck out for EWI? Let me tell you why, let me tell you why. All along we were trying to get people to appreciate that you have to get at least a 30 per cent reduction in the price of electricity...

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PAULWELL: ...to start, to start. That is to start. Because at 42 cents, 30 per

cent is not going to help us to become competitive, you have to get below 20 cents. And so, when EWI came and said that they could guarantee twelve point eight-eight cents (012.88) that was music to my ears. Music to the ears of the Cabinet.

(Applause)

But not only that, but not only that. They were prepared to guarantee it so that it would become a ceiling, unlike what we have today where fuel is a direct pass-through to the consumer, so it doesn't matter what the price of fuel is, the consumer bears it. So if it goes up tomorrow - if heavy fuel oil or diesel, any one of them goes up tomorrow it is passed through to the consumers. Not so in the proposal from EWI. The cost of the fuel would remain constant. The price that it's sold to the grid would remain constant for twenty years. That was what we got.

(*Sotto voce* comment from an Opposition Member)

Mr. PAULWELL: We are not - we don't have the responsibility to do due diligence on those things. This is what they presented to us and we had to pass it over. We would have been irresponsible - as The Gleaner has said - if we had not taken them into account. And we did.

(MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central, entered and took his seat.)

(MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. Speaker, Members of this Honourable House will recall that last month I announced that the OUR had recommended that Energy World International be granted a licence for the supply of 381 megawatts of electricity to the JPSCo. And I signed an amended licence on the 14th of April. But we noted that EWI was ranked second.

Again, people are saying we were able to parachute them to the head of the line. That's not so. They came out number 2, not number 1. We have to correct the record. They were number 2. The first one having failed and they moved up to the position of number 1.

The legislative framework, as I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, provides that the Office of Utilities Regulation should manage the procurement process for new generating capacity. Consistent with that framework, the OUR has full latitude to discharge its role and function. As far as I am aware, while there have been several delays, there has been no impropriety on the part of the OUR's management of this process.

Of course, Parliament knows, and I think the Opposition spokesperson on energy and I share the view which I have already expressed, that really, for the future, in relation to addition of generating capacity, this should not really be under the control of the OUR, as its function is not in keeping with the role of the regulator.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that even though the OCG and I disagree on the outcome of his investigation, I have a tremendous and profound respect for that

office. And I want to say upfront that if I might have said anything or done anything in any way that would compromise the authority and independence of that office, I regret it and I withdraw and apologize for that. I respect the role and Office of the OCG.

(Government and Opposition Members applaud)

Mr. VAZ: You respect the office or him, or both?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: A little youthful exuberance!

Mr. PAULWELL: A little, a little.

Mr. Speaker, let me just turn now to the Minister's role, because the Minister only comes in after a recommendation is made by the OUR. So after you have done the full evaluation of the bids, and you have made a determination, you have determined a preferred bidder, and so on, the Minister comes in at the point where a licence is to be issued.

So, having received the recommendation from the OUR, the Minister becomes responsible for the terms and conditions of the licence, in keeping with the law, the Electric Lighting Act. This role is also reflected in the OUR Act, which states that no entity shall provide a utility service without a licence issued by the Minister. As the terms of the licence are the purview of the Minister, it may be amended also by the Minister, Section 3(a).

I just want to go through - even though we had issued a statement over the weekend - again, so that it is in the record of this House. And I hope you will give me the additional five minutes as I just go through this part, to put it on the Table.

The OUR, in making its recommendation, also proposed terms to be included in the licence. Several of these terms were substantially different from those contained in the Form of Licence attached to the instructions for final proposals - what you call the RFP - we call it here the IFFP - that was issued to our bidders. This Form of Licence - a document containing standard terms - would have been a critical consideration for all bidders, in deciding whether to submit a proposal.

The IFFP states that the performance bond is due ten days after the issuance of the licence. The recommendation from the OUR for the grant of the licence was dated the 26th of March. I reviewed the recommended terms and sought the advice of the AG's Office, in relation to the deviations that were identified.

While awaiting that advice, I was told by the OUR that if you don't sign it by a certain date, then you are going to lose the currency of the bid bond, at which time I signed the licence. And this was done on the 4th of April.

In an effort to ensure that the performance bond of Thirty-six point Eight Million ($36.8M) would be due before the expiration of the bid bond, I was advised by the OUR that the signing on the 4th of April was an absolute necessity. And this is what I did, even before receiving the formal advice of the AG's Office.

Having received the signed licence, EWI indicated that it would be unwilling to proceed

with the project on the terms of the licence issued, that's the licence that was issued on the 4th of April. The basis of its unwillingness was the substantial differences between the recommended licence and the Form of Licence contained in the IFFP.

(*Sotto voce* comment from an Opposition Member)

Mr. PAULWELL: I am going too fast. The Member says I am going too fast, so let me slow down a little bit.

The basis of its unwillingness was the substantial differences between the recommended licence and the Form of Licence contained in the IFFP, as well as its reservation that the risk profile of the project would increase exponentially and jeopardize its ability to obtain financing.

The EWI people indicated to me that they had previously made these comments known to the OUR when the latter sent a copy of the draft Licence for which a response was sought in 24 hours.

Mr. Speaker, acting in the interest of the Jamaican people, I decided to amend the Licence. I obtained legal advice from the AG's Chambers to ensure that the amendments were consistent with the Form of Licence to preserve the date, the timelines and targets of the bid and performance bond. And that Licence was signed on the 14th April.

Mr. Speaker, let me focus on two amendments to the Licence that have dominated discussions in the public forum, and that has fueled many misconceptions.

There are two things:

- the step-in rights during the construction phase; and
- the non-inclusion of the requirements for financial information.

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. Speaker, the step-in rights are general rights granted for an entity to assume ownership of an asset for a discounted purchase price. In the context of electricity generation, the usual intent would be to ensure the continuity of a service as opposed to the mere acquisition of property prior to commissioning. For this reason, the step-in rights are usually most appropriate post-commissioning of an electricity generating plant.

Step-in rights during the construction phase were not contained in the Form of Licence that was submitted in the RFP. Further, it should be noted that step-in rights in the construction phase are not a feature of any other licence granted to any other independent power producer in Jamaica. Also, the Amended Licence still provides for step-in rights after commissioning - after the plant is open - and as Minister, I would have had that right if the plant is shut for more than 48 hours.

The Second item, Schedule 1 of the Amended Licence requires EWI to provide evidence of financing of the Project in accordance with the Power Purchase Agreement.

(MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central, entered and took her seat.)

In the event that EWI fails to supply that information, this would be a breach of the amended licence which may lead to its revocation.

Mr. Speaker, while EWI's financial status is relevant, projects of this nature are usually project-financed and contingent on an effective and financeable Power Purchase Agreement. The Power Purchase Agreement is therefore an important document which a potential financier will consider in making a decision to finance a project.

Again, Mr. Speaker, unlike all other Power Purchase Agreement - and I am not blaming anybody, I am just stating a fact - unlike all other Power Purchase Agreements, which are usually effective on signing, the OUR made the effectiveness of this one, subject to the grant of the Licence by me. I believe that this could have delayed the discussions that the investors were having with potential financiers. The OUR's recommended Licence contained the requirement for certain financial assurances. This is another unusual requirement in a licence. Further, this requirement was not contained in the Form of Licence in the IFFP.

Mr. Speaker, I made a decision to have certain matters that were not appropriately included in the recommended licence, transferred into an Implementation Agreement between EWI and the Government of Jamaica. That Agreement, a copy of which is now posted on the Ministry's website, also included terms designed to declare the Project a Strategic National Priority and reflected the requirement for the posting of the performance bond that was stated in the IFFP.

Mr. Speaker, much has been said about the absence of the performance bond. For clarity, it should be noted that the original Licence was superseded again by this Licence of April 14. They were given 10 days. Within that ten-day period, there were two intervening holidays, both in Hong Kong and Jamaica. And then there was this IDB communication that stated that they were unwilling to finance the Project. Given those matters, I allowed for some more time for the posting of the bond.

Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet received a Report and an update from me in relation to this project yesterday, and as a result of that update the Cabinet has taken certain decisions.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time has expired.

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time be sufficiently extended to complete his presentation. And in so doing, I seek your permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

The SPEAKER: No problem.

The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

(Applause)

Mr. PAULWELL: Much obliged to my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, the following is the decision taken by the Cabinet, and it is in precise legal language so as to protect all of us.

Firstly, the Minister will consult with the OUR concerning the revocation of EWI's Licence. Secondly, the Cabinet has declared the building of this power project as a large-scale major project, and will appoint an Enterprise Team which will oversee its full implementation. The Enterprise Team is to be chaired by Dr. Vincent Lawrence.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. SHAW: The one with Mirant? He is the one that gave... (Inaudible) ….to Mirant. The Enterprise Team will report to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.

Mr. SHAW: Him bring Mirant to Jamaica; that was where our troubles started... Mirant.

Mr. PAULWELL: The Enterprise Team will be mandated to implement...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. PAULWELL: This is very important; this is very important. The Enterprise Team will be mandated to have the project implemented in 2016.

(Applause by Government Members)

A Government MEMBER: By...

Another Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PAULWELL: By 2016. That timing is sacrosanct. Let me say it again. The project will be implemented by 2016. And the country will receive regular reports from the Team.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. PAULWELL: I should also note that the team will comprise six individuals, two of whom will be nominated by the private sector group.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the Prime Minister's passion; and her passion and commitment to bring cheaper electricity to the people of Jamaica, and for her fervent desire to foster growth in the Jamaican economy. I share those goals with our Prime Minister.

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PAULWELL: And in this regard, I pledge my own support and commitment to ensuring that we meet this timeline. And, you know...

Mr. VAZ: At the price.

Mr. SAMUDA: You can't change the price, you know. You can't change the price.

Mr. PAULWELL: ...there is a silver lining in all of this. There is a silver lining in all of this because Mr. Speaker, let me say to you - let me say to you, before EWI came on the scene, people were bombarding me about...

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. SAMUDA: All those who were up at 18 must come down to 12. They must come down now.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Opposition Members)

Mr. PAULWELL: You and I are at one. You and I are at one because before EWI, I was being bombarded by people who wanted to pursue sole sourcing...

Mr. VAZ: The price must be the same.

Mr. PAULWELL: ...and I couldn't get them to budge below 19 cents. So, a benchmark has been set; a benchmark has been set.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. PAULWELL: And I have every confidence, I have every confidence now that we will be able to achieve that initial 30 per cent reduction, because a benchmark has been set. Thanks to EWI.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I want to move to another related matter that has also been very much in the public domain. This has to do with coal...

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PAULWELL: ...and its proposed role in the Government's strategy to reform the country's energy sector. When I speak of the Government's Energy Sector Reform Programme, I refer to the comprehensive set of activities which together, will sufficiently change the way energy is used in Jamaica and place the country on a level playingfield with our neighbours, near and far.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Mr. PAULWELL: This strategy is grounded in our National Energy Policy that was approved by this Honourable House in November 2010 under that Government. In the policy, Jamaica's vision for energy is outlined as *a modern, efficient, diversified, and environmentally sustainable energy sector*. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, the NEP clearly provides for a strategy that will see the introduction of natural gas into the energy mix, as well as more solids, such as coal.

Diversification

In accelerating the implementation of policy, we have developed a track record of solid achievements in renewable energy. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased, I am proud about the Government's achievement in relation to renewable energy. We have done exceptionally well.

(Applause by Government Members)

I have mentioned earlier, the granting of 166 licenses for solar photovoltaic equipment and use.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PAULWELL: There are some people who don't come to us for licenses, but they are making these dramatic steps to free themselves of expensive electricity, and I salute them. I salute the DBJ for facilitating a lot of the loans, and their enterprise in moving this way. It is saving the country millions and millions of dollars. (Applause) By next year, end of 2015, 78 mega watts of electricity coming from wind and solar will be available to the grid, come 2015.

A Government MEMBER: Yes, yes!

Mr. PAULWELL: And finally, we expect that as the Tribunal settles the issue in relation to wheeling, that that opportunity will also be available for persons who - for companies that wish to establish generating plants to service numerous, or multiple locations across Jamaica.

So, Mr. Speaker, the move from liquid fuels to gas and solids is one that is recognized across the world. In fact, much of the developed world has been built on coal. Times have changed, and in an effort to achieve its

policy objectives, any responsible government must consider all its options.

Mr. Speaker, our Administration, in a number of iterations, has a solid track record of performance for introducing clean energy technologies to reduce environmental pollutants in support of sustainable development. We only need to recall the introduction in 2002, of unleaded fuel by this Administration.

A Government MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. PAULWELL: Yeah man, we need to big up ourselves. (Applause) We can recall the introduction by this Administration in 2006, to replace MTBE with Ethanol...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Mr. PAULWELL: ...and it became fully operational in 2009. And again, as I mentioned earlier, we have introduced ultra-low-sulphur diesel in June last year. (Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: That is not going so well; the Ethanol is not going so well.

Mr. PAULWELL: The diesel is good, the Diesel is good, and it is environmentally friendly.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Vaz)

Mr. PAULWELL: Since 2012, we have witnessed the most decisive, ambitious, and impactful growth in the use of renewables, not to mention the increased role of energy conservation and efficiency, all designed to lower harmful emissions in the atmosphere.

So going forward, Mr. Speaker, we will build on this record of performance. Coal was clearly identified and its role properly defined in the NEP which was promulgated by that side. However, Mr. Speaker, it is more than that. Our bauxite/alumina industry is uncompetitive today due to the high cost of energy. And the future will be bleak without an energy solution.

The crux of the matter is that the revival of our alumina industry - a key plank of our quest for sustainable growth - is dependent on high volumes of steam for calcination. Without a source of low-cost steam, the prospect of restoring the bauxite/alumina sector will be negative.

This is where, Mr. Speaker, coal has a huge advantage and the investors in that sector they have indicated their intention to use coal as their preferred energy source. Notwithstanding, we are mindful of the negative effects associated with the use of coal. This Prime Minister has a Minister of Climate Change and we want to salute her for that and to appreciate (Applause) that in all that we do we have to take into account some of the serious environmental issues associated with coal. (Applause) But this is not new. Other fuel sources have negative impacts but there are mechanisms used to manage those impacts. And, ultimately, Jamaica's environmental standards are being developed and in many cases well established. They are consistent with international standards and as such coal will be no different from other technologies in our requirement to meet the standards for steam and electricity production.

Mr. Speaker mining, especially our bauxite/alumina industry remains a key plank of the Jamaican economy. The Opposition Spokesperson mentioned that if you are

looking for a sector, an industry to give you a quick jolt on the path for growth you probably need to look at one that we have some experience in a track record in and that as we have lost shell capacity, we need to focus on it to see how we can build back the capacity. So not only has it consistently been a major foreign exchange earner and provider of jobs for many decades, but it is one of the industries that can create the potential for healthy and sustainable growth in the Jamaican economy.

Mr. Speaker, our soil is a rich basin of minerals that when mined, can create several linkages to create wealth and thousands of new jobs. Mr. Speaker, it is widely known that Jamaica was the world's leading producer of bauxite in 1957, with over a quarter of the world's production. Since then we have mined, Mr. Speaker, approximately 600 million tonnes of bauxite out of a total deposit of 2.5 billion tonnes. However, only 1.2 billion tonnes remain for mining because the balance has been sterilized. We are not going into the Cockpit Country to do any mining. (Applause) Certainly, not this generation; that's for 30 years or so that we are pledging that we are not going to be doing any mining in that area known as the Cockpit Country. (Applause) But, Mr. Speaker, I say boldly that the best years of this industry are ahead of us, not behind us. (Applause)

Bauxite is a finite resource and while exploiting it for the benefit of our people, we must not give it away. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I have to announce a new policy. Going forward, the policy of the Government of Jamaica is that there will be no new agreements for the export of raw bauxite, the ore, without certain specific benefits. (Applause) So while we are going to honour all existing agreements - and some do run for some time - no new agreement will be considered unless, and this is it now, Mr. Speaker, unless an investor commits and does invest in value-added production. And what do we mean by that, we are not going to allow you to take out our raw bauxite alone, you have to have associated with that a refinery, a refinery to process alumina.

That is the policy that we are implementing today.

(Applause)

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. PAULWELL: Not aluminum yet. I am talking from bauxite to alumina. So if you want our bauxite you have to set up a plant to process alumina.

(Applause)

An Opposition MEMBER: That's not new.

Mr. PAULWELL: It is new. It is new. It is new.

Mr. Speaker, despite the cyclical nature of this competitive industry, Jamaica is now positioned to do much better than we have done over the period of the recession. Our first-mover advantage in infrastructure, and the quantity and quality of our reserves will make us a critical player for decades to come. Jamaica's bauxite future is assured because the demand for bauxite in the global market is growing as some countries are restricting bauxite export. Our bauxite remains attractive

because of its high quality and near-surface deposits. It's easy to mine.

In this regard, Mr. Speaker, it has been a long time since the closure of the Reynolds mine in St. Ann. That single act disrupted many lives as we have seen with the closure of Alpart and Kirkvine. And many more have wondered if bauxite mining operations will ever return to that area of St. Ann. I have also stated that the Administration's policy is that no one should export, as I mentioned before, raw bauxite.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have stayed true to that because we are serious about building the platform for sustainable growth. I am therefore pleased to announce that on the 28th of February, this year, the Government of Jamaica signed a historic MOU with a company called Xinfa, x-i-n-f-a, Group Company Limited. Xinfa Group was founded in 1972 and is registered in the People's Republic of China. Xinfa has more than 72 affiliated enterprises and holding companies with total fixed assets valued at approximately US$16 Billion. Xinfa is one of the top three integrated aluminum companies in China. It imports over 10 million tonnes of bauxite per annum. Xinfa operates several bauxite mines in China and operated two mines in Indonesia until late 2012. In the last three years Xinfa has successfully established a new bauxite mining and export operation in Fiji.

This MOU that we have just signed, and the parishes of Trelawny - not Cockpit Country, I am being very precise because I am talking about opportunities now for jobs - Trelawny and St. Ann. This foreign direct investment amounts to approximately US$3 Billion.

(Applause)

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. PAULWELL: No. It will involve some export of bauxite 4.5 million tonnes annually for 25 years, in the first instance. But very importantly, Mr. Speaker, it will see a construction of a two million tonne *per annum* alumina plant to operate for 25 years, again in the first instance.

Dr. BAUGH: When!

Mr. PAULWELL: It will also construct a coal-fired power plant to support the alumina plant.

Mr. Speaker, the MOU states that the parties are to pursue negotiations to settle the terms of definitive agreements within six months of its date. Cabinet has approved a negotiating team. The members of the team are - it's going to be chaired by Dr. Vin Lawrence, Mr. Christopher Cargill, Chairman of PCJ...

Mr. SHAW: The god come back, god come back, god is back!

Mr. PAULWELL: I am announcing the team: Mrs. Nicole Foster-Pusey, QC, Solicitor General, a representative of the Ministry of Finance and Planning; Mr. Coy Roache, Managing Director of the Jamaica Bauxite Mining Limited; Mr. Trevor Francis, an international chartered accountant; Mr. Michael Vaccianna, Legal and Commercial Counsel; and very importantly, Mr. Speaker, we are designating a slot on the team for a technical specialist in environmental management, and we are going to consult with

the stakeholders to name such a person. This means, Mr. Speaker, that...

Mr. VAZ: Diana McCaulay.

Mr. PAULWELL: …. that on successful completion of the negotiations we will not only be mining bauxite in that area of St. Ann as was the case with the Reynolds [Jamaica] Mines. We will be producing alumina from St. Ann for the first time at last. (Applause) And this will be the first greenfield alumina facility to be constructed in Jamaica in 42 years. (Applause) There is going to be wide consultation and the precise location will be determined during the negotiation.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Jamaican people that this Government will ensure that this project is implemented according to international best practices, and be fully compliant with our environmental laws. As a first step, we were keen to appoint an environmentalist to the negotiating team. This, Mr. Speaker, is a massive shot in the arm for the bauxite and alumina industry and the Jamaican economy. It will mean the provision of jobs in the construction phase and permanent jobs during the operations. There are significant linkages to the proposed operations that will enable our people to provide goods and services to the project. We will insist and ensure that these opportunities are maximized.

Mr. Speaker, these are the types of investments that can build the platform for sustainable growth and development.

(Applause)

Mr. SHAW: What's the timeframe for that?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, let me give you the time slot. The company will only be allowed to start exporting bauxite once they have met the NEPA approval for the construction of the plant. And we are not going to give them the full $4.5 Million upfront. It will be done based on the construction pace of the refinery. When the refinery is fully constructed that's when they will get the $4.5 million tonnes of bauxite. So it's going to go hand in hand so that the Jamaican people can benefit.

Mr. SAMUDA: When will that construction start?

Mr. PAULWELL: The export of bauxite will commence early next year. But again a lot will be...

Mr. SAMUDA: The plant.

Mr. PAULWELL: …negotiated with the team.... it will go hand in hand, same time. So once they start to export bauxite we intend for the construction to start. But they are not going to get the full amount until that plant is fully constructed.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to an update on the UC Rusal matter. The Member - firstly, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that the WINDALCO Ewarton plant's return to full production has been sustained. So I want to acknowledge that. This, together with JAMALCO and Noranda operations, has resulted in the growth that we have seen in the mining sector of 4.2%. I want to commend all the players. (Applause) We are back to growing the mining sector.

Mr. VAZ: You still not getting the….

Mr. SAMUDA: You got some help from Roger's team.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, progress has been made in difficult negotiation for the sale of the Government's 7% stake in WINDALCO, and later this month I expect to announce that sale and the price.

Members will recall that Cabinet had previously granted approval for a bauxite levy concession for one year to WINDALCO. In return, some specific actions were to have been taken, including the expansion of production at Ewarton and the re-opening of the Apart and Kirkvine plants by 2015. There have not been successes in relation to these even though some milestones have been met.

In that regard, Mr. Speaker, Cabinet has recently granted approval to UC Rusal for a further concession on the bauxite levy for an additional two years in respect of the Ewarton plant on the condition that UC Rusal constructs a coal-fired energy solution at that plant. We are proceeding to conclude this agreement as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, the Member knows that I had intended to speak about Alpart and Kirkvine fulsomely today. But recently I have been advised that a mission from Russia, from UC Rusal, will be coming to see me during the month of May, and I am therefore holding that announcement so that we will see what is their update in relation to the reopening of those two plants. Mr. Speaker, those two plants cannot continue to be closed for much longer. We are now into the fifth year and the impact has been great on those communities. And those resources are rich resources and in light of what we are seeing now in the bauxite/alumina industry, we believe that there are opportunities for those plants to be reopened forthwith, and so I will report to the country as soon as those negotiations are completed.

Very briefly Mr. Speaker, I want to update on Clarendon Alumina Production Limited. Last year I advised this House that the Government had decided not to divest its interest at that time. I also advised the House that when we resumed office in 2012, the negotiation for the sale of CAP to Glencore was nowhere near completion, as the country was led to believe by the previous Administration. The Government assembled a new negotiating team to pursue and settle new arrangements. And I am pleased to advise this House that this Administration has been successful in transforming CAP into a self-financing entity, which no longer has recourse to the Consolidated Fund since May of last year. (Applause) This is largely due to new financing arrangements secured with the Noble Group, a leading global supply chain company that is ranked 76th in the 2013 list of Fortune 500 companies. The Noble Group will provide US$120 Million worth of financing between 2013 and 2016, and buy alumina at improved prices. The group has also been working with JAMALCO to address energy efficiency problems for the medium and long term. For the medium term, generators will be

installed and for the long term, JAMALCO will be provided with stability via a coal- fired energy solution. Again, these are all going to enable the industry to be viable.

Finally, Noranda. Noranda is currently the only exporter of bauxite from Jamaica. I am pleased to update this House that Noranda Jamaica Limited is closer now to breaking ground for additional investment in Jamaica. This investment involves the expansion of its Port Rhodes facilities in Discovery Bay to accommodate larger ships and to enable a quicker turn-around of those vessels. (Applause) The total cost of this investment is US$18 Million. (Applause) We want to salute them for that.

Mr. Speaker, rare earth elements. Last year I announced the partnership between the Japanese company, Nippon Light Metals and the Jamaica Bauxite Institute to extract rare earth metals from bauxite waste. This pilot project, which was a $600 Million investment - J$600 Million; it is quite significant as a pilot and we want to commend the Japanese for investing in our country to this extent. (Applause) It has now been completed. Mr. Speaker, this is dried red mud. (Holds up a small bottle containing a dry sample red mud)

A MEMBER: Mud?

Mr. PAULWELL: Yeah.

Mr. McKENZIE: Second time yuh a show we.

Mr. PAULWELL: No, I didn't show you this last year. I didn't show you this last year, I didn't show you this last year.

(Cross talk)

So, from this the Members will appreciate that from this we have been able to refine Jamaican-owned rare elements, our own rare earth elements. (Holds up small bottle containing a small sample of rare earth (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAULWELL: And many persons don't appreciate what these things are good for.

Dr. BAUGH: Cellular phones.

Mr. PAULWELL: There are some elements in this, in the Jamaican rare earth - let me read them out:

- Neodymium
- Samarium
- Dysprosium

These are prevalent in the Jamaican rare earth element and these are elements that go towards making super magnets, super magnets. (Holds up samples of super magnets)

Mr. VAZ: We want something to send to Colorado, man.

Mr. PAULWELL: Now, these - you wouldn't believe the strength of these magnets, which are used in the manufacturing of motor vehicle engines. And though the project has come to an end, I have instructed the team to go back because I am not satisfied with just producing this. (Holds up rare earth sample) I want Jamaica to produce this right here too. (Holds up super magnet sample)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAULWELL: And I want to go further, because with cheap energy you can manufacture the engine in Jamaica.

A MEMBER: Good move.

(Applause)

Mr. PAULWELL: You can manufacture the engine in Jamaica.

A Government MEMBER: Don't stop the progress.

(Cross talk)

Mr. PAULWELL: So - no, call me a dreamer, call me a dreamer. Call me exuberant. Call me a…. but we wouldn't have been here had it not been for the vision to build value on that waste that we have sitting out there called red mud. And, Mr. Speaker, we have a very good positive development so far, because many Members know that if you were to enter any of those lakes, red mud lakes, in Jamaica you wouldn't come out alive; caustic. And so far, the pilot has proven that you can completely neutralize that alkalinity. And in fact, I don't try it yet but you could get water at the end result that could water your lawns and do some agriculture. That is the nature of the process that we have just completed. There is a lot of work to be done because there is analysis to be done in terms of the commercial viability of the production process and we are allowing the team to complete that analysis. But I want them to start to think about how we can build value in Jamaica...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAULWELL: ...not just to refine the thing to ship to elsewhere ship it, but to see how we can process these things right here in Jamaica. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I hope the House will forgive me for going over time, but I'm sure you would appreciate that I had to spend some time earlier on energy and I have not dealt with over 50 per cent of my Ministry. There is a lot more…

(Cross talk)

Yes, well, Minister of State will speak a lot on the ICT Industry...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Mr. PAULWELL: ...and we await his very excellent presentation, no doubt.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Mr. PAULWELL: There are areas that we're doing - we are moving back to commercializing the post offices. We have a lot to report on our exploration for oil and gas, but I can't deal with everything today.

Dr. PHILLIPS: You can't deal with everything today, because their absorption capacity.

(Laughter)

Mr. PAULWELL: Right. And the good thing about this Debate is that I not only open it, but I close it. So I shall return at a later date.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Pearnel, yuh hear? Pearnel.

(Cross talk)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, there are many other areas of my Ministry where there have been exciting developments but, of course, time will not permit me on this occasion. However, I have tried to at least mention....

(Cross talk)

The battery? Or the magnet? I shall.

(Laughter)

However, I have tried to at least, Mr. Speaker, mention some of the major developments that will build a solid platform for sustainable growth. Mr. Speaker, I have tried to be as clear as possible in explaining the issues that have commanded public attention especially recently. However, from my sojourn in public life, I do understand that obfuscation of reality is commonly employed by those who disagree with you especially when they serve special interest. Mr. Speaker, I know that the only interest I serve, that I could serve under this Leader, is the interest of the Jamaican people.

Today - I remember my mother and my father and the sacrifices they made to ensure their son got a good education (Applause) at Norman Gardens Primary School in East Kingston and then later at Excelsior High School. I remember their pride when I graduated from University. I remember their joy when I qualified as a lawyer. It was not only my dream coming true, but it was theirs as well. Like many of us in this Honourable House, we could have gone on to private practice in our chosen professions. I chose to serve the people of Jamaica through the process of political representation, service to Parliament and, of course, thanks to our Prime Minister to the Cabinet. I have no regrets.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAULWELL: I would not have chosen differently. I chose to put myself in the line of fire to better the lives of my people, and it is they who I serve with guidance from the Almighty.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I think it is fitting that I share this quote from former American President Theodore Roosevelt and I just ask the colleagues to spear me two minutes as I quote.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Where's Wheatley?

Mr. PAULWELL:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood...

A MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. VAZ: And tears.

Mr. PAULWELL:

...who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAULWELL:

...so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAULWELL: If I had allowed myself to be side-tracked by critics, the telecom monopoly would never have been broken. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. PAULWELL: Telephone call rates would still be high.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Mr. PAULWELL: The BPO industry would have bypassed Jamaica; and the Universal Service Fund of over $12 Billion would not have existed. (Applause) That is, Mr. Speaker, if I had allowed myself to be side-tracked.

I close by inviting Members of this Honourable House to join us in modernizing the Jamaican society and building the platform for sustainable growth. Join us in support of these initiatives that will unlock Jamaica's economic potential. Join us as we usher in a new era for the mining sector. Join us as we bring our students, our teachers into the knowledge society with the Tablets in Schools Programme. Mr. Speaker, let us move ahead with all of Jamaica to build the growth platform for the future by exploiting the obvious benefits that abound in the fields of science, technology, energy and mining. Mr. Speaker, the investment opportunities are there. All we need is the unity, the vision, the integrity, and the will to persevere to the very end. I am ready. My Prime Minister and this team, we are ready. Let us continue on our mission.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Forward ever, backward never.

(Cross talk)

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, the next speaker in the Sectoral Debate is the Member from North West, St. Ann, Dr. Dayton Campbell.

(Applause)

Dr. CAMPBELL: Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, before I start I just want to ask you for permission to speak from a seat other than mine?

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Dr. CAMPBELL: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Speaker, as I rise to make another contribution in this Honourable House, I want to first express my gratitude to the Most Honourable Prime Minister, Mrs. Portia Simpson Miller, who continues to be a safe pair of hands steering the ship as we navigate the stormy seas.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

(Applause)

I want to reassure her that I will continue to do all that I can do from where I sit to ensure that this Administration goes down in history as one of the country's greatest administrations.

(Applause)

Madam Prime Minister, like Esther, "Who knows whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

(Applause)

I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker for the unbiased way in which you have directed the proceedings in this August House. I want to thank as well my Regional Chair, Minister

Lisa Hanna who continues to provide astute leadership and mentorship in region one. (Applause) I want to thank my colleagues, including the Member from West Kingston…

(Laughter)

(Dr. Campbell points to Member McKenzie with laughter)

…on both sides, on both sides of the aisle. And I take this opportunity....

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You see, you see how him single you out!

Dr. CAMPBELL: …I take this opportunity to assure the public that we are not as divided as the pundits believe.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank each and every one of my constituents, some who are here with me today, who in 2011, decided not to "Gamble but rather to vote for Campbell".

(Laughter/Applause)

Their love and hard work continues to be the wind beneath my wings.

I want to specially highlight Mr. Lucius Thomas, who is here today (Applause) who like John the Baptist was responsible for paving the way. To my Councillors, Councillor Marlon Garvey, Councillor Arthur Clemetson and the Deputy Mayor, who is unavoidably absent, Councillor Redway, I want to say thank you for your hard work and dedication to North West, St Ann.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my family for whom it has been a rough year but, like true Africans, we continue to survive although we have a history borne out of hardship and trials.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes!

Dr. CAMPBELL: I also want to thank my friends some of whom sit in this Honourable House who continue to be a source of inspiration.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my Lord and Saviour, the resurrected one whose words comfort me daily. Words such as these found in Jeremiah 29 and verse 11,

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you....

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes!

Dr. CAMPBELL:

....and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Mr. Speaker, let us understand that calling on God and asking for divine intervention could never be a sign of weakness. (Applause) It is a recognition that with Christ, our weakness is compelled to strength. For his words says:

"I look to the hills from whence cometh my help, and my help comes from the Lord".

When I began this journey, I made a commitment to changing the lives of those whom I represent in a positive way.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Dr. CAMPBELL: I believe that politics is one of the most potent careers to effect real change.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. CAMPBELL: This kind of change pulls an individual out of the oblivion of doubt and points them to a path that leads them to realizing their dreams and aspiration. I received that chance, as all of us in this Honourable House did, to change our

circumstance and influence others in making the right decisions.

Mr. Speaker, the title of this presentation is: "Charting the Course from Poverty to Prosperity"

Mr. Speaker, I'm a firm believer that North West, St. Ann is one of the best constituencies in Jamaica. It has a comfortable mix of rural and urban areas, with Agriculture, Tourism, Mining and Bauxite Industry and small businesses all concentrated in its borders. The campaign leading up to the December 29, 2011 elections saw me asking the people to vote for a solid future under the broad slogan of the People's National Party "People Power". Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what I intend to do, give the power to the people.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. CAMPBELL: Power to rise above the negatives and secure real opportunity to pursue prosperity. Mr. Speaker the voice of the people is the voice of God. (Applause)

In light of this, we have sought to execute our development plan based on community consultations. The main areas that emerged as priority areas are as follows:

1) Infrastructure
2) Employment
3) Education
4) Health care delivery; and
5) Youth development.

Mr. Speaker, we look at these in turn.

The Most Honourable Prime Minister stated during the Budget Debate that we are 'Going for Growth and development working for the people'. I would like to say to her that in North West, St Ann, we are operating under this same mandate.

The Most Honourable Michael Manley said '*The egalitarian philosophy commands us to walk consciously towards a situation of equality of the human condition'.*

As Member of Parliament I am taking that walk towards the situation of equality where I am charting a course from poverty to prosperity...

(Applause)

...by positing and implementing practical solutions, sir, for complex problems that face my constituents. Thus far, we've made great strides, but the work is by no means over.

In relation to **Infrastructure:**

Reliable efficient infrastructure is crucial to economic and social development by raising labour productivity and Lowering production and transaction costs. Transportation, energy and water enhance economic activity and so contribute to growth, which is essential to poverty reduction.

In relation to Roads, Mr. Speaker, we have repaired the following roads; From Orange Hill to Lower Buxton, from Knapdale to Sturge Town, Minard Hill, Philadelphia, Trysee, Cardiff Hall.

Mr. Speaker, as the JEEP refuels, we plan to drive into Benin and Goshen and Muirhouse and Shelley Road.

(Applause)

I have not forgotten the Retirement to Lawrence Park Road, which is in a deplorable condition. The residents of Mt. Zion and Mt. Olivet and Chester will be glad to know that

their cries have not gone unanswered, and that they should just hold on, because help is on its way.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to **Water:** Water is life and it is my desire to bring life to the communities within my constituency. (Applause)

Sir, Bamboo a 'mi yard, sah', that's where I was born and grown, sir, and it is my desire to see the people of Bamboo removing the buckets from their heads and being able to turn on their pipes. (Applause) And I'm happy to hear the State Minister in the Ministry with the responsibility giving his nod of approval.

In Queenhythe, Mr. Speaker, a well was dug over a decade ago. We're anxious to get it operational as it will improve the water resources of the people in Lawrence Park, Retirement, Keith, Home Castle and in Queenhythe proper. We enthusiastically await the commencement of the pump and tank programme the Minister of Land, Water, Environment and Climate Change has announced to undertake this year. It would mean a great deal to the constituents of St. Ann, North Western.

In addition, we will be rolling out our 'black tank' project this year to alleviate the sufferings of the constituents in the deep rural areas.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

(Applause)

Dr. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, we have made great strides, but the work is by no means over. The people must be taken from poverty to prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable that I still have communities within my area without electricity and no effort should be spared in ensuring that this shameful reality is sent packing to the past where it belongs.

(Applause)

I am committed to ensuring that this is done and so we are working with the Rural Electrification Project (REP) to have electricity delivered to at least one community per year. This year we have already allocated funds to deal with Lower Buxton and we'll be moving on to other communities in subsequent years.

Mr. Speaker, my grandmother would say, 'One, one coco full basket'. And little by little the constituency of St. Ann .North Western is moving from poverty to prosperity.

(Applause)

In relation to housing: The residents are grateful for the project in the Belle Air project and are anxious to benefit from the lots that will be made available. We do hope that low income houses will be built and that our people will benefit as there is a long list of teachers, policemen and other public sector workers who are lining up to make use of this magnificent opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, we want to register our thanks for the work being done by Food for the Poor in providing housing solutions to persons living in abject poverty. (Applause) The partnership with the Government of Jamaica has seen several persons now able to open their own doors.

In relation to **employment:**

A holistic approach to putting people on the road to economic prosperity must include looking beyond the piecemeal solutions. In North West, St. Ann we have posited and implemented practical solutions to mitigate against the crippling effects of unemployment.

Farming, sir: It remains the main income generator for 50% of the constituency.

As Member of Parliament, I have been working with the farmers to implement lucrative projects. We invested in year one in a ginger project and this year we have planting material for 20 farmers to plant over an acre each. (Applause) We have also engaged JAS and we will be doing a red peas project that we'll see 50 farmers planting half (1/2) acre plots each. Of the 50 farmers, at least 10 of them must be below the age of 25, as we seek to pique the interest of young people in agriculture. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said about my views on marijuana, so let me clarify. My opposition is to smoking, irrespective of what is being smoked.

(Applause)

I do support its use for medicinal purposes, for neutraceuticals, hemp and clothing and textiles and all the other uses. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, I do believe that no well thinking Jamaican would disagree with these uses or would ask for any referendum to give us the go ahead to use it.

(Applause)

To this end, and bearing in mind that 50% of the employment in St. Ann North Western is from Agriculture, I am making a request to the Minister of Agriculture for us in North Western St. Ann to have the first legitimate Agro Parks where marijuana is cultivated as we have the land....

(Inaudible comments)

Dr. CAMPBELL: ...we have the human resources, we have the know-how and we have the right climate to produce the highest quality herb.

(Disturbance)

Mr. Speaker, we continue to support our farmers with tools, fertilizers and seeds. A significant portion, sir, of Jamaica's rural population depends on farming as their source of income. It is, therefore, imperative that farmers are given the training and support needed so that they can augment their businesses. As Member of Parliament, the majority of those whom I represent are farmers and I have become quite intimate with their struggles through my consultation with them. The difficulties that tend to cripple our farmers are lack of irrigation, refusal to adapt to newer technologies and the assumption that our farmers are also able to market their produce. The farmers need to be engaged in some sort of training that will expose them to trending methods in marketing and farming that will amplify their income.

The approach to augmenting the farming fraternity's business must be twofold; we must look at ensuring that there is quality in the output and that there is a market for the produce.

Let me turn my attention to the problem of finding the market. It is safe to assume, based on what obtains currently, that our farmers are not experts in marketing, we must therefore

engage in specialization of labour. The hotels are there and the farmers are also there so we must bridge the gap between the two. Our aim must be to also help with increasing yield and preventing extortion at the farmer's gate. We must capture our own market first and then the export market. Our agricultural produce has no hormones, they are healthier produce, and thus we need public education of consumers to eat local.

(Applause)

The former Prime Minister said it best: '**Grow or perish, export or die'.** In Old Folley in Discovery Bay, St. Ann, farmers are using greenhouse technology to grow vegetables for the hotels in that area. We are sponsoring them to implement a programme that they got approval for, through REDI, the arm of JSIF, for them to do a ginger project. This is an example of farmers using new technology to boost their business. In this particular instance the farmers have found themselves a market. We need to help our farmers to connect to a market for their produce. (Applause)

Tourism...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Dr. CAMPBELL: It is for that purpose.

Mr. Speaker, Tourism is responsible for 25 per cent of the employment in St. Ann, North Western. With this in mind we want to further develop our tourism product by focusing on community tourism. To this end, we want to develop an Artisan Village in the area. (Applause)

This, Mr. Speaker, is something that we are currently in discussion with and we hope that the necessary powers that be will grant the approval. It is our intention to use the Artisan Village as an attraction for tourists travelling through St Ann as well as to collaborate with local attractions so that the Artisan Village is included in the tour packages. This will therefore become a "Pull" for the parish of St. Ann as tourists will be able to view how their items are made by us having the HEART/Trust who are excited to do the certification for the craft persons there and they can also make the items on spot.

While on their tour they will be able to indulge in a cultural melting pot of authentic Jamaican meals ranging from renowned jerk to local traditional cuisine. The aim is to promote 'Things Jamaican', capitalizing on the fishing village which is located right across the road in Salem. We hope that this will also become a premier rest stop for the visitors.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in relation to call centres, we have a lot of young people who are in dire need of jobs and we also have a constituency that is lined by the north coast and is only thirty (30) minutes from Montego Bay. We, therefore, would like to have a Call Centre in the constituency. I have been training the young people which I will detail later, but the vision is to have at least 150 of them working on an 8-hour shift so that we can liberate some of them from poverty and take them to prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, if we cannot find a building that is already there I am suggesting that we even retrofit some containers to get it going so

that these youngsters can gain employment. (Applause)

In relation to the mobile business unit, this is something that I made an impassionate plea about in my presentation last year, to use the MSME to drive rural development. I once again, put this forward, Mr. Speaker. What joy it would be to have a mobile unit rolling into our main towns in rural Jamaica with personnel from the JBDC, from the Revenue Department from the Companies Office and have also masters students at the University of the West Indies who will work with these small businesses and their small dreams to take them from conceptualization to writing the business plans, to registration of the companies to opening the business accounts, to micro- financing and finally to opening their own doors to their business. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the matter of education. As a true believer in socialism and the virtues of education, this is my primary area of focus. Mr. Speaker, we intend to develop programmes to treat with issues from cradle to college. Mr. Speaker, the message that underlines this priority is that, no matter where you are from your dreams are still valid.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we are working to increase the number of spaces in our early childhood facilities. To this end, we have constructed an Infant Department at the Runaway Bay All Age School; we have also trained 20 students in Early Childhood Education, who are now on work experience at different locations.

Mr. Speaker, our flagship project for this year will be the roving caregivers programme. Mr. Speaker, the critical importance in Early Childhood Development programmes in attenuating cognitive and social delays in children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds is of increasing interest to government and non-governmental agencies and policy-makers, and educators in the developing world. Poverty and a lack of access to Early Childhood Development place children on an unfavourable developmental trajectory, a life condemned to manual labour in young adulthood, poor family planning, and poor parenting skills. Undoubtedly, these outcomes also apply to Jamaica where sizable numbers of families and children live under difficult social and economic circumstances.

In an effort to advance the life chances of poor children; governments have identified the early childhood years as an ideal time to implement interventional programmes to stave off the negative consequences of poverty and inadequate parenting on children's overall well-being. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, early brain stimulation programmes conducted during the preschool years in diverse cultures around the world have produced evidence of the positive effects of intervention on children's intellect and social functioning.

Mr. Speaker, research has shown that 75 per cent of the brain development occurs in the first five years of life. Brain stimulation from birth that is being read to help develop pre-literacy skills needed to be able to read. Learning to read, sir, is the single most

important factor in school success. (Applause) Learning to read is the single most important factor in school success. Early stimulation of the brain also sets the stage for how children will learn and interact with others throughout life. As the maturing brain becomes more specialized to assume more complex functions, it becomes less capable of reorganizing and adapting to new or unexpected challenges. It is for this precise reason that developmental delays before age 5 or 6 are difficult to compensate for later on in life. Once the brain's circuit is "wired," it stabilizes with age, making it increasingly more difficult to alter over time.

Mr. Speaker, the Roving Caregivers Programme originated in Jamaica as a visitation programme aimed at addressing the early childhood development needs of children from birth to three years, in vulnerable, these are the largely rural families. It proved to be a useful model for providing these services in communities which would not otherwise have had access and was recognized by UNICEF in 2000 with its highest honour, the Maurice Pate Award.

Mr. Speaker, the RCP builds on a solid history of home-based intervention as a way of inoculating young children against intellectual and social failure during the formative years. Couched with eco-cultural theoretical perspectives on parenting and childbearing, the RCP uses culturally and developmentally appropriate stimulation activities with the chief focus of improving parenting skills and altering childbearing beliefs that would then prevent developmental lags identified in poor Jamaican children around the first birthday.

Often in the Caribbean sir, there are few opportunities for parents to receive information on optimal parenting much less parent stimulation services. Equally distressing is the fact that a large number of poor parents are young with low educational attainment, and less than optimal parenting skills.

Mr. Speaker, the experience of the RCP has concretely demonstrated the potential of the RCP model to cost effectively deliver a vital social service while incorporating multi-partner alliances. We have decided to replicate this in North West, St Ann because children from chronically poor households are likely to experience the most debilitating kind of deprivation which is too often reflected in their performance at school. St Ann has areas that are steeped in poverty and was recorded as the lowest parish in the island a couple years ago with fourteen of the island's poorest communities are in the garden parish.

The findings provide very strong evidence in support of ensuring that poverty reduction should be accompanied by very deliberate and sustained emphasis on preschool and primary school development and education. I turn now to the primary level.

Mr. Speaker, arsonists earlier this year raged what I called a war on education when they set fire to the Liberty Hill Primary School and to think that yesterday we got reports that that behaviour has now spread to the Tacky

High School in St Mary. Mr. Speaker, we have met with the parents and teachers. We were able to relocate the students to the Discovery Bay All Age School. We were also able to arrange for transportation from the community to the new school to take them to and back from school. Mr. Speaker, they have settled in well and the reports are that they reported doing well in their GSATS examinations. I want to place on record my gratitude to the Minister of Education for his kind assistance during this trying time. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we continue to keep our annual luncheon where we award the top boy and girl from all 24 schools at the primary level and the three (3) at the secondary level. This year we will also be awarding the top boy and girl who are on the PATH programme as there is a possibility that these students may not be... (Applause) ...the top achieving students - as well as it may very well be so. But given their financial situation, this award will be very meaningful to them and will be added impetus in their move from poverty to prosperity. (Applause)

At the secondary level, Mr. Speaker, the residents of the constituency would benefit greatly from another high school which would most likely be in the Discovery Bay area. This will go a far way in removing the Brown's Town High School from the shift system and will save the parents valuable funds in transportation cost.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Speaker's time has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: I move that the Member's time be extended sufficient enough for him to complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended so that he may complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Campbell.

Dr. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will try to speak as quickly as possible.

At the tertiary level Mr. Speaker, there is a motion in this Honourable House looking at the funding of tertiary education. And we are also encouraged by the positive changes announced by the Honourable Minister of Finance, in regards to the Students' Loan Bureau... (Applause) ...as we are convinced that education remains the only redemptive tool for the masses of the people.

(Applause)

I have held a Tertiary Funding Workshop at the Brown's Town Community College, exposing the students to the different ways of footing their educational bill with the Students' Loan Bureau, JAMVAT, the banks, the other financial institutions, the Work and Study Programme, so that the students can make proactive steps in achieving funding for their studies.

Re - Vocational Training. Mr. Speaker, the Addison Park complex in Brown's Town is currently underutilized, and we believe that HEART would do well to take over this facility and offer training in areas, in keeping with our Development Plan, example, in

animation, and areas to fit into the impending logistics hub.

(Applause)

In relation to adult education, Mr. Speaker, the 'Dr. Dayton Campbell's Chance for Change School' was designed to offer a second chance to residents in skills training and evening classes. And I pause here to enunciate the point that the origin of the Night-School Programme was taken out of a concept from the Member from East Rural St. Andrew, to offer a CSEC subject. I want to commend him for that initiative. (Applause)

Equality in access is the guiding philosophy. And to date we have 850 students doing Business Administration, Accounting, Customer Care, Computer Repair, Early Childhood Education, Cosmetology, Welding, Food Preparation, Housekeeping, Cashiering, Merchandizing, Bartending and Food and Beverage. We also have 300 students doing a mixture of Mathematics, English, Principles of Business, Office Procedures and Social Studies. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we pay all the bills. The students are only asked to turn up to the class and do their best. We have no limitation, except that students must come from the constituency, seeing that it is funded by the Constituency Development Fund.

Mr. Speaker, the effects of this Programme will be far reaching and will pay off in the long run. I am committed to this Programme and will not turn back on my commitment to educating the people as the greatest means of development.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. CAMPBELL: The programme, sir, also has a remedial component which will take 400 students from the area that they are at and bring them up to the Grade 9 level, sir, so that they can filter into the skills training or into the night school, but we are leaving no one behind.

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, I have used my medical background to assist as much as possible in the constituency. The Member from Eastern Westmoreland to my left, is familiar with our need for a Health Center, and also the Member from East St. Thomas, the Minister of Health - to have a Health Center in the Runaway Bay area. Mr. Speaker, there is a facility there that the need has gone beyond the capacity of the facility, and we need to have a new building constructed to deal with the increase in the population.

In relation to medicals, Mr. Speaker, we continue to travel the length and breadth of the constituency during the summer period to do the back-to-school medicals free of charge.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Dr. CAMPBELL: So far we have done 2,560 in the constituency, and several hundred in North West Manchester, North West Clarendon, South West St. Elizabeth... (Applause) ...South East St. Elizabeth and Western St. Mary. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I use this opportunity to commend the other doctors and nurses that volunteer and give of themselves to assist me and my colleagues in this House.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, every Monday we go into a community and we have our mobile clinic. What exactly do we do? We do the blood pressure checks, the blood sugar checks, the examination, we write the prescriptions, we sign up persons to the NHF, we sign up persons to the JADEP, all of this is done in a different community on a Monday, free of charge. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this is one of the flagship projects, and we are still working assiduously to get a mobile unit.

And I also use this opportunity to ask any well-thinking Jamaican who would like to contribute or donate a mobile unit to the constituency or to the parish, to do so, we would be very grateful.

On Saturdays, Mr. Speaker, we convert the Member of Parliament's office into a medical office, and we conduct the same work. (Applause) We do health talks in the churches, focusing on what the Minister has been relentless about in addressing the change in the morbidity profile to the non-communicable diseases.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. CAMPBELL: We now turn to Youth and Community activities. The youth have a very important role to play in nation building. It is crucial to educate them and help them obtain as many life experiences as we can. They will be the future workforce and leaders of our global community. They must learn, Mr. Speaker.

We in North West St. Ann understand the importance of engaging the youth and providing positive influence in their lives, while guiding them to achieving their desired goals. In this breath, we have done the following:

- We have focused on sports, having competition in football, cricket and netball, so that everyone can participate in the process.
- During Youth Month, we have a Youth Month activity, where we went into the secondary schools and the students had contests between essay writing, drama and project writing. The members who participated in the project writing wrote a project as to what project they would implement that would positively impact the lives of young people if they were member of Parliament for a year. The winner was St. Hilda's, who did a programme re, Values and Attitudes in School... (Applause) ...and York Castle was also dubbed to have a good project in relation to sports. Both those projects will be implemented this year to show them that it's not just about talk, but we have a lot of action behind it.

Mr. Speaker, we will also be having our Choirfest in our churches, where all the churches will compete to see who will be the winner, and the winner will receive equipment for their church.

We will have our Talent Search.

Mr. Speaker, we have been having our Town Hall Meetings monthly, where we invite the NWA, the NWC, the SDC, RADA and the JCF, *et cetera*, to a meeting so we can detail

the community members as to what is going on, as far as the office of the Member of Parliament and at the local level is concerned. We rotate this through our divisions.

I now turn to Mentorship. So often we complain about the wayward nature of our young people. We wonder why our young men fall prey to the perils of the corner, rather than enroll in a college and hop on the most reliable vehicle heading to prosperity, that vehicle being education.

The fact is, those of us deemed as professionals have an awesome role to play. Prosperity can only be attained if we share formula. I say to you, for the best results from our young people, get involved.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt to the value of mentorship. As of such, I have taken on the task of mentoring five boys from the Prospect College in St. Mary. These are boys who are considered to be difficult cases.

Mr. Speaker, the sharp focus on education from early childhood to adult continuing level is not by chance or mistake, nor is it based on theory alone.

Mr. Speaker, it is from an experience I still have a testimony to share. You see, sir, I was born in a rural area in my beloved constituency called Bamboo. My father is a farmer and has also tried his hand at drug trafficking. Mr. Speaker, he has gotten himself into trouble so often, and just returned from prison in March of this year, after serving almost ten years on this particular occasion. He has been incarcerated for more than 70 per cent of my life.

My mother is a former domestic helper who toiled tirelessly over baskets of dirty laundry in order to feed her family. (Applause) Sir, their union bore three children. Whilst growing up we were teased mercilessly. Every mistake I made I was told that I am just like my 'wutless puppa'. I was called names like 'jail-bud pickney'. I was told that my mother 'jus a hatch up de pickney dem like fowl'. Sir, I still... (Dr. Campbell broke down) (Both sides of the House applauded lengthily) Sir, I still have the stigmata of those emotional wounds.

(Applause/*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, as you look at the tear-stained face, Mr. Speaker, it is not out of having failed, it is out of a passion that irrespective of where people are coming from, that their dreams... (Applause) ...are still valid.

Mr. Speaker, my sisters and I took a decision that we would use education as the vehicle for upward social mobility. As such, we worked hard. We ignored the teasing about our uniforms, like when I was asked if I took my measurement in water. Or when the pants got old and you pulled out the hem but you couldn't iron out the crease to show that it was hemmed. (Applause)

We all passed for traditional secondary schools. We went to the University of the West Indies, and in 2008 we all graduated at the same graduation. My sister that passed away last year - of blessed memory - she got First Class Honours in Nursing. My younger sister is now back from Fiji, and is completing

her PhD at UWI in Chemistry. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I happen to be a medical doctor, the youngest MP in this current Parliament, and one month away from having a Law Degree. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, look at the 'prison bud' and domestic helper children.

The PRIME MINISTER: Yes! Yes!

Dr. CAMPBELL: If we did it, sir, then that youngster in Bamboo can become a lecturer. That youngster in Brown's Town can become an engineer... (Applause) That girl in Discovery Bay can become the next Prime Minister. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Yes!

Dr. CAMPBELL: And that youngster, that unborn pauper child in Runaway Bay can become a Judge. It stands to reason, sir, that no matter where you are from your dreams are still valid. (Applause) That even if everyone has given up on you, you should not give up on yourself.

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. CAMPBELL: And if you dare to work hard and love God, your dreams of today can be the realities of tomorrow. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. CAMPBELL: This, sir, is a chance for change for all those who like me who decided to be the change they want to see.

Mr. Speaker, St. Ann, North Western, has received a lot since December 29, 2011 when they opted not to gamble but rather, push ahead with Campbell. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Dr. CAMPBELL: But, we have not reached our destination. We are pursuing prosperity relentingly. Poverty will not hold our people's potential hostage. Opportunities will set them free...

A Government MEMBER: Yes.

Dr. CAMPBELL: ...and the highest efforts will transport them to prosperity. Mr. Speaker...

Mr. BUCHANAN: So next Election, you *gwine* eat the oatmeal.

(Laughter)

Dr. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, before I finish, I just want to speak to one national issue. And it is because of my training, and because of what I see on a daily basis. And that issue is a tricky one. It is that issue of abortion.

The WHO estimates, Mr. Speaker, that 22,000 abortions are performed in Jamaica each year. Complications arising from unsafe abortions are among the top 10 causes of maternal death in the island, especially among teenagers. Review of the Legislation governing it has been 30 years in the making. Efforts by various Governments to address these concerns have been halted by conservative religious groups, not sensitive to the reproductive rights and realities of women, girls, their families, and partners.

In Jamaica, Section 72 and 73 of the Offences Against the Person Act criminalize women who chose to terminate a pregnancy if convicted shall be liable to imprisonment for life, with or without hard labour. It also criminalizes medical professionals who facilitate a woman's exercise of choice to have her pregnancy terminated, and the parents and guardians who facilitate termination of

pregnancy of girls under the age of 18. If convicted, they shall be liable to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding three years, with or without hard labour. Too often, we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. CAMPBELL: Think for a second, does the illegality of abortion prevent its practice? Is pregnancy only unwanted because the woman has been sexually reckless? The answer to these questions is no.

The current law frustrates thousands of Jamaican women, the poor especially who are in desperate need of this service. Nearly half of all pregnancies, 41 per cent are unplanned. Only 50 per cent of pregnancies were planned according to the survey - the Reproductive Health Survey in 2009; 7,612 live births occurred to mothers under the age of 20; 81 per cent of recent births reported by women aged 15 to 19 were unplanned. Nearly all of these unintentional births were mistimed. That is, occurred earlier than desired, as opposed to unwanted, where they didn't want any children, or no more children were desired.

Who is affected? According to the WHO, abortions and complications thereof, are the eight leading cause of maternal deaths in Jamaica, affecting the adolescence primarily. All patients that presented to the Victoria Jubilee Hospital in 2005 between March 1 to August 31, 641 of them were from inner-city communities, single, and nearly half were Christians.

The question is asked, do Jamaicans support abortion? The answer is actually yes. Many of us support efforts to make services for the termination of pregnancy legal, safe, and affordable. A 2006 Public Opinion Survey conducted by Hope Enterprise found about 60 per cent of respondents support the legalization and termination of pregnancy under special conditions, such as incest, endangerment of women physical or mental health, or life.

From the public health perspective, we need to address these women who burden the public health system after botched abortion attempts. Evidence in Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, South Korea, Guyana and Barbados, show that where abortion is legal, maternal morbidity and mortality rates fall. The rates may initially seem to rise because of the previous under-reporting.

For women who are in the middle and upper income groups, the law can be circumvented by access to financial resources to pay for private medical services to procure a safe abortion. The law is restrictive and unjust to women in the lower income groups who cannot afford private medical services, and therefore, resort to the illegal, informal market.

In both instances, the quality of the service that the woman receives is entirely determined by the ethics and integrity of the individual practitioner. There are no minimum standards and no norms. Legal provision of abortion by qualified practitioners in both the public and private health care system, as recommended, will ensure that safe abortions can be accessed by all women, thus protecting their lives and health.

While debates on when life begins and ends may persist along the continuous range of religious perspective, the realities surrounding the public health matter which affects so many women will not disappear unless addressed based on existing objective realities. It is a woman's right to have all the options available to her, to be provided with information that allows her to take an informed decision, and not to be persecuted for this decision. The State has a responsibility to ensure that the rights of all citizens are protected.

The current illegal status of abortion in all circumstances exposes women to stigma and discrimination when they are faced with the choice. Women should not be punished for what is a difficult decision about their bodies, lives and future. (Applause) It is a misuse of Government power to take that right from them. Denying women access to medical services that enables them to regulate their fertility or terminate an unwanted or dangerous pregnancy amounts to a refusal to provide health care to that woman.

Women are consequently exposed to health risks not experienced by men. Repealing the prohibitive provisions under the Offences Against the Person Act concerning abortion, as recommended by the Policy Review Group, will restore this right to women and prevent further stigmatization and gender discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, let us consider cases where one contraception was used, but it failed and the woman is not in a position to go through with the pregnancy and adequately support a child. The Minister of National Security will tell you how many of these children who end up born in an unwanted situation end up turning to criminality. Consider the situation where the pregnancy resulted from rape, or an abusive relationship, or where the pregnancy placed them at severe mental, emotional or physical risk, or, where the compromised development and health of the foetus.

To abort or not to abort is an extremely difficult decision of any woman. There is not only the financial cost to consider, but risk to her mental and physical health as well. Adequate access to appropriate counseling service to help her consider all the options, strengthening of sexual and reproductive education at all level is needed.

We, as a nation, need to debate this issue and lay the facts bare without shrouding them in misconception, prejudice and religious absolutism. (Applause) It is about time such an important issue be dealt with, once and for all. The women of Jamaica deserve no less. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, for those who might not agree, let me paint a situation for you, of a bright 16 year-old girl in the inner-city who is getting ready to do her CSEC examination, and who is the only option to lift that family out of the abyss of poverty, who is sent for by the so-called *don* in that community. She is then abused, and subsequently, she takes the morning-after pill, but still ends up being pregnant. Should she be forced to carry that child, or to seek abortion on the black market? As a man of faith, I humbly suggest that we allow common sense to prevail.

Let me make it abundantly clear, I am not proposing abortion as a means of contraception. I want to make it abundantly clear, I am not proposing abortion as a means of contraception, nor am I suggesting that mere poverty should be a reason for it...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. CAMPBELL: ...as I stand as a true example that it is possible to break the chains of poverty, and rise from poverty to prosperity.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, of paramount importance is also the need to revise our adoption laws, so that we can provide this service to those who are in need. I anxiously await a vigorous debate on this matter, as we seek to establish a new paradigm to dispel myth, and to embrace a true sense of liberty and prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, poverty is an endemic condition. In North West, St. Ann, we are using multidimensional strategies to address the needs of the constituents, particularly the dispossessed. To this end, we have done a lot, but there is still work left to do.

The best way to assist low income families is to launch an attack on poverty, on multiple fronts, by making the most of our limited resources and targeting them in the priority areas... (Applause) ...enabling pro-poor development that is development at a pace and in a pattern than enhances the ability of poor men and women to participate in, and contribute to, and benefit from development. This will be critical in achieving a sustainable trajectory out of poverty to prosperity.

The Jamaica we dream of achieving in 2030 cannot be a causality of poverty. Mr. Speaker, I repeat: The Jamaica we dream of achieving in 2030 cannot be a casualty of poverty. Jamaica, the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business; that dream is still valid.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, St. Ann North Western is equipped and ready to lead the journey to that prosperous nation. We believe that the nobler Jamaica, the loftier race, can start with us.

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took her seat.)

I have an abiding faith in the will, strength, and capacities of my constituents. They place their hopes in my hands, and I am prepared to work diligently and creatively; to think generously and honestly in North West St. Ann, so that Jamaica may, under God, increase in beauty, fellowship and prosperity, and play her part in advancing the welfare of the whole human race.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(Standing ovation by Government Members and some Opposition Members)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Okay, Mr. House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended for us to do any further business this

afternoon, so I therefore move for the adjournment of the House until tomorrow, May 7, at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Warmington.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I wish to address the situation as it relates to... (Inaudible)

I have been asking for years for corrections. And when we had the boundary changes four years ago, I brought to the attention of the Leader of the House, and the then Prime Minister of the situation that was created then. And under Section 8 - Section 67 subsection (8) of the Constitution, it gave the Leader of the House the power to make certain changes to the Draft that came to the House. And the Legislative Council for the Clerk of the House, Miss Kadian A Smith, then wrote to Errol Miller, the then Chairman of the Electoral Commission, and said thus:

> *With regards to the concern of Member of Parliament for St. Catherine, South Western Honourable C Everald Warmington, who respectfully draw the Commission's attention to sections 8 - subsections (8) and (9) of section 67 of the Constitution. Subsection (8) contemplates that the Draft Order submitted by the Minister responsible for electoral matters for the approval of the House, may make provision for any matter which appears to the Minister to be incidental or consequential under provision of the Draft. Subsection (9) provides that where such modifications are made, a statement outlining the reasons for the modifications should accompany the Draft Order.*

The then Prime Minister refused to follow the recommendations from the Legislative Counsel of the House, and he sent to the Attorney General to clarify. And what came from the Attorney General, it said:

> *It appears from the instruction forwarded to us that a Draft Order has not yet been laid. Mr. Warmington's recommendations appear to address issues that are incidental to, or consequential upon all the provisions.*

And he made it clear that regardless of convention, the then Leader of the House has the ability to make the minor changes that were necessary. And what happened was that the boundary that they had then took Portmore into Spanish Town. So, you had sections of Spanish Town now falling under the Portmore Municipality.

Dr. DAVIES: This is your Sectoral presentation?

Mr. WARMINGTON: And... I don't speak in Sectoral presentation; it is a waste of time. (Laughter)

But the Act that establishes the Portmore municipality that was signed by the Governor - General, the Most Honourable Howard Cooke, dated the 27th May, 2003, Section 5 as passed in the House, it says here that - subsection (6):

> *For the purposes of this Act, a municipality shall include all lands within the boundary set out in its Charter.*

And it says further, in subsection (10) of the same Act:

The Minister shall cause a copy of the Charter to be laid on the Table of the House of Representatives and the Senate within 30 days of the date on which that Charter was granted.

The Charter was signed by the then Minister of Local Government, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller it says, dated this 22nd day of May, 2003, signed Portia Simpson Miller, Minister of Local Government, Community Development and Sport. The issue is that it should have been laid 30 days after. It was laid some two months after it was signed. So .it means that the Charter in itself is invalid, it did not meet the specification as laid out in the Act. So this Charter doesn't stand. It doesn't stand at all. It did not meet the Act as was signed by the Governor-General.

But what is most important, Mr. Speaker, is that this Charter, I tried to get a copy from the Library of Parliament; they do not have a copy here. So my view then was that it was never laid, because as I recall, it didn't come here within 30 days. So my position or opinion was that it was never laid at all. But I was advised on Friday that in fact it was laid, but it was not laid until the 28th day of July 2003, that is more than two months after the requirement. But what is most important is that the Charter itself excluded the most important aspect - that is supposed to be included here, Section 5 subsection (6)...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. L. Buchanan)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Oh, shut up you stupid fool!

(Heckling)

Mr. WARMINGTON: I withdraw. I withdraw.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Out of order!

Mr. WARMINGTON: I withdraw. What it says here, Mr. Speaker, is that the Charter must stipulate a boundary.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Out of order!

(The Speaker Gavels)

Mr. WARMINGTON: I have withdrawn.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington, I must advise you, Mr. Warmington not to make it recur for the rest of your presentation.

Mr. WARMINGTON: But I have already said that, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I have already withdrawn it, so why you mentioned it.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by a Government Member)

Mr. WARMINGTON: He knows I am sincere when I speak.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Oh, no!

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, will you protect me from that man from South East, Westmoreland.

What it says here, Mr. Speaker is that the boundary was never established by the Charter that is required by Section 5 subsection (6). So there is no boundary for the Portmore Municipality. And what happened in the last election is that Errol Miller and the Electoral Commission disenfranchised the people for two divisions in Portmore claiming that they did not fall within the boundary of Portmore Municipality.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Government Member)

Mr. WARMINGTON: But it is not stated here. So this Charter that - I spoke to the Minister a year and a half ago that this Charter, he needs to come here with a new Charter stating the boundaries for Portmore so that Portmore can be legitimate. It was never done. So my position is that the Minister needs to come here, because what they are doing now is to collect 7% of the signatures of persons in those two divisions to have the boundary change. How can you change a boundary when it does not exist? There is no boundary to change. It does not exist; therefore you do not need any 7%. All we need, Mr. Speaker, is for the Minister to come here with a new Charter. If it doesn't - if they can take this to be a Charter, then what you can do is an amendment to the Charter to include in that Charter the boundaries of Portmore.

My recommendation, as I have advocated for years, is that PDs 51, 52, 53 and part of 52 in East Central St. Catherine be excluded from the boundaries of Portmore and for South St. Catherine PDs 2, 3 and 4 be excluded from the boundary coming here.

Mr. H. BUCHANAN: You want…. the PNP's majority.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I don't majority. I don't talk about PNP or JLP. I talk about including the people in Portmore.

Mr. Speaker, protect me from...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington, proceed.

Mr. WARMINGTON: But why won't you protect me from the gentleman over there.

The Deputy SPEAKER: You are being protected, proceed.

Mr. WARMINGTON: But you haven't told him to shut up and give me a chance to speak.

Dr. DAVIES: You can't argue with the Speaker.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I don't want to.

Dr. DAVIES: Well don't.

Mr. WARMINGTON: All right, I take your advice.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington, continue. Mr. Buchanan, hold on...

Mr. WARMINGTON: So what I am saying, Mr. Speaker, what can be done is for the Minister to have a Charter drawn.

A Government MEMBER: Write him a letter.

Mr. WARMINGTON: That mus-mus across there.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I withdraw. I withdraw.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Member from South West, St. Catherine on his feet is...

Mr. CHARLES: State your point of order.

Mr. McKENZIE: What is the point of order?

Mr. WARMINGTON: He doesn't know what he is talking about. He is dumb, that dumb fool!

The Deputy SPEAKER: Well, allow him to make his point.

Mr. McKENZIE: Respond to a rat!

Mr. WARMINGTON: He is a dumb fool! (Laughter)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, the Member continues on his feet to be abusive and disrespectful and against the Speaker's advice, and he has this 'ginalism' from where he is from, that I withdraw after you. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, on such grounds you are to make a ruling.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I am no 'ginal'.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Warmington, sit. Mr. House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, could I just mention that the only reason why we have not objected to the Member's presentation is that I gather that he had received permission from the Speaker. But I don't think it is fair for us to expect, for the Member to expect a response now. And having tabled the matter, I intend to respond fulsomely tomorrow at our sitting. So if we could, at this stage, allow for time, so that tomorrow we can come back and deal with it. Okay.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, I accept the suggestion from the House Leader, very wise, not like the other two.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Which is why I asked for the House Leader to come in...

Mr. WARMINGTON: So I am saying, I am making the recommendation that it doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker, for the boundary of Portmore to cross highway, the toll road. So what I am saying the seven PDs I recommended just to take along the toll road that Portmore stay beyond the south of the toll road...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. WARMINGTON: I don't ask you, Dalley, for your opinion.

Mr. Speaker, that's my presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. House Leader.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I therefore move for the adjournment of the House until tomorrow.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House adjourns until Wednesday, May 7, 2014.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House was accordingly adjourned at 5:02 p.m. until Wednesday, May 7, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, May 7, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:23 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House
Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Hugh Buchanan

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

STATEMENT BY MINISTERS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I had undertaken to respond to the Member from South West St. Catherine on the motion he put on the Adjournment yesterday and I just want to - it's a simple update that I have written to the Attorney General's Chambers for legal guidance on this matter and as soon as I get a response, I will advise the House.

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: Okay.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Clerk laid on the Table of the House, a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Papers No. 87 - 92/2014**
  7. Curriculum and Assessment
  8. National Comprehensive Literacy Programme
  9. National College for Educational Leadership
  10. School Feeding Programme
  11. Infrastructure Development
  12. Alternative Secondary Transitional Education Programme

(DR. KENNETH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central, entered and took his seat.)

BILLS BROUGHT FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Clerk read the following message from the President of the Senate:

"To the Honourable House of Representatives:

I have the honour to advise the Honourable House of Representatives that on the 2nd day of May, 2014, a Bill entitled, "AN ACT to Apply a sum out of the Consolidated Fund to the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 2015, and to appropriate the sums granted in this session of Parliament" was passed in the Senate.

Signed: Floyd E. Morris
President of the Senate

(DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central, entered and took his seat.)

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Minister Kellier.

Mr. KELLIER: I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled: "The Disabilities Act, 2014".

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

(MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLY-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern, entered and took her seat.)

(MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central, entered and took his seat.)

PUBLIC BUSINESS

SECTORAL DEBATE

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will continue with the Sectoral Debates and we have two presenters: the Minister of Education, the Member from Central Kingston and then the Opposition Spokesperson on Agriculture, the Member from North West St. Elizabeth.

The SPEAKER: Reverend Thwaites.

(Applause)

Rev. THWAITES: Thank you Mr. Speaker and it's a happy coincidence to be speaking on the same occasion with the Member from North West St. Elizabeth. We attended the same university and shared accommodations for three years. He took the green path and I took another path, but we are still friends.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, I give thanks to the long suffering and patient people of Central Kingston and also to the Honourable Prime Minister for the privilege of leading the critical portfolio of education at this item.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good day for education amid all of the conflicts and uncertainties that sometimes bedevil debates of this sort in the House this is a good day. After all, it is Teachers' Day.

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

(Applause)

Rev. THWAITES: And there are many good and positive things happening in our schools, so many positive projects to be spoken of today. But you know sir, the tone and content of this annual contribution on education has to be special for the subject is far too important for partisan bickering or pointscoring across this aisle or between special interests within the sector. Our hearts and our heads have to be in different and higher places when we are discussing student achievement, which is what we will do today. So I open by expressing sincere thanks to all of my colleagues in this House for their critical support, especially Members of the Opposition for education has no political colour.

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took her seat.)

Rev. THWAITES: I can't think of a single Member here with whom over the past year I have not had positive interactions regarding the state of schools in their constituencies and also, in respect of broad educational policy and that is as it should be. I express thanks to the teachers and their associations for a year spent building bridges, recognizing strengths and weaknesses and reaching accommodations.

(MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central, entered and took his seat.)
(MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

I express appreciation to the Churches and the public commentators who have played such a vital role in guiding policy. What will be said here today is not the ruminations of one minister but rather it is the collective views and best endeavours of so many who contribute fulsomely to this endeavour.

Thanks to the parents, thanks to the farmers and the teachers, for example, those in North West St. Elizabeth who prepare breakfast for their own and other people's little children with a very small subvention from the Ministry. Thanks to people like Mr. Isaacs, you know, Mr. Speaker, I never met him, but he's from New York who has such a yearning and appreciation for the Pratville Primary School - you know about that - which he attended over forty years ago, that he continues to send supplies and an annual donation even in these challenging times. (Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Rev. THWAITES: Thanks to the members of the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica Education Policy Advisory Committee, it's our EPOC. I asked them to come together and they have willingly done so to advise on education policy. The Honourable Oliver Clarke, the Honourable Danny Williams, Honourable Douglas Orane, Mrs. Esther Tyson and Mr. Cliff Hughes...

(Cross talk)

...yes, sure who, along with the almost ten thousand school Board members, offer voluntary service to the cause of education.

(MR. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, over the past two years, we have called the Jamaican nation to action over the state of education. We all know the problems too well. This presentation will focus on solutions. What we're doing this year, what we must do in order to improve

student achievement for the future of this country rests on effective education we say again and by that we mean passing subjects, acquiring skills - listen (sic) and developing character. Not one, not two, but always all three and in these times I would want to emphasize the development of character, Mr. Speaker.

The best way to balance people's lives is to give them the opportunity for a sound education. (Applause) Some of us need to stop denying reality. It is idleness, ignorance and weak family life that is fuelling our crime wave, our declining levels of labour productivity, and the high levels of unemployability.

(DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

It is educational accomplishment and the personal discipline, which is part of it that made our scientists, our investors, our professionals, our athletes and artistes to be as great as they are. So spread the word today from this place: if you want to step up *inna* life, ignorance and underachievement are your enemies. Effort and performance in education are your friends. (Applause) And while it is the responsibility of the State to provide the basic requirements for effective education, partnerships are required with all segments of the society bar none to ensure quality and equity in education.

And so I take the opportunity to thank all the dedicated teachers, as we celebrate Teachers' Day today. I think of the Early Childhood practitioners who are earning less than their worth; far less. I think of the young graduates I met last Friday working in dark, hot, makeshift classrooms behind a workshop at Porus High School, or the ones who in the crisis at Penwood High last year stepped forward for training as social workers to better cope with the demands of their students, or the long-serving staff at Bethabara Primary and Junior High who I met recently. There are many more teachers who continue to serve with distinction. Let us salute them all. (Applause)

Let us salute the teachers who are embracing voluntary redeployment to serve more effectively where they can be. Those who patiently offer individualized and differentiated instruction suited to their students' special needs, thus adding value suited to their students rather than sticking to the curriculum only; those who make learning more interesting and less boring. And as we observe Child Month, sir, I also encourage all our children. Our Prime Minister began her address in the Budget Debate reaching out to the children who are our future. I follow her, especially those living in difficult circumstances; they must try and go to school every day, to take homework seriously and to hug-up the Maths and English. Students, congratulations on your results because they're getting better but we still have far to go.

(MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

Take Timar Jackson as your example. He is just like you, you know. He rose from a below-average Maths student at Vauxhall High to receive a First Class Honours degree in Actuarial Science at the University of the West Indies.... (Applause) ... and he was selected as Rhodes Scholar for 2014, remember. (Applause)

And you know Mr. Speaker, Timar's mother and his Maths teacher, Mr. Clarke, were also crucial to his success. His Maths teacher took a special interest in him, didn't put him aside when Timar was failing and skylarking and this made all the difference. His mother - I met her, so did you, House Leader - his mother made and sold snacks and brought the money to him for lunch. I pay tribute to all the parents who sacrifice so much for their children's education.

(Applause)

Come with me to Downtown Kingston any school morning, Mr. Speaker, at the crack of dawn and see the young fathers carrying their children on bike-backs, on bicycles, on their shoulders, any how, just to see them safely to the school gate. These are the types of parents and teachers who will make more ordinary students extraordinary and exceptional.

The taxpayers of Jamaica, Mr. Speaker, through government, spend most of their tax dollar year after year in the hope and anticipation that the younger generation will do better than they were able to. We who spend or receive any fraction of this money must add value. We accept this awesome responsibility and we pledge to serve you as we focus this year on student achievement. The decision to spend every dollar this year will be made on the basis of how much value it adds, and how much it promotes student achievement.

In the most difficult of times, in the most difficult of times, almost $80 Billion has been devoted to education this year. And remember this contribution of the State is only a portion of the total educational spend, which is the largest enterprise of any public/private in Jamaica.

The education tax, Mr. Speaker, which is often misunderstood, is just a portion of what the taxpayer contributes through the Consolidated Fund to the education enterprise. Eighteen Billion ($18 Billion) is only a portion of $80 Billion. Many people don't understand. We need to appreciate that not only is the education tax being paid, but that the taxpayer in all of his/her need, is postponing their needs in order that the children and those who superintend them could have more.

This is an awesome responsibility and all segments of the society have the responsibility to seize the opportunities available to advance themselves. The story to be told today traces the challenges and advances in education throughout the whole life cycle. And so we start with the little ones, Mr. Speaker.

Early Childhood and Special Education are the headline items for student achievement this year, early childhood and special education. Because, all we know indicate that the dollar investment in Early Childhood gives you a 17-fold return. Invest $1 in early

childhood and by the end of that cycle, you're going to be able to earn in productivity, in human achievements, $17. I don't think there's any better investment, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The Early Childhood Education Cohort includes - hear me now - all our four year olds to eight year olds, that is, students from infant school to Grade 3 at the Primary school.

Mr. Speaker this year the Ministry of Education will spend approximately $14.1 Billion or 18 percent of the Ministry's Recurrent Budget on our Early Childhood and Special Education Cohort. Additionally, 18 percent of the Capital Budgets (A & B) or $316.5 Million will be spent on supporting and improving Early Childhood Education. The sums in aggregate have never been larger before than they are now and this is on purpose. (Applause) It is my responsibility to tell you how they are proposed to be spent.

Mr. Speaker, nutrition is so important. Research showing the harm done by poor nutrition to children in the early years, makes the school feeding programme a priority.

Mr. Speaker, the Inter-American Development Bank did a study in 2011, and here are the conclusions that are appropriate:

> *"The conclusion is that between a quarter and a third of the school-age population arrives in school hungry or without having eaten anything on any given school day.*

Yes. It goes on to say - and this would be relevant to something we're doing later.

> *An early school day meal appears to have advantages over a lunchtime meal, both in terms of reducing shortterm hunger and in terms of improving attendance and performance....*

(Power outage occurs at approximately 2:42 p.m.)

The Ministry conducted a breakfast programme recently where we fed 12,000 Early Childhood students and what very good results students' achievement begins here. And the evaluation of those 12,000 supported the IDB Study. It showed that about 40% of children are in need of constant supplement - food supplement, while another 30% sometimes go hungry.

Because of this, Mr. Speaker, starting this September, 2014, the Ministry of Education will expand the Breakfast Programme to provide free breakfast and lunch to 70% of the Early Childhood Cohort or 138,000 children.

(Thunderous applause)

With the remaining 30% who are better off, having the option to make a contribution or pay in full to share in the programme.

We have allocated $1.05 Billion out of our allocation to this budget. And we will use a combination of Nutrition Products Limited produced meals, as well as food provided at the local school level, where that is appropriate and possible.

Mr. Speaker, in respect of upgrading facilities for Early Childhood, in the new school year the Ministry of Education will be targeting the integration of 200 Early Childhood institutions into infant departments of primary schools or the construction of

stand-alone infant schools. Let me tell you why again, sir.

We have 2000 basic schools or so, some of them are excellent, some of them are barely marginal. We can't afford to have the big difference between the good and the not-so-good. The infant schools allow the Government to support fully the enterprise to offer consistent nutrition and curriculum support.

Last year 68 basic schools were merged into infant departments. We had said that we hope to do 50; we were able to do 68, along with two stand-alone schools. (Applause) Promise made, promise kept. (Applause)

You know, the partnerships that help us Mr. Speaker, are so wonderful to recount. For the CHASE Fund has committed $87 Million for repairs and retrofitting of Early Childhood Institutions this financial year. And that follows on what they contributed before; over $50 Million was spent last year by CHASE on the same enterprise.

Food for the Poor has, at the end of February, built or expanded twenty-nine (29) basic schools and there are thirteen (13) more are at various stages of construction. This country owes a debt of gratitude to Food for the Poor.

(Applause)

We're going to do something else this year, Mr. Speaker, because we can call it a grant-aided programme of assistance to basic schools, to infant schools.

There are many Churches, many non-government organizations who run good Early Childhood institutions, but they are under pressure, because the parents can't pay that which they would normally accept to be viable. We can't afford to take them over and we don't want to, but what we can do is to offer them assistance where necessary. And we are opening this to Members of Parliament where it exist and we have made an allocation, because we want the quality of all Early Childhood institutions to be upgraded.

Tributes must be paid to the likes of Mr. Glen Christian, Chairman of Cari-Med Limited, who has not only established a basic school in Clarendon in his mother's honour, but also will be building another one in the constituency, the great constituency of South West St. Andrew.

(Applause)

And this is just one instance because interest is growing in the early Childhood sector. Imagine Gulf Stream Oil, parent of Texaco, has now expressed an interest in aligning a basic school and infant school to each of the service station outlets. Wouldn't that be wonderful, Mr. Speaker?

(Applause)

So have Diaspora interests in all over the United States and England offered to help. Others already involved include the Rockhouse Foundation, the Sandals Foundation, Digicel Foundation, Jarrett Foundation in the United Kingdom, Wray and Nephew Group, the Sugar Transformation Programme funded by the European Union, the Bank Foundation, Scotia and LIME, so many others. Corporate donors to the sector also include Jamaica Public Service Company, Radio Jamaica and Nestle. And of course the

tremendous assistance broker through the Jamaica Social Investment Fund. And we salute the Churches too, that have long given tangible support to Early Childhood Education, indeed, they are the backbone of the system.

And there is room for many more partners large and small to whom I appeal today, Mr. Speaker, for Early Childhood Education is the most appropriate vehicle for public and private philanthropy and volunteerism.

I turn to staffing in the Early Childhood Sector. For the majority of our early childhood practitioners are employed to private or non-governmental organizations. And in recognition of the invaluable contribution of these practitioners to the sector and to student development, the Ministry of Education has long provided a subsidy in support of their wages. And this year, we will increase their monthly subsidy by fifteen percent (15%), fifteen percent (15%) on top of the subsidy for basic education teachers. (Applause) It's not a wage, they're not employed to us in that sense, but they have been receiving bare Minimum Wage or less than.

We hope to do it again next year and we want our best teachers and practitioners to stay in the Early Childhood system. (Applause)

In addition, we'll be engaging the services of 200 trained teachers through JEEP. The JEEP is rolling well in education Mr. Speaker.... (Applause) ....as well as 40 others who will provide coaching and teaching support to 480 of the Early Childhood Institutions.

Mr. Speaker, it's within our grasp now to finally have one trained teacher available at least part-time to each Early Childhood Institution island-wide. To achieve this, the Ministry proposes to ask each Early Childhood trained teacher to coach pre-trained teachers in one other school that has no trained teacher. And teachers who are willing to make this additional effort will be offered an incentive for so doing. We need to make sure that we offer balanced instruction, informed and trained instruction for our little children. That's the objective for them to achieve their fullest potential and I trust that we'll receive full support in this regard.

And I point out that this is being done within the resources allocated to the Ministry of Education. We do not expect any more money to achieve these ends.

Mr. Speaker, the Early Childhood Commission will carry out a pilot in May-June this year of the 4-year-old readiness of our children. The Readiness Evaluation. The Readiness Evaluation will identify children as either being on target for entry to primary school or requiring additional support and/or assessment. Any additional support or assessment which is required will be done during the last year of infant school.

Mr. Speaker, we have to give much praise to the Crayons Count Movement supported by the National Continental Cooperation and managed by former Senator Deika Morrison. For the third year in a row they have provided significant contribution worth some $60 Million annually donating play and learning

kits to every one of some 2000 basic and infant schools state of-the-art material.

Additionally, every Saturday in the Gleaner there is curriculum guide for the following week and the Jamaica Observer, not to be outdone, also promotes an early childhood feature on Thursdays. I say again, more funding for Early Childhood Education is being realized from revising how we spend the existing education budget. We are trying to do more with what we have to advance student achievement.

Mr. Speaker, I am inviting new partnerships with local businesses, churches, government offices and schools in the community for they will receive the output of these basic schools later as their students and customers and workers and so they have vested in better quality.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make the crucial link now between strong families and good education starting even before early childhood. Research published by the organization for Economic Corporation and Development Council on Early Childhood Development shows that more than 70 per cent of a child's emotional control is learned before he is three year old. The Member for North West St. Ann set it out well yesterday in his presentation. This is what helps people to learn, it helps children to succeed in their social lives, it is up to parents to help their children learn these critical skills before they even start infant school. Parents after all are children first teachers.

The Early Childhood Commission working in collaboration with the National Parenting Support Commission headed by Dr. Patrice Charles Freeman will strengthen resource centres to become the strategic hubs for parenting in support for families for young children with special educational needs.

In the next financial year three resource centres will be upgraded to perform these functions. I believe three in western parishes have been chosen because the needs seem to be greatest there and others will follow over the next two years or so. Parents can expect seminars, assessments and intervention. And with the help of UNICEF and USAID, the Ministry has established over 60 parent places a list of them will soon be presented to parliamentarians. But come with me to some of the better parent places that are doing very well at the Central Branch All-Age School, at the Linstead Primary and Junior High School, at the Anchovy Primary School. These are places where the necessary equipment and resources for parents to meet and to discuss parenting issues as well as to participate in workshops on literacy, numeracy, homework strategies among other things are available.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education invites the churches of Jamaica to join forces with the National Parenting Support Commission to assist parents in improving their child-rearing skills. This should be the first mission of the churches in Jamaica, to ensure that all members and all efforts of advocacy on their part...

(Power outage occurs)

Mr. Speaker, I hope Members will listen to this because all of us in this House deserve a cussing that we have still not passed law

making it mandatory for a father's name to be mandatory on every child's birth certificate.

Being a good parent is the supreme achievement of any mother or father and I am asking us this afternoon to say whether our popular culture sufficiently affirms and emphasizes this ineluctable truth. The word to parent is that if you invest time, love, presence and discipline from the early childhood period, you won't likely have the brawls and disgrace like what took place among the girls at Santa Cruz Primary and Junior High in the public square last Friday. Make them read to you even if your eyes are dark, take them to church on Sunday or Sabbath School. Make sure they join the nearest library, and parents, try to never miss a parent teacher's meeting. Be very careful of which stepfather or stepmother you bring in on your children. (Applause)

Encourage your children to open a savings account; feed them porridge or an egg in the morning; help them to develop a taste for locally grown foods which are better for them than fast food. Mr. Speaker, can we tell the parents from our own modelling that manners and good behaviour are important. And style and fashion are less so. (Applause) Even if your pocket is low these are things that we all can do because of who we are; the Jamaican people. (Applause)

I move on to the primary education stage. It is at the primary level Mr. Speaker that if properly done those who have invested in Early Childhood Education sees the first fruits of that investment. Because if children are ready for primary school the battle for learning is already half won and the heavy reliance on remediation and on costly extra lessons ought not to be needed.

The Member for North West St. Ann was right yesterday when the children learn to read; they are well on the way. Infant school is not the place to learn to read, primary school is but you prepare for learning, you get ready for learning at the early childhood level.

I report that the country is on track to achieve the target of one hundred per cent of the educable cohort mastering literacy at the Grade 4 level by 2015.

Mr. Speaker, our girls are leading towards this goal but our boys are lagging behind. The National Literacy Team with assistance from the United States agency for International Development to whom we are indebted is providing direct support to 450 primary schools across the island through the deployment of 90 Reading Coaches at Grades 1 to 3 - 90 Reading Coaches - they are paying for it. We are fortunate. (Applause)

Twelve other literacy specialists have also been assigned to 48 secondary schools to provide support in the teaching of English language at Grades 7 to 9.

Over last year and up to now approximately 1,500 teachers were trained by Reading Coaches and we also engage 1,300 parents to better equip them to help their children towards literacy. This level of literacy intervention is unprecedented and must be sustained.

Mr. Speaker, I was one of the ones who in the early 1970s was recruited by the late great Michael Manley to sit on the National

Literacy Board when that was first enunciated. And the problem - one of the problems that we had was that we never were able to turn out the spigot of illiteracy coming from the schools, and therefore even as we train adults to read and write in the understanding of literacy at that age which is not the same now; there were always a new flow of illiterates coming from our schools and therefore we could not beat the problem, and very often the resolve quailed. Our resolve....

The SPEAKER: The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended by 40 minutes to allow him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended by 40 minutes to allow him to complete his presentation.

Motion put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister Thwaites.

Rev. THWAITES: I wanted to say, Mr. Speaker, that our resolve in this generation headed by this Parliament must be that there must be no more illiterate school leavers. (Applause)

As far as numeracy is concerned we are far off track to meet the national target of 85 per cent proficiency by 2015.

This year the Ministry of Education has allocated an additional $390 Million to expand the mathematics programme and we are hoping to get where we should have been next year by 2018 and we are hoping that by 2017 at least 82 per cent…

(Power outage…..)

This year, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education will employ 146 teachers to primary and secondary schools. And they will be charged with the specific purpose of raising teaching standards and student achievement in Mathematics. And we are also enjoining the principals and heads of department through the National College of Education leadership that they have to be accountable for the advance the improvement in Mathematics; it is non-negotiable, Mr. Speaker. At great expense the Ministry of Education is upgrading its teachers; the outcomes should be commensurate with the investment. The quality of teaching and learning in these two core subjects must be improved.

Mr. Speaker, the G-SAT examination, the Grade 6 Achievement Test next year, will no longer require detailed knowledge which is not age-appropriate in the field of science, but will include more mastery of general concepts and basic scientific principles. And in social studies we are reducing the content by about 25 per cent and the test will consist of 60 items instead of 80 items and we are asking the children to learn about themselves and their environment, and their country which is what is important at that age. They can learn about Asia and Oceana later in life. And by 2017 a new primary curriculum will herald a different primary exit examination; one which relies less on recall and more on continuous assessment that emphasizes the student developing reasoning and critical thinking skills.

(Applause)

The new curriculum is well underway you know Mr. Speaker, and what we want to do is to ensure that we don't pile on so much content that people don't understand the meaning of what they learn. The new curriculum must set a premium on higher order skills such as reasoning, analysis and mastery of a range of literacies. (Applause)

It is being piloted now with Grades 4 to 6 and here is an opportunity now Mr. Speaker, we need to galvanize the writers, the illustrators, the printers and the publishers to embrace the new opportunities and provide education with excellent inputs in print and in electronic media solutions for students at all levels. We want to repatriate some of that about $3 Billion that the country spends largely to foreigners, yes, for the material to educate our Jamaican children. (Applause)

Finally Mr. Speaker, during this year we cannot postpone decisive action in relation to more than 200 primary schools, each with less than 100 students. It cost more than $170,000 per student; twice the per student cost at the primary schools to keep them open and if they were doing well it would be fine but generally the outcomes are poor despite the option optimal teacher/student ratios. It is a difficult task but we have to look at them in the interest of student achievement.

Mr. Speaker, I turn to secondary education, for Jamaica must achieve great benefits for having expanded secondary education for all. This goes way beyond our obligations in the Charter of Rights, but it is absolutely necessary for our development objectives. Quality is our quest in our secondary education from now on, and the elimination of the shift system continues to be a major objective.

This year we will expand classroom places in 40 schools at a cost of $1.35 Billion. (Applause) At least 20 schools are projected to come off the shift system after a dearth of building info for some years; we are now trying to revive the construction of necessary facilities to improve quality in our secondary system.

We also propose the use of the extended day method to relieve the enormous shortage of quality secondary places. This model has been in operation, for example, at Campion College for over 30 years and it works excellently. One half of the students come in at one time and slightly later the other half; it is not two shifts, it is one shift but you are making best use of all your facilities - library, canteen, classroom facilities - in a very creative way and it allows for the accommodation of more students in existing facilities. Mr. Speaker, Jamaica must do more with what we have and not always look for more. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica must do more with what we have, and not always look for more. (Applause)

Since September last year, you know sir, seven schools have been removed from the shift system; Holy Trinity High, Glengoffe High, Central High, Crescent Primary, Albion Primary and Junior High, Sandy Bay Primary and Junior High and Bethabara Primary and Junior High. We hope that the elimination of

the shift system, its reduction, will provide more instructional time.

Do you know Mr. Speaker that on the shift system a student probably gets on shift no more than four-and-a-half hours of instruction, by comparison to a whole additional hour in a single-shift regiment? Can you imagine when you multiply this by five days a week, by 190 days a year, what this means in terms of the disadvantage to those students? And they don't have the same opportunity for extra-curricular activities, which can also facilitate student achievement.

I am glad to announce that this year the facilities at Montpellier in South St. James will begin operating as a second campus to Anchovy High in St. James, in 2014. (Applause)

Mount St. Joseph's Catholic High School in Mandeville will begin operating as a new grant-aided secondary school at the start of the next school year, with Grades 7 and 12, and building out from there.

Belair High School will be extended and Sydney Pagon will be converted to a regular high school in order to alleviate the space shortage at the secondary level in the parishes of Manchester and St. Elizabeth.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Thank you, sir.

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, when we call the names of schools that aren't doing well, it's not to shame them. The name was called of Balaclava, in a certain context. Balaclava will be getting a new bank of ten classrooms, and it has new, enlightened leadership, both at the Board and the Principal's levels. (Applause) That's the change we will be making.

Glengoffe was named. Yes, Glengoffe has received tremendous investment of new space, courtesy of the Japanese Government and people, and is now off shift. (Applause) That's a step forward. We name them in order to help them.

A Government MEMBER: Yes!

Rev. THWAITES: My lady from St. Ann, Marcus Garvey, has had its challenges. Marcus Garvey has a brand new campus at Mansfield, alongside its traditional campus. That's the way we want to do. We name them not to shame them, but to advance them. (Applause)

(MR. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, entered and took his seat.)

Holy Trinity was named. Holy Trinity now has ten new classrooms, a progressive new administration, and a great deal of private sector assistance from the businesses in downtown Kingston. That's progress! That's balancing people's lives!

(Applause)

Over the last year, Mr. Speaker, they were opened - some by me, some by others, yes - new or expanded school plants in a number of areas. Can I just name them for you quickly:

- Garvey Maceo High School
- Jonathan Grant High School
- Brown's Town High School
- Glengoffe High School (mentioned already)
- Bellefield High School
- Marymount High School
- Belair High School
- Munroe and Dickenson Trust Sixth Form
- Central High School
- Holy Trinity
- The Cedar Grove Academy in Portmore
- Red Hills Primary
- Appleton Early Childhood
- Moreland Hill Primary
- Torrington Early Childhood
- Marley Hill Primary and Infant

And expansion is now underway at:

- Belmont Academy…. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Rev. THWAITES:

- Hampton High School
- Tacius Golding
- Aabuthnott Gallimore

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Rev. THWAITES: Yes, you are dying to hear Moneague?

At Herbert Morrison and Titchfield the material is now being aggregated. (Applause) I promise you, Moneague will follow.

I want to congratulate publicly Mr. Speaker a number of principals who, through their astute leadership and frugality have financed expansion of their own school plants. How can we thank Mr. Vinroy Harrison, the principal of Central High School, Dr. O'Neil Ankle from Jonathan Grant High School and Mr. Johnallson Feraria of Brown's Town High School. And I am glad to tell you that Mr. Clayton Hall, the principal of the Spanish Town High School has been able to, with his predecessors, put together funds which will allow for the expansion of that school on their own account, not the Ministry's account. (Applause) These are good things.

Thanks to the Mutual Building Societies Foundation, and in particular, to Jamaica National and Victoria Mutual. To people like Earl Jarrett and Dr. Rene Rattray for the faith they have demonstrated in the Jamaican people, and the commitment to Jamaica's future.

Thanks to the Junior Achievement Movement, sponsored by the Bank of Nova Scotia. They have provided over the last years - the Building Societies Foundation - more than a Hundred Million Dollars ($100M) for in-service training and capacity building in six of our high schools as well as technical and managerial support to the leadership of these schools. They too share the vision of transformed education. The partnership is continuing and it is expanding, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker this is a project that is dear to the Prime Minister because along with its partners the Ministry of Education is targeting the removal of pit latrines and the installation of 94 flush-toilet units during the 2014/2015 year. (Applause)

Food for the Poor has submitted a proposal for One Hundred and Sixty-eight

Million Dollars ($168M) to construct 112 of these units in two phases. And 94 units are projected this year, involving not only that institution but the Jamaica Social Investment Foundation, the CHASE Fund, a number of non-government organizations and others.

We pay tribute to those who have assisted in this way. The Chinese Government has been of considerable assistance, Mr. Speaker, to the advancement of Early Childhood Education. Their officers were in Jamaica until recently - they may still be here - finalizing the arrangements for the assistance of the construction of basic schools amongst us. (Applause)

The PetroCaribé Fund has also promised considerable assistance. And we hope to complete the elimination of pit latrines in the 2015/2016 financial year.

Mr. Speaker, heed me now. Many of the secondary schools whose students are from poorer families are hampered by their ability to collect auxiliary fees. A reasonable contribution to school cost is a necessary supplement to the Eleven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars ($11,500.00) which the Government pays for each student in a high school.

Consistent with this Administration's philosophy to help the weakest in the new academic year, the Ministry of Education will provide to schools for each of their PATH beneficiaries - each of the beneficiaries that are on PATH, in high school, all 82,181 of them, Mr. Speaker - an additional Two Thousand Dollars ($2,000.00) per student towards their auxiliary fees. (Applause) They can hold up their heads. (Applause) Those secondary schools like Alva Town, who has a majority of PATH students - and there are many, many others - should receive significant additional financial relief.

Despite that Mr. Speaker, even the PATH families must be asked to contribute what they can when they can. And those who are not on PATH, assuming to be better off, must take the payment of their children's auxiliary fees seriously; they simply can't walk away from it. Contribution to your child's education is the best investment you can make. And it is not legitimate to say that government must pay it all, we do what we can, but more is needed.

Last year's strong intent to contribute was evident in the high percentage of parents who entered into arrangements with schools. This year auxiliary fees will not be normally increased, but parents must try to pay.

The Ministry of Education encourages schools that are stronger, to partner with others to share resources and best practices for student achievement. Campion College is already relating to Mona High and will help with Mount St. Joseph's. I am hoping that St. George's, Kingston College and Alpha Academy will combine to make Holy Trinity a Centre of Excellence. This takes vision, leadership, generosity of spirit, and I am sure our school community have all of those. All school Boards and managers should seek out such partnership.

What, Mr. Speaker, would be the good cause if all of the traditional schools were to reach out right now to another school that

perhaps is not as well equipped as they are, and say, can I help you? Can you use my field? Can I share a coach? Can I share a laboratory? Can we exchange books? What a difference that would make. You don't lose your identify and your pedigree by reaching out, by sharing. On the contrary, you prove those qualities and you enhance them.

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

(MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central, entered and took his seat.)

It is our determination Mr. Speaker that by 2017 all students should graduate with at least one marketable skill...

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Rev. THWAITES: ...among the suite of subjects in which all must sit examinations. (Applause) The world market recognizes a good high school diploma, and by 2016 this must be the target of every high school leaver. No more 45 per cent of our secondary cohort just passing through, Mr. Speaker. Competence in English and Mathematics must be measured and must be certified.

May I say a word about those students who feel compelled or feel impelled to sit for multiple subjects? Mr. Speaker, you hear now of children who are straining, parents who are at pains to pay the exam fees for ten and for twelve subjects at CSEC, as if the multiplication of numbers somehow indicated greater acumen. I don't know that this is helping, you know sir. I don't know about the Members of this House, but I got five subjects. And it's quite enough, because you got the competencies - the basic competencies, and you built from that. That's what you must do.

And so, I am encouraging - without clipping anybody's ambition - for us to look very carefully at this issue of multiplying the number of subjects that you take.

We now have a policy to guide the TVET Integration Programme in our schools. And I am grateful that we have introduced in 54 secondary schools, new occupational skills related to the job market, Mr. Speaker:

- Call Centre Operations
- Digital Animation
- Crop Production
- Motor Vehicle Repairs

These and many others, all dictated by the needs of the economy.

And, Mr. Speaker, the prejudice against technical and vocational subjects as being inferior to academic subjects, must be discredited now, once and for all, from the word coming from this House. (Applause)

In the past Mr. Speaker we trained in skills without sufficient linkage to workforce opportunities. We do know that education has to be liberal and that human development involves more than being work ready. It's also about developing good citizens; it's a matter of balance, exposure to arts and culture and literature are indispensible ingredients in a rounded education.

But, Mr. Speaker, in our situation, much more weight must be given to acquiring those

skills which will attract investors, and equip our young people to work and thrive here and anywhere in the world.

Mr. Speaker, to this end we are on track to fully integrate STEM, that's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, in the education system in a formal way.

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Rev. THWAITES: Technical schools and other selected schools will be among the first this year to begin this integration.

The whole integration of technical and vocational subjects into our school system is being headed by Dr. Grace McLean, the Chief Education Officer who is in the well of the House. And I am pleased to inform you that as far as the integration of STEM subjects, particularly STEM subjects - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics - to be used as a pillar in the development of the new curriculum from grade one to grade nine, is going to be spearheaded by one of our own number, an experienced and pedigreed science teacher, I refer to Senator Skeffery, who is present, also.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, as we make these important changes, we are looking at the need for science upgrading in our schools. Do you know that many of our high schools don't have a functioning science lab? And therefore, we are asking the HEART Trust/NTA - and my goodness, how they are becoming integrated in the education system much more than ever before - we are asking them to assist us in ensuring that we have the facilities, that every high school, starting this year - we won't finish - starting this year, has at least one functional laboratory. And that micro-science kits will be provided at the upper levels of the primary schools to ensure proper preparation of those students.

Level 1 and Level 2 of HEART, you know Mr. Speaker, ought to be imbedded in the high schools.

A MEMBER: Yes.

Rev. THWAITES: Not outside. You should get Level 1 and Level 2 there and then go on to the higher levels at the workforce, colleges, or elsewhere, after you leave high school.

One of the serious problems - I move on quickly, Mr. Speaker - that the education system is beset with, is that of anti-social behavior. Mr. Speaker, it's of concern to every Member of the House that we are wasting, by estimate, up to 20 or 25 per cent of instructional time, and adding unnecessary stress to our teachers, big time, just to get a few of our students to behave properly when they come to school.

It gets worse after hours, aggravated by the shift system, the latch key children, and the free-for-all at the Transport Centre and in the town squares. This is a bigger problem than the school system can handle alone.

I ask a question - you know, it should be one for debate in this House at some early stage, Mr. Speaker: is popular Jamaican youth culture conducive to student achievement? Is it really helping us? Is what we see portrayed as being the apogee, the best approach to life: how you dress, how you behave, how you support yourself, how you approach a girl, or

how you react to a boy, when you begin a relationship, what are the standards of behavior; is this helping us towards student achievement, broadly understood? And it is not to be approved or to preach some sermon; it is simply to say, Mr. Speaker that we have to recognize that there are wholesome and fundamental values in Jamaica. It is a false liberalism. In fact, it is a libertinism when we say, you know, anything goes, and every time I itch I must scratch.

Broadly speaking Mr. Speaker, we have to avoid being in denial now. Many students simply don't know what is appropriate, you know Mr. Speaker. A principal of our prominent high school phone me just before I came here today because several of the students in the CAPE examinations, going on now, were found in the exam room with their cell phones. And they simply didn't know that it was inappropriate for their phones to be in the examination setting. Where do you learn those things? Where is the sense of propriety, the sense of restraint, the sense of being considerate of others?

Despite all of that, school is where our children spend the majority of their time and that's where we have to start. We want to catch these tendencies in the earliest stage. So, the Ministry will be implementing new programmes this year to support behaviour modification, falling under a National Steering Committee, chaired by Professor Fred Hickling. People like Dr. Elizabeth Ward, Dr. Kim Scott and Mrs. Pauletta Chevannes of the Change from Within Programme, and a team of specialists will be responsible for the overall implementation with the Ministry's line officers.

We are focusing on the first 1000 days of a child's life, and have to depend very much on cooperation with the Ministry of Health in this regard and seeking to look this time at the eight year-olds - the eight to twelve year-olds where many of the anti-social behaviour patterns are to be found.

We are going to focus on those and later on, on the older teenagers, and the programme will target about one thousand behaviourally disturbed children, using literacy, use of sport, creative activities, life skills training, parenting and nutritional support, as well as after-school activities, and structured summer activities in order to try to change their ways.

These are things that we are going to require cooperation in the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Youth and Culture and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, in order to be able to have a coherent joint intervention.

Mr. Speaker, values and attitudes has been a cry in this country for their resurgence. We have very valuable material in what is called the Valuable Pathways in Schools. We will be promulgating this, printing the text that has been laid dormant for so long and trying again by various means, within and without the Ministry, in order to improve and to embed positive values and attitudes among our children.

And similarly, when they show signs of difficulty and social disorder, the diagnostic centres that were promised last year but frustrated because of procurement difficulties

will be available this year both in Montego Bay, in Portland, and in Mandeville. And I am glad to announce, Mr. Speaker, that the VOUCH facility on West National Heroes Circle will be enabled as a diagnostic assessment and treatment centre for children with special needs at the early childhood level. We feel that it is most important to do it at the earliest level.

Mr. Speaker, the uniformed groups that can help children to comport themselves in organized and cooperative ways, we have started 105 new formations last year, taking the total up to about 400, and both the cadets, and the scouts, and others, we are seeking to increase that element this year, and inviting alumni groups to help with leadership, uniforms, and instruments.

Mr. Speaker, education broadcasting is a critical use of technology in the new era. Right now, we are working with partners to ensure that the Jamaica Educational Television/ Education Broadcasting of Channel 117 on Flow is available seven days a week from 9:30 in the morning, until 7:00 in the evening. It is a great step forward. It is a good start. DC Digital will begin transmission of educational material in May on Flow Channel 670, and on Love Television from Monday to Friday for a total of 27 hours per week in the first instance. We have received unsolicited requests from Cable TV providers to join educational broadcasting. We want to give our students every single possible medium for improving their student achievement. (Applause)

We are glad to report that we are working with the Universal Service Fund to afford the content appropriate to the new curriculum and the development of character of the Jamaican youth, and I have had the assurance of the Minister that resources will be available to craft this. And again, we send out an appeal to our writers and our playwrights, and our dramatists to help in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education has allocated $900 Million this year to the Textbook Programme. We have had to ask - or we will have to ask for a new care of this material. There used to be a cycle where we replace books after three years. Mr. Speaker, the books are going to have to last five years now. We simply can't afford, with a declining dollar, and with increased inflation on book cost abroad, to spend more and more money on the same texts. We all have to do more with what we have. That's the constant refrain. And we have to also be very careful, because we are appealing to principals to ask parents to buy only those books that are absolutely necessary. (Applause)

Let me tell you Mr. Speaker, for the first time, the Ministry of Education has reviewed all book lists from the school, and will be approving the list of books for schools to give parents to purchase at different grades. No booklists are to be issued by schools unless approved by the Ministry of Education. (Applause) We are giving some guidelines. Parents should not be spending more than an average of $5,000 on supplementary texts at the primary level.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Smith)

Rev. THWAITES: Look carefully at what the Ministry is giving you first and see

why there is need for anything else. And if there is a doubt, please call us and we will explain... and about $12,000 at the Grade 7 to 9 levels at the secondary schools. When you go higher with the specific subjects for CSEC that will require more, we will give you further information on that.

Mr. Speaker our students, very often, have wrong attitudes or inadequate attitudes to learning. They lack self-confidence and demonstrate low self-esteem, and some have less than a desirable value system. To address this, and again following the instructions of our Prime Minister, we have begun to broaden the civics programme. Last year we included the Life and Work of the Right Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey, and the introduction has gone reasonably well. This year, we have had consultations, and taken the decision to focus on the Founders of Modern Jamaica, the Right Excellent Alexander Bustamante and the Right Excellent Norman Washington Manley. (Applause)

It is amazing how many of our children don't know who they are, you know, and the texts that are available for their instructions tend not to be available or tend to be difficult for them to access. The Ministry of Education accordingly, has commissioned the writing and publication of a series which will help supplement the Ministry's social studies curriculum.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Samuda)

Rev. THWAITES: Well indeed, I have had that; I have been called somebody related to you.

The Founding Fathers of Modern Jamaica is the title of the new series, and it is one of the publications that we will be putting forward. I am happy to bring an approved copy for you - National Heroes of Jamaica. This will be distributed in the schools with appropriate questions and essays for the children to understand, giving the personal lives as well as the political and social significance of our two Leaders. And I am pleased to thank the eminent social historian, Mr. Arnold Bertram, formerly Minister of Government, for his authorship of this series.

(Applause by Government Members)

When you read them, Mr. Speaker - and I will circulate them - they will infuse values of respect for self, love for learning, innovation and achievement, promote civility, self sufficiency and interdependence. They will affirm the positive attributes of being a Jamaican. I would love to see these stories, the stories of these people, of inspiring Jamaicans, made into film documentaries very soon.

(Applause)

(THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, entered and took her seat.)

(HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, North, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for Public Service entered and took his seat.)

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that earlier I stated that the Ministry of Education will be providing breakfast and lunch for 138,000 students, or 70 per cent of the early childhood cohort to the tune of $1.05 Billion annually. PATH beneficiaries on other levels of the system will continue to receive free lunch, three days a week. This will cost us $2.4 Billion. Mr. Speaker, can we ask parents to contribute $45 and $60 a day to the cost of the meal for the other two days?

There is another group of our children - about 30 per cent of the school population - who is not on PATH but is very vulnerable. Sometimes they have lunch money, sometimes they don't. And for this group, Mr. Speaker, we expect parents to pay what they can when they can afford it. I bless the teachers and the cooks who multiply loaves and fishes every day, and share the food so that many not on the PATH, but who come without lunch money are not turned away. (Applause)

We also have children whose families experience crisis from time to time, and we will ask our principals to continue to look out for these children and feed them when they can. Government will no longer purchase store or distribute large quantities of imported commodities such as tin corned beef, tin mackerel, flour and cornmeal. The school-feeding menu will use, as far as possible, locally produced meat, peas, beans and eggs. (Applause) The menu for breakfast will include porridge with banana bread, sandwiches using local protein, carrot cake and fruit juice.

We want to pay tribute to Nutrition Products Limited under the chairmanship of Mr. James Rawle, just with the same money they have paid off all the bills that the new board inherited. They have modernized the plant. They have increased production. They have declared a decent financial surplus and are spearheading the critical expansion for the greatest expansion for the greatest possible use of local produce. We need the agricultural local sector to keep up with the desires of school feeding.

Mr. Speaker, during Standing Finance Committee, the issue was raised as to whether this should be divested. This Government has no religion on that you know, sir. Whoever can do it efficiently and at lowest cost, that is who must do it. If the private sector can do it, that's fine. In fact, a large section of the School Feeding Programme is already with the private sector. You ever go to the school - in front of the school gate and see who is there? So, what we want to do is to ensure that we get the best nutrition. I refer again to the IDB study which shows that one-third of our children are coming to school hungry. That's what we can't play with, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the National College of Education leadership has begun strongly, and has continuing programmes for 450 principals and education officers, training them. The regret, however, is that some 20 per cent of these have not completed their assignment or

shown some reluctance to fully accept the training. Mr. Speaker, this is not acceptable, and their performance will have implications for tenure and for licensing.

There is going to be, in conjunction with UWI, an Aspiring Principal's Programme which is going to be a prerequisite for anyone to be appointed a principal, or a person of high responsibility in the schools. And when you take this course, if successful, you will get a Professional Qualification for Principalship qualification which will assist you in your upward mobility in the profession.

Mr. Speaker, the National Education Inspectorate has completed 129 inspections this year. We have almost finished the schools, and they provide the basis through the School Improvement Funds for the improvement of our system.

School boards and principals must be held accountable for the successful implementation of the school improvement plans.

Mr. Speaker, I am coming to a close but I wish to say something about the teachers of this land. Mr. Speaker, today I proudly wear the 50th Anniversary pin of the Jamaica Teachers' Association and so does the Prime Minister. Oh my! (Applause) It was purposely affixed this morning next to my clerical cross by the incumbent and the incoming Presidents of the Jamaica Teachers' Association when they called on me. We have a better understanding now Mr. Speaker and I believe a shared commitment to what is required both of State policy and teachers' interest in order to achieve transformation of a system with solid foundation but creaky and outmoded superstructure. I am pleased to announce the Ministry of Finance has committed to pay all verified arrears owed to teachers by the end of August as agreed with the JTA. And I should like to thank colleague Minister without Portfolio, the Honourable Horace Dalley for his considerable help in this regard. (Applause)

Last year we gave the assurance that we would try and settle the 50% refund of tuition and every month since then, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education, from our little much, has been making payment on all settled claims. Whatever is owed must be paid to our teachers and in return we expect that they will conduct themselves professionally and be accountable to add value to their students. Government is committed to honouring all teacher entitlements. There are issues to do with the scheduling of leaves which the Ministry of Education and the Jamaica Teachers' Association are collaborating to resolve. I would like to say to you that the Ministry of Education has developed a teachers' match job portal on our website which links teachers seeking jobs with potential employers locally and overseas. About 800 teachers have already registered and posited their resumes and several matches have been made. I would like to encourage employers generally to consult this website, not just those who are employing for teachers. If you want good, solid educated people who can serve in your industry, your service industry, your manufacturing industry, check

this portal because teachers are well trained and usually fit in well in a variety of circumstances.

Arising from a visit to China last year, supported generously by the Chinese Government, I am happy to report that a total of 59 teachers are being recruited to fill positions at high schools, primary and junior high schools, vocational high schools and tertiary institutions in China this year 2014/2015. Nearly 300 persons applied for these positions but this is just the beginning of a huge opportunity. As a result of the same visit, Mr. Speaker, six Jamaicans will take up scholarship offers to Shanghai during the summer of 2014. (Applause) And I pay tribute to the Chinese people and government represented by their Ambassador who graces us this evening with his presence. (Applause) And you know, Mr. Speaker, we are told that the Jamaican teachers of English in Japan are doing so well that the numbers to be recruited this year will likely increase. We thank the Japanese Government for their help in this regard. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, maybe it is time just to say this right now, because the level of international assistance which the education sector gets is so gratifying and so necessary to what we have. How can we thank USAID for the literacy coaches that they have provided? How can we thank the Government of Spain for their insertion along with the Government of France in language training in Jamaica, the European Union for their strong support, the exchanges that are taking places with a number of embassies where they send people into our schools to familiarize children who would not otherwise know of foreign cultures and foreign practices to the benefit. To the Government and people who have equipped the Workforce College of Construction in Portmore, to the Government of Turkey who have promised to establish a school in Jamaica and has now sent a resident representative to live here at their expense in order that we can in fact have this achievement in short order. (Applause) To the Governments of Canada and of Mexico who have helped us so greatly and, of course - and this always amazes me and fills me with emotion, Mr. Speaker - the continuing consistent and increasing assistance and generosity of the Government and people of Cuba. (Applause) How can we say thanks to the diaspora groups, the alumni associations, 130 of them in the eastern sea (board) of the United States alone who every year send back multiple millions of US and Canadian dollars worth of aid to the schools. (Applause)

This year we have arranged facilitation because their used to be the complaint that when they send the stuff they couldn't get it off the wharf, never got it into the schools in time. We now see to that and make it possible. I thank the Ministry of Finance for their facilitation too, and I say to the schools, whether it is one pencil you get or 100 desks or a copier, make sure you say thanks because it's very important. Oftentimes we fail to do so. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it's vitally important for us to improve the quality both of the entrance and the standards of outcomes in our teachers

colleges. I am pleased that at the last Council Meeting, two weeks ago, the University of the West Indies and the teachers colleges of Jamaica have agreed to jointly award the Bachelors Degree in Education. What this means, Mr. Speaker, is that if they wish, our teachers' colleges can become colleges of the University of the West Indies and the degrees that come from whether it is Bethlehem, Sam Sharpe or Shortwood can be UWI degrees. (Applause) We can't have 17 different degree-granting institutions. They must meet the standards of the UWI that they can get the benefit of their pedagogy of their facilities and this is tremendously important.

Mr. Speaker, the Government funds two universities - one regional, the UWI and one national, the University of Technology. We treasure both universities. Our policy is to avoid duplication which is not strategic and to get best value from our investments in both these institutions. One is not a polytechnic and the other a university, both are universities. Competition is good if it fosters innovation but it must be sustainable and progressive.

Mr. Speaker, may I use an important image: Harvard and MIT are neighbours in Cambridge Massachusetts, they have complementary campuses and no one confuses one with the other. Our policy is to have the same relationship between UWI and UTECH. UTECH is our national university with a historic emphasis on STEM excellence. Mr. Speaker, we are determined that UTECH should become the MIT of Jamaica and the Caribbean.

(Applause)

Last year there were internal controversies and certain actions had to be taken by the Ministry of Education. I am pleased to report that the Ministry's intervention through the Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission was salutary and I am happy to pay thanks this afternoon to the special committee chaired by Ambassador Derrick Heaven present in the Chamber whose Report to the University/UTECH Council has been largely accepted and is being considered for implementation. (Applause) I wish to confirm that the Council of the University of Technology invited Ambassador Burchell Whiteman to act as interim President from June 1, 2014 to February 2015 by which the search committee will announce a new president. (Applause) I wish to thank the Most Honourable Prime Minister for releasing Ambassador Whiteman to undertake this special assignment, and he will work with an appointed committee to refine governance and financial structures of UTECH in accordance with their centennial review.

Mr. Speaker Professor Errol Morrison is a distinguished academic and I congratulate him on his call to higher service in the area of science and technology. His record at UTECH stands tall and may he use this larger campus to do Jamaica proud. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, the virtuous connection between science and technical vocational thrust in the high schools unto the HEART training through an expanded UTECH, VTDI, CMI, Caribbean Maritime Institute, that wonderful institution, to research, to industry and to employment, all under the strategic guidance of the National

Council on Science and Technology. It all fits together. This is balancing lives and is balancing books at the same time. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended by 20 minutes to allow him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended by 20 minutes to allow him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Reverend Thwaites.

Rev. THWAITES: Mr. Speaker, thank you so much. (Applause) I shall not trespass on your patience much longer but education is so important.

Mr. Speaker, regarding the HEART Trust/NTA, I acknowledge the presence of the Chairman Dr. Moses Peart and the Executive Director Dr. Wayne Wesley in the Gallery and perhaps other members of the HEART Trust Board. I am pleased to announce Mr. Speaker, hear me good, that the HEART Trust/NTA turned away no one who applies for training hereafter. (Applause) If you go there without the necessary Grade 9 competences you will be directed to the High School Diploma Equivalency Programme and then have a promised place in an area of HEART Trust/NTA training. Allowances will be made for those with challenges who won't manage the HSD Programme offered by the Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning. The National Vocations Levels I and II will be located largely in the secondary system and existing communities-based on workplace centres. Higher levels will be available at the workforce colleges in HEART.

Come with me Mr. Speaker, if you will, visit the Brazilian-aided HEART College of Construction Services in Portmore. Right now the most advanced programmes in building, equipment construction and maintenance are certifiable at world-class standards. That's what Jamaica needs. (Applause) Those are not low-level jobs you know, Mr. Speaker, those are high level that's available anywhere, any comparable institution anywhere in the world. This year we will establish the Advanced College of Automotive Technology in conjunction with the Jamaica Urban Transit Company to be located at the Lyndhurst Road depot. The building and the planning is already well underway in conjunction with the Ministry of Works, Transport and Housing.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Rev. THWAITES: Work will begin at the Machado Complex in the great constituency of Central Kingston in a range of competencies all aligned with the Caribbean Maritime Institute to meet the needs of the maritime sector and the logistics hub. (Applause) We are not just thinking of courses you know, Mr. Speaker, that we think would be nice for people to engage in. We are saying to Minister Hylton and the people at JAMPRO, we are saying to Minister Robinson who has responsibility, along with Minister Paulwell, for the BPO industry, tell us what you need. We must train in order that those needs may be fixed. (Applause) HEART Trust/NTA must train to fit the direction of the

economy; graduates must have appropriate competencies and appropriate attitudes both not one or the other, and the HEART Trust/NTA will become more flexible. It's not prudent to continue training persons for oversupplied industries. When we get to that point - it's a point but then we must divest and we must move on and use our resources to do other needed things. The HEART Trust/NTA is collaborating with Caribbean Maritime Institute to expand its capacity to offer them training for the logistics hub and the port expansion. It's the chief facilitator of the BPO industry and has commenced collaboration with the BPIAJ Association in building capacity. HEART/NTA will deepen its linkages by partnering with Southern and Global to provide approximately 200 incubation workstations at the Gordon Town Road facility very shortly.

Mr. Speaker, another area of HEART'S involvement will be the community-based initiatives - $317 Million - hello when we speak about money in this capacity we are not talking about projections, we passed the budget last week, this is money that we know we have. These are things that we will do. (Applause) You can hold us to them. Three Hundred and Seventeen Million ($317M) will take skills training into communities across the island.

The number of community training institutes will increase from eighty-one to ninety-six. One is now working in the National Heroes Park; a simple thing, but we're training twenty-five youths who were on the corner in the skills of ornamental horticulture and landscaping, yes.

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Rev. THWAITES: We need to do more and more of that. (Applause) And it's not just in town Mr. Speaker. The Member for - is it East or West Manchester who is not present here today….

MEMBERS: North East.

Rev. THWAITES: …North East, applied for us to come into his constituency and revive a project that had existed long ago in Sedburgh in Manchester and therefore, the Sedburgh Automotive Skills Training Centre in Christiana will be commissioned during this year. In addition, a partnership is being finalized between HEART Trust and Ebony Park Academy and St. John Bosco Boys' Home in Manchester to deliver joint programmes in the skills areas of piggery, pig rearing and butchery which are scheduled to commence in 2014. The St. Anne's High School campus in West Kingston, the Member of Parliament indicated his concern that here was a facility that was not being used adequately. Well, HEART will come and help in that regard. We'll offer a much broader range of skills to students and community members in the already excellent facilities that are there and we trust that we will be able to do the same in Seaview Gardens in the constituency of Western St. Andrew. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, there's been a lot of concern recently about the fate of the Alpha Boys' Home despite the prodigious efforts made by

the Ministry of Youth and Culture to ensure that the facilities remain in their pedigree and in pedigreed form. Well, a partnership has been established with the long established Alpha Boys' Home to offer technical and vocational training in the creative sector. That Ministry planted, we will water and God will make the increase, Mr. Speaker. This facility will over time provide training in music, graphics, fashion designing, digital animation and skills for the business process outsourcing industry. (Applause)

The best part Mr. Speaker is that a national music academy is envisaged including a special outreach to youth at risk for whom music can be an inducement to learning. We are confident that the popular music industry and the bands of the security forces will help. Most of them came from Alpha anyway. So the spirit of Alpha Mr. Speaker will not die; it will grow and Minister Hanna, you will play a big, big part in this. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, there is more, not much more but there is more. I am pleased to announce that after a gap of some ten years the Apprenticeship Board has been reactivated and we are so fortunate to have the distinguished scientist Professor Gossett Oliver of the University of Technology present with us this evening as the chairmanship of the new Apprenticeship Board. (Applause) Strong representation from industry, but giving our young people the opportunity not available for a long while of gaining experience while they learn and after they learn, because Mr. Speaker, how many of your constituents and mine can't get a job because while they may have qualifications on paper they have no experience.

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Rev. THWAITES: And so there is no way they can bridge that gap except through the apprenticeship programme. Money has been provided through HEART for the introduction of it and we trust that five hundred (500) persons will be targeted for training in the current financial year and there's much to come. (Applause)

The HEART Trust/NTA will do much more than that and we congratulate the management and staff of HEART. Remember, Mr. Speaker, they were awarded the Jamaica Business Leader 2013 Award for their contribution to the development of the private sector. (Applause) And we also extend congratulations to the Executive Director, Dr. Wayne Wesley, who has been appointed as Chairman of the Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies. HEART is large and is progressing and is flexible, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Jamaica Library Service has received approximately US$2 Million in grant funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to implement a project known as JLS: Using technology to empower individuals and communities for development. This dovetails entirely with the e-Learning Project, which is anchored in the STEM Ministry. It will allow for the extension of technological opportunities in our libraries and other appropriate facilities throughout Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, you ever been to a public library? Come with me to Tom Redcam. Every day the bank of computers there has a line waiting on it, because our people are anxious to use the internet to advance their personal interest and their knowledge. What this grant does, and I pay tribute to Mrs. Patricia Roberts, the retiring Director, and Mr. Paul Lalor and his Board, yes, Mr. Paul Lalor. We don't replace chairpersons, you know, when administrations change. He's doing a good job. We want him there.

Mr. SILVERA: I've kept two of mine, Ronald.

(Laughter)

Rev. THWAITES: Yes, why not. This thing is beyond partisan colours and they went and they got this money, yes, and, therefore, we need to make sure that our public have this tremendous opportunity to develop.

A library building will also be constructed at Clarks Town in Trelawny with appropriate funding from the Sugar Transformation Fund.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

And I'm so happy to say that the Alexandria Branch Library in St. Ann is being upgraded with the assistance of the Government of Japan.

Mr. Speaker, if you know what plans not only the Minister of Sport but the Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister has for the G. C. Foster College. We are garnering international assistance and this year you will see ways in which new areas of sport prowess are cultured there. The Chinese will be sending people to come to learn of our skills in track and field at G. C. Foster and they in turn will reciprocate with assistance and with introduction of other ventures. G.C. Foster is under strong management. That must become the sport university of Jamaica, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, last year the legislative agenda was foremost in my presentation. I would like to report that the National Council for Education, by law the highest advisory body to the Ministry of Education, took charge of the review Jamaica Teaching Council Bill and as well as the reform of the Education Code 1980. They have canvassed and taken into account everybody's point of view and I'm pleased to tell you that this week I have received the final reports on both issues from the National Council and these will proceed after review through the legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education is doing its best at cost containment and also in providing better services and more customer-friendly approaches to our constituents. We can't ask for better service in the schools unless we give better service at the centre. (Applause) Let all of us, me first, we are not rulers we're servants and facilitators and just as for the school personnel don't let us talk too much about tenure and permanency. Let's work to add value. If I don't add value, I shouldn't be in this post, Mr. Speaker. None of us should be here. We should add value to the task that we have. (Applause) Were there time I could tell of the hundreds of millions of dollars we're saving by using efficient processes both in the education regions and in

the head office. I will post a Ministry Paper to this end so that you can know.

I should like to express great thanks though, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Labour and Social Security this afternoon could indicate that the Disabilities Bill is to be tabled in this House at long last is tabled. (Applause) And, Mr. Speaker, we have special pleasure on this occasion, because as that Bill is passed reflecting the passion of this Government, especially the Prime Minister, the President of the Senate and others that no one should be disadvantaged because of physical and mental challenges, the Ministry of Education is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Hickswell Douglas, himself a blind man, as Assistant Chief Education Officer for Special Education. (Applause) And he's not being appointed because he is blind. He's being appointed because he's the best man for the job. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: He has vision.

Rev. THWAITES: And he has vision. (Applause/Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, I'm coming down. Mr. Speaker, there are other areas of education which will require our urgent attention. We are not here this afternoon, all of us, only to tell you the positive things. First, we have to be much more focused on ruling out the alternate High School Diploma islandwide. We are late in this regard and Mr. Speaker, I accept responsibility. The Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning has been cramped by internal difficulties and their incapacity is disappointing thousands of adults who need a second chance to get a high school diploma. Resources are not the problem. By September coming I am committing that the comprehensive programme must be available to all.

The other matter that is of challenge is how to assist the three or four thousand students from poor backgrounds who have done so well in school that they have matriculated into college or university. Just as we want them to, but without the money to pay even their part of the fees. This past year the Ministry of Education has had to find well over a Hundred Million dollars to help scores of medical, dental, pharmacy and others students: teachers and community college students. We'll try it again this year, Mr. Speaker, with the help of the Ministry of Health, but it won't be enough.

I want to give thanks that the Students' Loan Bureau reforms announced by the Minister of Finance have gone so far, especially the possibility for loans without guarantors and for the reforms that will follow. And students should note that their records are going to be part of their credit record for life. We have to challenge families to start saving early for tertiary education. We are preparing a booklet setting out all the opportunities for bursaries, scholarships, work and study, so that students can be informed from their secondary years. But I issue a challenge to the private financial institutions and will not cease to do so. It is an irony that the State should have so little cash space but the private institution should be so flush. It

can't be right, Mr. Speaker, that you can get a loan for a car that utilizes foreign exchange both in its purchases an operation within a week of application but it takes you months and months and probably you can't get a loan to go to university. We have to find different ways.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I want to express my personal thanks and that of the Ministry of Education to our teachers for their sacrifice made in the interest of advancing student achievement.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Rev. THWAITES: To all of the staff of the Ministry of Education, the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Education Officer, my advisors and all of those who have been part of a sturdy team in this regard.

The final area of our own work I want to mention is that of renewable energy and conservation. Mr. Speaker, this year we want as many schools as possible to be equipped with solar panels, yes.

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Rev. THWAITES: Can I tell you the story of Holy Trinity High? They were given solar panels this year, August 2013, (sic) and the school has reaped reduction in its electricity bills. They have decreased by some 20 per cent over the past six months. So much so that the JPS came to find out what was wrong and who was tampering with the meter. (Laughter) Can we use the example in South St. James of Chatsworth Primary and Maldon Primary who have introduced solar panels in their schools and also rainwater harvesting and are now *lickle* or nothing paid to the utility companies. Yes Minister, thank you for that. (Applause) Came to you with Aabuthnott Gallimore, you know how much that's - and, you know, when they save the money we're not taking it back, you know. We're giving it to them to invest in educational quality. That's the promise that we're making to do and the PetroCaribé Fund is promising to help.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to end this chronicle of where we are and what we will do just as I began. This is a good time for education in Jamaica. Look what we have going of us. The nation realizes as never before that there will be no personal satisfaction nor any growth agenda unless we become a knowledge-based society undergirded by sound education. (Applause)

Of course we need more money, Mr. Speaker, but there is enough public and private if we use it wisely. There are thousands of good teachers straining to perform better. There are public officials among whom are many Members of this House who have embraced educational and advancement as a first priority for their constituents.

There is a private sector, there are churches, there are philanthropic individuals who recognized the futility of hoarding resources or spending mostly in selfish ways and are increasingly the benefactors of education.

And there's a Government Mr. Speaker, led by a focused lady whose passion it is and will ever remain, for the weakest in our midst

to stand no longer behind but alongside the strongest. (Applause)

Stand strong Mr. Speaker, not through the power of the gun or the gang, not because of colour or money, not arrogantly or contentiously but humbly and compassionately. The new Jamaica all through the power of knowledge the outcome of good education.

So let us continue to invest our time, our talent and our treasure, because education is the ultimate progressive agenda.

Thank you.

(Standing Ovation by Government Members) (Applause)

(The Speaker left the Chair at approximately 4:13 p.m.) (The Deputy Speaker presides)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Member from North West St. Elizabeth will now make his contribution.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate all the hard-working teachers, especially those in the constituency for North West St. Elizabeth. Being one of the poorest constituencies in the country, they are working under various adverse conditions and with children who have a number of serious challenges. The teachers in North West St. Elizabeth are dedicated to their work and I have pledged to continue working with their various schools to overcome the various challenges facing them. (Applause)

Mr. SILVERA: How long you a MP?

(Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, the citizens of North West St. Elizabeth continue to be hardworking persons despite the many challenges they face. The greatest concern the citizens have is the deplorable road conditions.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Same thing you say last year.

(Laughter)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Over the years, over the years, Mr. Minister of Works, over the years North West St. Elizabeth has been known to have the worse roads in the Parish of St. Elizabeth.

Dr. DAVIES: No! No!

(Laughter)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: None of the roads were rehabilitated until 2009, when two roads were done under JDIP. Since then, none of the roads have been rehabilitated. I am seeking the intervention of the Minister of Transport and Works to have the Maggoty to Elderslie, Mulgrave to Ipswich, Springfield to Pisgah Roads rehabilitated.

Dr. DAVIES: And thank me.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: And the road from Newmarket to Middle Quarters resurfaced.

Dr. DAVIES: Which one you thank me for?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Those were patching.

Mr. Speaker, 80% of the citizens in my constituency are farmers, but they are plagued by praedial larceny and the lack of markets for their crops.

Mr. Speaker, last year a breakfast progamme was introduced into the primary and basic schools through the Constituency

Development Fund. (Applause) Despite limited funding, the programme has been a tremendous success as I have said oftentimes in this House.

Dr. DAVIES: Some times.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I would like to congratulate and thank the Minister of Education for the announcement he has made today. It goes a far way in assisting those students who are unable to go to school properly fed. It is one where, as he says, there are students there and roughly in my constituency 40% of them go to school without breakfast and that causes them to have a brain that goes dead by 10.00 o'clock in the morning. And when that happens, they are unable to learn. And then the teachers are blamed because the children are not performing. Mr. Minister, I thank you very much and I am hoping that North West will get the assistance that I had asked in that little note there. (Applause)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Pickersgill)

Mr. CHARLES: Don't try to disturb him now, keep quiet.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, on Labour Day last year, all but two of the primary schools were given fencing material and agricultural inputs including hand tools, to establish or expand their school gardens. The major objective here was to produce vegetables, ground provisions and foods that would be utilized in the breakfast programme.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Good!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, the programme is one that staff and students at the schools greatly appreciate. As a matter of fact, one of the schools, Holland Primary, is this year's winner of the National School Garden Competition. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, these initiatives are providing tremendous support for the students attending the schools in my constituency. I am suggesting to the Minister of Agriculture that instead of aligning the School Feeding Programme to Agro Parks, the money should be spent expanding the School Garden Programme in primary and high schools. (Applause)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Both can do that. Both can do that.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, I'm indeed sorry that the Minister of Agriculture is not here this afternoon.

Dr. DAVIES: He's on business.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I applaud his honesty.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Where you get that?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Okay, sir. I know he's travelling and I say I'm sorry he's not here today, because I would have loved to have spoken to him personally in what I am going to say today.

MEMBERS: Yes! Yes!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Because agriculture is critical in whatever we are going to be doing in moving forward for the development of this country.

(Applause by both sides)

Mr. Speaker, this year let us explore the position of the agricultural sector and the direction it has to embark on for growth. This is important based on the dilemma the country

is facing at this time; agriculture is one of the key players, if not the key player to take us out of our economic problems.

Dr. DAVIES: I agree.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: We have too long depended on fresh produce for our main source of revenue. We have to focus on the value chain to be able to drive the sector. (Applause) Our produce are the most flavourful and of the best quality worldwide, but they are not being fully utilized.

As mentioned by a Member on the Government side, the sector is disjointed, there doesn't seem to be a cohesive direction in which agriculture is being driven. He's absolutely correct and I applaud...

Mr. PARCHMENT: Nobody said that.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I applaud his honesty.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Where you get that?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: If you go to the papers of....

Mr. McKENZIE: Stop listen to the man, just keep on talking.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Don't listen to…. (Inaudible)

Mr. McKENZIE: Don't be distracted.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Agriculture is being run in a hop, skip and jump way with no specific goal or any achievable target to work towards. There is no structure, no vision...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Pickersgill)

Mr. PARCHMENT: Blind man!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: ....and the Minister just said there was somebody who was blind but had vision. This has no vision, no comprehensive plan for the development and growth of the sector. I am saying so.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Oh, is your quote? (Laughter)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Small farmers will produce but they have to be empowered and given the tools and encouragement to produce.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Even with the introduction of the Quasi Agro Parks. Agricultural production has not increased because the cart is being put before the horse. Agricultural Production has not increased.

Mr. PARCHMENT: So you sey STATIN a lie?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Agriculture is once again on a downward trajectory.

Government MEMBERS: Ho! Ho!

Mr. DALLEY: You know better than that. You know better than that.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: The Agro Parks are not achieving their goals. These are large tracks of land that were in full cultivation years ago, but they were not called Agro Parks. Small sections of these lands are now being given to farmers to cultivate, so what makes these Agro Parks?

The Minister spent much time speaking about the growth in the Agro Parks. The Minister still continues to try and pull the wool over some of us eyes, but I will continue to give the facts as they are.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I will put things in the true perspective at the Plantain Garden River, first. First, there are 40 farmers now operating at

Plantain Garden River, not 61 as the Minister said.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the Minister is unaware of what the true situation is at Plantain Garden River. As he admits and I quote, "I am at a loss as to why the resuscitation plan was abandoned". The Minister is saying that he is at a loss as to why the resuscitation plan at Plantain Garden was abandoned. Now, I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, let me advise the Minister, that the plan was not abandoned.

A Government Member: Finish your paragraph.

Mr. CHARLES: Do not disturb the man.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: The farmers were only given pepper seedlings, under the Resuscitation Plan. The rest of the money was held by the Credit Union; they were not given any tools, inputs or equipment from the beginning of the programme so the crops had to fail. There were only two knapsack-sprayers for 40 farmers and these were owned by two farmers.

Mr. Speaker, we saw the plight these farmers were in and that is why we attended to alleviate the problems they had by giving them the requested equipment and tools including the four spray pans which are still working despite the Minister's assertion that they are not working. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, for educational purposes, I am going to provide and - I am sorry he is not here, but the Minister of Works says he is sitting in for him. So I am now going to give the Minister of Works the reasons for the debacle and total fiasco with the farmers at Plantain Gardens with recommendations as to the way forward.

Dr. DAVIES: Okay.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, no, I want you to have a look at it.

Mr. CHARLES: And you can look at it and then deliberate.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Works looks at page 4, Plantain Garden which the Minister speaks so glowingly about, page 4, tools and equipment required were not procured. This is coming from the St. Thomas Cooperative Credit Union, lessons learnt.

Go to the other part Mr. Minister, the PATH Manager was not stationed at the Agro Park and did not have nor was given the required technical support to properly advise the farmers and promptly detect response to issues when they occurred. These are some of the problems and you can go right through they are there why they failed.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister would seek to blame the exuberance of the farmers for the failure, this is totally false. Just about everything for the farmers were mobilized and implemented by the Agro Invest Corporation. The farmers are now, Mr. Speaker, being threatened to be dragged before the Court by the Credit Union because they have no money to repay their loans. They went out there and the crops failed and those are the reasons there why the crops failed and the Minister is saying he does not know anything about the resuscitation. Mr. Speaker, this Minister says this is a promise kept, delivered and exceeded. If the promise was to make the farmers poorer

then they have certainly done that and exceeded that... (Applause) ...and exceeded that expectation by causing the hardworking, trusting and dedicated farmers to be threatened with court action; total fiasco and grief for these farmers.

Mr. Speaker, the farmers requested equipment from our leaders because those who were to provide equipment tools and inputs failed to do so causing the onion crop which was planted initially to fail. Mr. Speaker, this is the growth the Minister speaks about. Growth at Plantain Garden and it is a total failure.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, and I am sorry he has left, I asked him to just remain for 10 minutes, says that agriculture is one of the fastest growing sectors in the country, one of the fastest growing sectors. He said, for the quarter ending December 31, 2014 the growth rate for agriculture analyzed was of the order of approximately 13 per cent. Mr. Speaker, the real value added for the industry, declined by point five per cent in 2013, the real value added for the industry, declined by point five per cent. In 2011, the real value added for the industry grew by 10.6 per cent compare it with what is happening here.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, he also said preliminary estimates for the first quarter of 2014 are indicating approximately 18.7 per cent growth in the domestic food crop subsection. Mr. Speaker, this is totally false, there is no first quarter in any year where we have growth of even 10 per cent, and he is now saying that the first quarter of 2014, you are going to have 18.7 per cent growth; all of us as farmers know that the first two quarters of the year are the worst quarters, because of drought. The other two quarters are when you have growth. And let me explain to you.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. A. Hylton)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: What you saying old time something. All right since you - you see some of us who are not farmers don't understand and that is where we have a problem. Hold on in 2013, in 2013, and you, Honourable Minister, who say it is old time something. Listen, in 2013, the first quarter of 2013, there was a decline of 11.3 per cent...

Mr. McKENZIE: Say it again, him never hear.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: In 2013 the old time thing that you talking about, 2013 there was a decline in the first quarter of 11.3 per cent. The point is that I am saying that there is no growth that is going to go over 10 per cent...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. A. Hylton)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: That is what I am going...

Mr. CHARLES: Don't disturb the man.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Just a moment Mr. Hutchinson. I am asking the Government Members to allow...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Warmington)

The Deputy SPEAKER: I am speaking, Mr. Warmington please wait.

I am asking the Government Members to

desist from questioning and distracting Mr. Hutchinson. There are other occasions when misleading the House can be dealt with. There is far too much heckling from the Government side. (Applause) I think we need to show a little bit more respect to Mr. Hutchinson. (Applause) And I am asking therefore, that you desist from the persistent heckling.

Mr. McKENZIE: You can stay in the Chair forever.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson, please proceed.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, you see what happens when the truth is told many of us don't like it.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, let me explain further Mr. Speaker, let me explain further.

The first quarter of the year, last year, there was a decline in production by 11.3 per cent. The second quarter a decline by 6.3 per cent, in the fourth quarter that is when production starts to go up. There was an increase by 5.9 per cent and in fourth quarter there was an increase of 13.1 per cent that is what we are dealing with. So I am saying that what is said here by the Minister is totally wrong, and he must stop misleading the House and people with these figures. (Applause) It is about time he stop; he has been doing it every year. (Applause) And I am getting to it. I learn from myself and that is why I am speaking the way I am. He would not speak the way I am.

(Applause)

The Minister have spoken glowingly about the production of strategically selected crops such as onions, sweet potatoes, Irish potato, yam, hot pepper and small ruminants.

The Minister of Finance said we must just come here and chat - we must just come here - we can't come here and chat, we have to talk based on what actually happened. He also said that there are four missing years every time some people talk, four missing years, every time some people talk. Well I am going to talk about the four missing years in agriculture. (Applause) And I am going to deal with it. He said you may forget but the people have not forgotten. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I now intend to fill the four missing years for agriculture.

Mr. CHUCK: The best years in agriculture!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I don't know, Orderly, distribute...

(An orderly was given documents to distribute in the House)

Mr. Speaker, all agricultural crops are once again on the decline, compared with production between 2008 and 2011. Let me speak to the strategically selected crops mentioned by the Minister because it is dishonest to try and manipulate figures to suit your own pace. It must stop! Enough is enough!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: So, between - I am going to deal with it specifically now.

Mr. SAMUDA: Talk to dem, Busha!

(Laughter)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Between 1995 - and I hope everybody has got this Crop Production Chart.

Mr. CHUCK: These are real figures!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: See it there, Crop Production - I just want everybody to have this page, Crop Production Chart.

Mr. DALLEY: Where you get this from?

Mr. WARMINGTON: Because you can't read the book!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Let me just say, Mr. Speaker, all of this is got from The Economy and Social Survey of Jamaica.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Tell them again!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: And if you look at the first two, 1995 to 2008, per cent change - if you see per cent change, every single crop in Jamaica declined.

Mr. CHUCK: Under eighteen years of that government!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Who was the Minister most of that time?

Mr. CHUCK: Eighteen lost years!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I am saying, 1995 to 2008, when every year the Minister comes here and says crop production is increasing in Jamaica. See the facts here, put out by them! Now, if we look - and let us go in detail now because the Minister came and boasted, mentioned Irish potato as been self-sufficient by 86.9 per cent now? Let us look at Irish potato. Irish potato in 1995, 17,000 tonnes. By 2008 it dropped to 5,000 tonnes, a decrease of 71 per cent.

Mr. CHARLES: Under PNP!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Who was in charge?

Mr. CHARLES: PNP!

Mr. CHUCK: Mash dem up, Hutchie!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Now, when we look, and we look, now, and we say Irish potato between 2008 and 2011, what was the growth under that? 211 per cent growth. (Opposition Members applaud) Crop Economic Survey. 211 per cent! This is a government at that time, working, working, working!

(Laughter/Heckling)

Mr. CHUCK: Not traveling, traveling, traveling! (Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: Succeeding, succeeding, succeeding!

The Deputy SPEAKER: What is the point about, Minister?

Dr. DAVIES: No, just clarification.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Clarification?

Dr. DAVIES: Just clarification.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I am allowing him, sir.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, go ahead.

Dr. DAVIES: Did the Member say, in introducing, that all the major crops had declined since 2011 to the present?

Mr. CHUCK: Not yet! He is coming to that!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: A coming to that, sir. I said...

Dr. DAVIES: In your opening...

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, I am explaining.

Dr. DAVIES: ...In your preamble was that what you said?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, I didn't say all.

Dr. DAVIES: Eh?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I didn't say all.

Dr. DAVIES: Not all?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Not all.

Mr. CHARLES: Have a seat!

Dr. DAVIES: No, I am just asking. Is this the table? You have listed 11?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, no, no, I am going to clarify.

Dr. DAVIES: I should ignore this table?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, look at this page, it's the same thing.

Dr. DAVIES: Can I ignore this table?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: What are you trying to prove?

Dr. DAVIES: No, I am just asking, was it this table you were - was it this table?

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Forget about my opening remarks, just deal with this. Deal with this! Let us deal with this!

(Heckling) (The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Dr. DAVIES: No, I am trying to follow up; I am just trying to follow. Should I ignore this?

(Cross talk)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Omar, deal with this!

Dr. DAVIES: Forget this one?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I say deal with this!

Dr. DAVIES: Okay.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Don't bother forget this, deal with this!

Dr. DAVIES: Okay.

Mr. CHARLES: Have a seat!

The Deputy SPEAKER: Have a seat for me, please.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I know you 'fraid of it, you see some there, you see some. All right.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Yes, sir.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Proceed without distraction.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Thank you sir, without anymore disturbances.

We are now looking at...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: Chuck it pon him without warning!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Between 2011 to...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: ….we comparing - 2011, Irish potato to 2012, the growth was .4 per cent, and it just went up 2013, 13.2 per cent. This is where we can compare that now the Government is sleeping, sleeping, sleeping!

(Laughter/Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: And misleading, misleading, misleading!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: When we look at sweet potato, per cent change decreased between 1995 to 2008. These are products that he says he is working on now, you know - 15.58 per cent during those four missing years. The four missing years in sweet potato, that grew by 63 per cent! That means that the Government was working, working, working!

(Laughter)

Mr. CHUCK: That's right, Hutchie!

Mr. CHARLES: And you are now sleeping, sleeping, sleeping!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Look at it now, the per cent change, 4.9 per cent that you are talking about growth between 2012 and 2013.

Mr. CHARLES: Them gone to sleep!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, when we look at yams - go down look at yams, per cent change, - 57 per cent. And we find that between 2011 and 2012, 7.75 per cent. But look at it now, 2012 to 2013, - 4.3 per cent. This is the growth that you are talking about. The Government here now is sleeping, sleeping, sleeping!

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: Chuck it pon dem without warning!

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels - 4:48 p.m.) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time be extended by twenty minutes to allow him to complete his presentation.

Mr. Hugh BUCHANAN: No more time!

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time for speaking be extended for how long, Mr. Hutchinson?

An Opposition MEMBER: Forever!

The Deputy SPEAKER: For twenty minutes?

Mr. Hugh BUCHANAN: No more time!

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question has been put.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Yes, I know. I would like to thank those who have given me more time to continue my speech. I heard a lone voice in the wilderness saying, no more time, and I know why.

(Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: Wake him, wake him, wake him!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, I am going to close off, because there is a raft of them.

(Cross talk)

I am saying, one of the crops that is mentioned here by the Minister - and remember I said, selected crops that he is moving strategically to grow, onions, sweet potatoes, Irish potato, yam, hot pepper.

Mr. CHUCK: Let me hear onions now.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Let us look at hot pepper. Hot pepper percentage changed between 1995 and 2008, 19 per cent, 19 per cent. And when you look at 2008 to 2011, what was the growth, 114 per cent.

Opposition MEMBERS: Working, working, working!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: When you look at 2011 to 2012, what happened?

Opposition MEMBERS: Sleeping, sleeping, sleeping!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Minus 49 per cent, and then it goes to 6.6 per cent now. This shows that the Government now is sleeping, sleeping, sleeping! (Laughter)

Mr. DALLEY: You mek up dis!

(Cross talk)

A Government MEMBER: Of course is him mek it up!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: When we look at onions, 4,000 pounds in 1995. How much it

gone to in 2008? 455, a decrease of 89 per cent, a decrease. And between 2008 and 2011 it grew by 123 per cent.

Opposition MEMBERS: Working, working, working!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: This says Government...

Opposition MEMBERS: Working, working, working!

(Laughter/Cross talk)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson!

(Dr. Davies rose)

Opposition MEMBERS: Don't yield! No! Si dung back! Sit down!

Dr. WHEATLEY: No! You do that every day. The man is making his presentation!

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson, will you yield?

Dr. WHEATLEY: Don't yield!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, I am not yielding! I am not yielding to you now! I am not yielding!

(Heckling)

(Dr. Davies took his seat)

Thank you, thank you.

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. McKENZIE: Si dung! Si dung!

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker...

(Cross talk)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I am not yielding!

The Deputy SPEAKER: No, but he has a point of order.

Mr. DALLEY: A point of order.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Please sit.

Okay, what is the point of order, sir?

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, there is a document that the Honourable Member has presented, a piece of paper called, Crop Production. It has not said anything about the source of the document.

Mr. McKENZIE: You were outside!

Mr. WARMINGTON: He said it before he started!

Mr. DALLEY: No, no. Mr. Speaker, if something is tabled for...

Mr. CHARLES: You were sleeping, sleeping, sleeping! (Laughter)

Mr. DALLEY: I can hear! I was hearing, hearing, hearing! (Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: And you were sleeping, sleeping, sleeping!

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Minister, please sit. Please sit.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: You asked that I not be disturbed...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: And they are again disturbing me because the facts are hitting them in the face.

Opposition MEMBERS: Yes!

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson...

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Yes, sir.

The Deputy SPEAKER: For purposes of clarity...

Mr. CHARLES: Chuck it pon him without warning!

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles!

Mr. CHARLES: Don't disturb the man!

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson, for purposes of clarity, can you inform again, if necessary, sir...

Mr. McKENZIE: Why?

The Deputy SPEAKER: ...this Honourable House, as to the source of your statistics.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: The source is The Economy and...

(Heckling)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Let him speak!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: The source is The Economy and Social Survey, 2013.

I am going to ask...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Hold on. I am going to ask - hello. I am going to ask the Member from North Trelawny if he can read out what there is for onion, so I don't have to do it.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson...

(Cross talk)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, no, no, the book has gone to North Trelawny.

(Mr. Atkinson handed the book to Mr. Dalley) (Laughter)

You know, sir, I know why they don't want to read it. It is there, but they don't want to read it. So let me read it then, sir.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, no, I am presenting, not you.

(Cross talk)

Mr. DALLEY: I want to be corrected. Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: No, Mr. Minister, I have not given you permission to speak, sir, sit.

A MEMBER: Stick to the Budget, please, sir.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, there is no correction.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson...

A MEMBER: You are misinforming the House.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, I am not.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Dalley)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Go ahead, Minister.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson, please sit for me - sit.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. CHARLES: This is not a dialogue.

The Deputy SPEAKER: I am going to insist that we get back to a level of civility. If we cannot get back to a level of civility, then I will have to exercise my authority as the Presiding Speaker. And, I am serious.

Mr. WARMINGTON: You throw them out. Thank you. They can't take the blow.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The Opposition Spokesman is on his feet.

Mr. WARMINGTON: And he's speaking facts.

The Deputy SPEAKER: He has said that he garnered the data from the Social and Economic Survey of 2013.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: This is very unusual.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Are you prepared to say what pages, Mr. Hutchinson?

Mr. HUTHCINSON: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. McKENZIE: Don't yield to any more points of order; this is very unusual. They have the book...

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Smith.

Mr. CHARLES: They have the book over there.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, it is extremely unusual, and of course, unprecedented, where a Speaker submits to the Speaker where he gets his information from. And that is accepted. They don't need to be asking any further questions.

Mr. WARMINGTON: And they have it in front of them.

Mr. McKENZIE: The Minister didn't say where he got it.

Mr. D. SMITH: So I am imploring you, Mr. Speaker... He has told the House...They are dissecting that document while he is speaking, and protesting. It is unheard of. And I don't think you should pay any attention to that.

Mr. McKENZIE: This is a side show.

The Deputy SPEAKER: I am only going to allow one more intervention, and that is from Mr...

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Go ahead.

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, I am not dissenting whatever my good friend, the Member from North West wishes to present, but he's providing several pieces of data, and I am struggling to match up.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. DAVIES: I was struggling to keep abreast, using the table to which he directed with his utterances. And I was just double-checking whether the comparisons he is making are taken from this Paper which indicates that of the 15 years, the 15 food items between 2011 and 2013, nine showed increases based on what he is saying. The nine of the 15 showed increases so I was wondering whether he had looked at this - 9 of the 15 - 9 of the 15...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

The Deputy SPEAKER: I am going to ask you to proceed.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Thank you, sir, without any more disturbances. Mr. Speaker...

(Applause by Opposition members)

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I have been in this House from...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Davies)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson...

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Yes, sir, I am coming to it, sir. But, I am saying...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, but I am asking you not to continue the bantering with the other side.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, I am not continuing the bantering, sir.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Focus on your presentation.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: All right, sir. Mr. Speaker, what is happening here is that these figures have been taken from the Economic and Social Survey, those that I have gone back and researched from 1995 to 2008, coming straight through to what is presented here in 2013.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: And these can be taken from any research that anybody wants to do on these economic and social surveys. (Applause)

And what I have said Mr. Speaker is that I was dealing with the strategically selected crops mentioned by the Minister as those that he looks to see if he can promote, and has been promoting. And the crops are: onion, sweet potato, Irish potato, yam, hot pepper. These are the crops, and these are the ones that I have started to mention, and I have been through those so far, and I have reached onions. And onion, as I have stated before, 1995 - 4,000 tonnes; it dropped - declined to 455 tonnes in 2008, a decline of 89 per cent.

A MEMBER: 2008?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: 2008. You found that between 2008 and 2011, it grew by 123 per cent.

Mr. CHARLES: What!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: That is a Government...

Opposition MEMBERS: Working, working, working.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Now, when you look Mr. Speaker between 2012 and 2013, what do you see, a decline of 37 per cent under a critical crop - 37 per cent decline in onion. It is obvious that it is a Government that is sleeping, sleeping, sleeping.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: And this is the gentleman, the Minister of Agriculture who come and says every year, how agriculture is growing. Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SAMUDA: A myth - 19 per cent a myth.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: ...if these agro parks are doing so well, how comes there is a decline in most of these non-traditional crops?

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: What is happening is that the emphasis is being placed on agro parks and not the 250 traditional farmers. Those 250 traditional farmers - thousand farmers, are being neglected. These farmers were the ones who grew agriculture between 2008 and 2011. (Applause) Production of all crops grew by leaps and bounds between 2008 and 2011, resulting in the farmers' markets being established in 2011 to avert losses of crops as a result of over-supply of farm produce.

A MEMBER: Government working.

Mr. HUTHCHINSON: There were no agro parks then. The Minister speaks of 200 acres of sweet potatos to be planted in the agro parks to supply an export market. Mr. Speaker, the existing small farmers in Jamaica plant more than 200 acres of sweet potatoes.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. CHARLES: Even in your own constituency.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I pass there already, but you want me to come back.

MEMBERS: No, man…. no, no, no.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson...

Mr. HUTCHINSON: ...turmeric which makes curry powder was one of the crops we were promoting during the growth time. The Minister said last year that it was one of the crops being given special attention. This crop seems to have fallen through the cracks, as nothing is heard of it again.

Mr. CHARLES: It drop out.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: This crop is not as susceptible to diseases as ginger, and it grows wild in some parts of the country, and is in great demand.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to praedial larceny. Mr. Speaker, the two main problems in agriculture for the farmers is praedial larceny and a lack of market for their produce.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Farmers will produce much more as long as they have a reliable market for their produce.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: The Minister made a grand announcement as to how he intends to tackle praedial larceny, the four-pronged approach being:

- comprehensive slew of amendments to the Agricultural Produce Act,
- directly place penalties under the principal legislation,
- simplify procedures of all stakeholders along the food chain; and,
- impose stiffer fines.

These measures have very little effect by itself. Then he goes on, Mr. Speaker:

> *Now, for the first time, there is a dedicated allocation in the Budget to set up a praedial larceny unit.*

The most potent weapon against praedial larceny is foolproof traceability system. And he says,

> *I am pleased to announce the rolling out of an exciting and game-changing programme relating to the tagging of our entire cattle population.*
>
> (Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: *Dem* just cut off the ears.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker... Mr. Speaker, tagging is nothing new... nothing new.

A MEMBER: Nothing new.

Dr. DAVIES: You announced it eight years ago.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, no, no!

Tagging, this is when you have a little tag - silver tag with some numbers, and you put it in the ears; a small tag where people can hardly see. You have to go straight up and look before you can see that tag - small... little tag.

Mr. CHARLES: They have been using it for years.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: All members of the Red Poll Breeders Association have been using tags for years.

Mr. CHARLES: All of us.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Even some ordinary farmers tag their animals. So, this is nothing game-changing, new, wonderful, exiting, for praedial larceny - nothing new.

Dr. CHANG: Tell them Hutchie.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, the Minister had said that I am a conceptor and adviser.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: A conceptualizer.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: All right, a conceptualizer; thank you for the correction - a conceptualizer and an adviser. He is the implementer, that's right, referring to agro parks, even the microchips on animals, *et cetera.* I am the conceptualizer and adviser, but he's the counterfeit implementer. (Laughter)

For 18 years the PNP had no emphasis placed on praedial larceny. All that was mentioned was the two-foot puss... (Laughter) ...but nothing significantly done to counteract it by the Minister. It has taken centre stage since 2008. Programmes like Irish potato, onion, turmeric for curry powder, agro parks, farmers' organizations, green house programme, farmers' market all came to the fore between 2008 and 2011.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Nothing new has been proposed by the Minister since then.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear - sleeping, sleeping, sleeping.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: What new has been proposed by the Minister since then?

Mr. CHARLES: Sleeping, sleeping.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, no, no, I don't want Omar - you don't like how I'm dealing with him; you want cool me down. You can't cool me down.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Leave him alone; the man is doing very well.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: It is obvious that the Minister either misunderstood the concept or he is incapable of putting the process on the right path. Mr. Speaker, the proposal to curb praedial larceny misses the mark by miles. There is nothing said about fruits, herbs and vegetables. I have to ask now, other than animals, are the pigs, goats and sheep going to have these yellow glowing tags, tagged on to them also. (Laughter)

Mr. CHUCK: What about chickens?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, when I mentioned about microchips, I was called 'chippy'.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: Now, you call him taggie.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I remember somebody sitting and calling me 'Chippie'. You remember. Now 'Bulbie' has come with headlamps to put on the ears of Red Poll bulls, headlamps. These yellow bulbs are so conspicuous you will soon have earless animals because these bulbs are going to be glowing so much that you are going to have an illegal investor coming and say come and get

me, si mi here because him can see him. (Laughter)

Mr. DALLEY: I never knew you were a stand-up comedian.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: All I can see is the big yellow thing that he brought here.

Mr. DALLEY: Chippie the comedian.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: The Minister's programme has no relevance in curbing praedial larceny.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Not at all, Hutchie.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, the Minister must scrap the idea of a praedial larceny unit where persons will be sitting in an office to warm chairs. Only one coordinator is needed in the Ministry of Agriculture. Praedial larceny is a police matter, not a matter for the Ministry of Agriculture. (Applause) So what is the unit going to be there for?

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Charles)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Provide that money earmarked for the unit to purchase trail bikes for investigators to invest in trail bikes.

Miss HANNA: Trail bikes.

Mr. HUTCHINON: …trail bikes to investigate the end users of agricultural products. This is where you are going to get results. Every end user, every end user must provide the investigator with a receipt or invoice showing where the animals or crops originated.

Opposition MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DALLEY: That is there already.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Chippy is advising Mr. Bulbie to read the report.

(The Speaker gavels)

The Deputy SPEAKER: The speaker's time has expired. May I just…

Mr. DALLEY: Any amount of time you want, all the time.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker….

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. House Leader, I just want to explain, Mr. Hutchinson, that we did allow you some extra time based on the various...

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Thank you, sir.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question now is that the Speaker's time be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation.

Mr. PAULWELL: No, Mr. Speaker. I am extending the time by 15 minutes.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Speaker's time be extend by 15 minutes to allow him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Thank you very much.

Mr. CHARLES: If we need it we take 15 more.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Thank you very much. Colleagues, thank you very much. I am getting back to that.

Mr. Chippy is advising Mr. Bulbie to read the Report from the Economy and Production Committee which outlines the raft of proposals being recommended. And I don't know, I am sure - I don't know if you have read it. I am sure you have read it, the recommendations, you all have.

Dr. DAVIES: Gwane talk, Hutchie.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Proposals being recommended to curb praedial larceny. The persons on the Committee understand the vision in curbing this menace, and I must congratulate them for coming together with this proposal. They are able to share the vision which the Minister is missing. If he was here I would hand it to him, the recommendations.

Mr. CHARLES: You can send it to him.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Davies)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: So you would like to - the copy of recommendation, since he indicated that I should advise him of the other measures other than his half-baked ones to tackle praedial larceny. I am sure the Minister is aware of these recommendations. So I wonder why he has refused to mention them for implementation. He knows about them so he must be a counterfeit implementer.

Mr. CHARLES: Sleeping, sleeping, sleeping.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: The counterfeit implementer Bulbie is now using bulbs as tax to curb praedial larceny.

Mr. Speaker, the praedial train was about to roll out of the station in 2012 but it got derailed during that time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I come to the serious point, the serious point, structuring the agricultural sector. The agricultural sector has to be rebranded, there has to be a new outlook and vision to assist the Jamaican economy out of its predicament. The focus has to be structured with the 250,000 small farmers as the catalyst.

Opposition MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: The first step is to reactivate the farmers' organization. The 250,000 small farmers are the pillars in driving that is vital for the economy. (Applause) Secondly, an agricultural complex, a real agro-park should be established with one, a grading and packaging house; two, a processing house; three, an abattoir; four, a cold storage; five, a drying house; six, a farm store; seven, a value-added centre; eight, a meat outlet.

All of this we are saying is under one umbrella, a complex, government-owned and so it would be Government/private partnership that we are looking at and so it is one where it has it in one place, all of these items. So what would that complex provide? It would provide a ready and reliable market for all agricultural produce, no product would be left to spoil in the field. Those melons and onions and carrots that are left in South St. Elizabeth spoiling in the field would be taken up and carried to the complex; two, provide guaranteed price for farmers to produce. The farmers would have a guaranteed price...

Dr. DAVIES: Seasonally?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: No, a guaranteed price right through. If it is $20 a pound it is right through the year.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Davies)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Hold on. Three, lessen the cost of produce to the consumer be eliminating the middleman. In other words, what happens, they buy the crops from the farmers at $100 a pound but when they reach the market they sell it at $200 a pound. So

instead of doing that there is somebody who is the contract person who carries it from the district directly to the complex.

Government MEMBER: It sounds like socialism.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: It is a way of structuring the agricultural sector. It provides the traceability of produce from farm to fork; provides farmers with cheaper inputs; curtail praedial larceny, and that I would need to go into more details to show you how praedial larceny would be curtailed with that complex.

Dr. DAVIES: What this have to do with cheaper import?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: The cheaper import we have you call a PIP in the Ministry of Agriculture, instead of giving all and everybody a little money it goes to the farm store where the genuine farmers would come and purchase the fertilizers and seeds.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Davies)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Eliminate glut or scarcity in the market. This is where it comes. When you eliminate the glut and scarcity - the Minister not listening - eliminate the fluctuation of prices to the consumer it provides a value-added centre for the commercial production of products, especially fruits and vegetables not utilized. We have plenty fruits and vegetables, plenty vegetables and fruits dropping off the trees now, and so we are going to collect all of those. Encouraging more entrants into agriculture, once they have a ready market you would have more farmers coming in, lessen the importation of agricultural produce, provide substitutes from feeder and fertilize - this is the by-products from the processing house and, of course, provide local food for the Breakfast Programme in Schools.

Mr. Speaker, an estimated cost in setting up this complex would be: grazing and packaging house $10 Million; processing house $15 Million; abattoir $20 Million; cold storage $30 Million; farm store $25 Million; drying house $10 Million; value-added centre $30 Million; meat housing $10 Million, a total of $160 Million. The funds to establish this complex could be taken from the allocation of the $640 Million which is set for drainage, roadways, packaging houses for 5,000 farmers and various so-called agro-parks. This agro-park would be the first to be established and this should be at Ebony Park. This would be strategically placed because of the logistics hub being planned in that section of the island. This would allow easy access for the exporting of goods from the centre. It would not be catering to the 500 farmers but to the 250,000 farmers island-wide (Applause) but mainly those in St. Elizabeth, Westmoreland, Manchester, Clarendon and St. Catherine as a first start. The second one now would be on the north coast or east.

(*Sotto voce* remarks)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: This is just what I said, Ebony Park close by.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture has been a failing enterprise over the years under this Minister.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: What is that?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: As I have indicated, the Minister has brought no vision, no direction and no new ideas to provide growth for this sector over the years.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: You are - who you are talking about, Tufton?

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Warmington)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: He has now brought half-baked solutions to one critical area in agriculture.

Dr. BAUGH: Jolly Roger.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Nothing else in his Budget Speech has given encouragement or hope to the 250,000 small farmers in this country. He has not touched the core of the problem of praedial larceny or expounded on ways for the marketing of crops.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister needs to crack the whip on the Minister if agriculture is to grow in this country.

Mr. Speaker, we have shown we can increase the production of certain important crops by over 40% annually. Jamaica can be put on a growth path again but the structures and programmes need to be activated once more. Mr. Speaker, let us work together as a team for the upliftment of this pillar which is so vital for the development and growth of this country. Let agriculture become the cornerstone for growth, the fastest growing sector in the economy. It has been done in other countries, let us used it here in Jamaica. The farmers of Jamaica are yearning to get it done. Today I salute all the hardworking farmers of this country.

(Applause)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Pickersgill)

Mr. CHARLES: Wake up, wake up, sleeper, sleeper.

Mr. DALLEY: The shirt a blind me.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Shut up your mouth over there!

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended for us to do any further business this afternoon, so I move for the adjournment of the Parliament until next Tuesday, the 13th of May, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House adjourns until next Tuesday, May 13, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House was accordingly adjourned at 5:25 p.m. until Tuesday, May 13, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015

TUESDAY, May 13, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:25 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Lynvale Bloomfield.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Clerk laid on the Table of the Senate, a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 93**
  The Unite for Change Initiative
- **Ministry Paper No. 94**
  Achievements and Plans of the Ministry of National Security 2014/2015
- **Ministry Paper No. 95**
  Wallenford Coffee Company Limited Annual Reports and Audited Financial Statements for the years ended July 31, 2005 to July 31, 2010

- 9th Annual Report of the Office of the Public Defender of Jamaica for the Calendar Year 2009
- **Ministry of Transport and Works** Appropriation Accounts for Head 6500A for the financial year 2011/2012
- **Administrator General's Department** Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the financial year 2012/2013

Head	Ministry/Department	Financial Year
0700	Office of the Children's Advocate	2011/2012 & 2012/2013
1510	Jamaica Information Service	2012/2013
2012	Jamaica Customs Department	2010/2011
2000B	Ministry of Finance & Planning	2012/2013
3000 & 3000B	Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade	2012/2013
4200A	Ministry of Health	2007/2008
4200B	Ministry of Health	2006/2007

(MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central, entered and his seat.)

(MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

(DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning, entered and took his seat.)

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

The SPEAKER: Mr. Jackson.

Mr. JACKSON: Mr. Speaker, on the item, Report from Committees I noticed that the Chairman of the Economy and Production Committee is not in the House, but there is a matter before that Committee that was referred from the House and that Committee has not met for about over two months. I will be grateful, Mr. Speaker, if the House could be advised as to how soon that Committee will meet to deal with the matter of banking fees that is before that Committee. I will be so guided by you.

The SPEAKER: Well, with the absence of the Chairman of the Committee, I don't think we can achieve much right now.

Mr. JACKSON: Well, I will ask through you, Mr. Speaker that the House Leader could ascertain from the Chairman when that Committee will meet again? I raised it, Mr. Speaker, because I have failed to get some response from my own initiative on that matter. The final report from the Bank of Jamaica has been submitted two months ago and to my knowledge it has not - the Committee has not met in order for that work to continue which is of some urgency.

(MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. MICHAEL ANDREW HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took her seat.)

The SPEAKER: I understand the urgency. We will follow up on the matter.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, at the expiration of twenty-one days I'd like to ask the Honourable Prime Minister the following questions:

Question 1:

Can the Prime Minister outline the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the proposed 6-member enterprise team?

Question 2:

Will the Prime Minister define the role of the Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) going forward as it relates to the 381 Megawatt energy plant?

Question 3:

It has been stated in the sectoral presentation of the Energy Minister that the project is now under the Office of the Prime Minister; will the Prime Minister state whether the Energy Minister will have any oversight responsibility or involvement in the project?

Question 4:

Will the Prime Minister provide a status report on the process of revocation of the licence to Energy World International (EWI)?

Question 5:

Can the Prime Minister affirm that none of the individuals being considered as members of the enterprise team is connected in any way to any of the bidders?

PRESENTATION OF BILLS WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE HOUSE FIRST OBTAINED

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Labour and Social Security I beg to move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled: "The Disabilities Act, 2014.

Bill shortly entitled:

"The Disabilities Act, 2014",

read a first time.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of second reading of the Bill.

The SPEAKER: I noticed that a number of Members are cooling themselves. We are on the standby generator and when we are on that generator then the air conditioner is not in service. So as soon as we get back on to the JPS the matter will be resolved.

(Cross talk)

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, at Public Business

(Cross talk/the Speaker gavels)

Mr. Speaker, at Public Business we will be continuing the sectoral debate, first with a contribution from the Minister of National Security, followed by the contribution from the Member from West Rural St. Andrew.

The SPEAKER: Minister Bunting.

(Cross talk)

Mr. BUNTING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Probably it is appropriate that when we are speaking on my portfolio that Parliament is as hot as it is today, because it is one that is a hot seat portfolio.

Mr. Speaker, let me start as is the tradition with some thanks and acknowledgements starting with the Prime Minister and you know, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister apart from thanking her for the confidence she continues to have in me in this portfolio, I hope you're recognizing the impact that she is having on the Cabinet when she starts every Cabinet with a devotion.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear! Right.

Mr. BUNTING: You now have Ministers calling for divine intervention (Laughter/Applause) and others like my colleague Minister from East Kingston and Port Royal who, in my constituency spoke about going down on his knees every night and pray. So clearly the Prime Minister is having a solitary impact on all the rest of us.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear! (Applause)

(MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP) St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, entered and took seat.)

(HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague Cabinet Ministers, my family and loved ones. (Applause) I want to acknowledge the leadership of the Ministry essentially the Permanent Secretary and, of course, the Commissioners of Police and Corrections who are here this afternoon. (Applause)

I want to also recognize a delegation from the great constituency of Central Manchester.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

(Applause)

Mr. BUNTING: I want to acknowledge the Mayor, the Councillors and my constituency team who work tirelessly to compensate some times during the periods when I've been General Secretary and Minister respectively. I want to acknowledge them. (Applause)

And, of course, Mr. Speaker, my personal staff, both professionally and those who serve in other capacities at home, *et cetera*, and

allow us to be able to make the contribution that we do. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, a recent IDB discussion document describes Latin America and the Caribbean as - and I quote:

> *"One of the most violent regions of the planet. Its average homicide rate in 2012 was 23.7 per 100,000 inhabitants, almost four times the global rate and more than twice the standard used by the World Health Organization to define an epidemic. And that standard is 10 homicides per 100,000".*

Jamaica has consistently, certainly for the last two or three decades, ranked among the highest for homicide rates in the region and the world, peaking at 62 per 100,000 in 2009 and averaging approximately 40 per 100,000 more recently. This level places us at almost twice the regional average and four times the standard used by the World Health Organization to define an epidemic.

It is now generally recognized that violent crime has multiple contributing factors, which include the transnational drug and gun trade, street gangs, informal and inner-city communities with inadequate social services and weak economies. These contributing factors are not unique to Jamaica Mr. Speaker, however, other causes are less common across the region. Causes such as our historical nexus between politics and gangs and the promotion of criminal behaviour and the glorification of criminal lifestyles by certain leading elements in popular culture.

Successive administrations in Jamaica, like others in the region, have traditionally focused primarily on crime control measures, hard policing and tough talking.

> (HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, entered and took his seat.)

While there has also been a recognition that crime prevention measures are necessary and there have been some long running social intervention programmes such as the CSJP, only a relatively modest amount of resources from the National Security budget have been allocated for such measures. Social interventions which impact violence prevention have also been taking place in other Ministries, Departments and Agencies and indeed in civil society, but have lacked effective overall coordination.

Today, Mr. Speaker, Jamaica has no choice but to develop new management and governance patterns for citizens' security, recognizing that violence has multiple causes and therefore, requires effectively coordinated responses from multiple sectors.

> (DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning, entered and took his seat.)

International and local best practices indicate that (a) public safety policies that balance prevention and control actions have a greater crime reducing effect. And (b), that citizen participation and cooperation between the

public and private sectors improve the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions. And when I say private sectors here I'm using private to include business, unions, NGOs, faith-based organizations.

Last October, the Ministry received approval from the Cabinet for the implementation of a revised National Crime Prevention and Community Safety Strategy.

(HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security, entered and took his seat.)

This strategy accepts that there are clear risk factors for crime and violence that impact our young people. Much of these risk factors develop outside of the realm of the Ministry of National Security and law enforcement, but, if not addressed, will result in increased violence and criminality. This strategy places responsibility for inter-ministerial coordination of crime prevention and community safety strategies with the Public Order Committee of Cabinet, which I chair, and the membership includes the Ministers of Health, Education, Justice, Youth and Culture, Local Government and Labour and Social Security.

Further Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of National Security has recently adopted the Public Health Framework to describe and analyze our crime situation, and specifically, that we are experiencing an epidemic of violence.

In many respects violence does behave like a contagious disease. The Minister of Health would tell you, for example, you have the same type of clustering of cases that you have with a contagious disease. And just as, for example, the greatest predictor of a case of flu might be coming into contact with somebody who is already infected with flu; similarly the greatest predictor of a case of violence is a previous case of violence.

But the good news Mr. Speaker is that there are three clear steps that are used to reverse epidemics. The first is to interrupt transmission by detecting and finding first cases. The second is to prevent future spread to others in the same group. And the third is to change group norms through remodeling and public education to build group immunity.

I will describe the initiatives of the Ministry, its departments and agencies within the framework of these three steps for the body of my presentation, and then I'll make a few concluding remarks.

Out of respect for the time constraints imposed by the House Leader and this Debate, I will not attempt to give a detail account of the performance and plans of the Ministry, because I'm tabling two separate Ministry Papers today, which will provide all the necessary background information. So I want to turn to the first step in reversing an epidemic, and that is interrupting transmission.

Traditional crime control measures have very much to do with the police detecting and isolating the perpetrators of violent crime, and

they will continue to be the principal vehicle for interrupting transmission. We have implemented a number of measures that we believe will improve the effectiveness of the police. And I will speak to a few of those.

The first, of course, is the merger of the ISCF with the JCF. The approximately 2,000 members of the ISCF have been successfully incorporated into the JCF. (Applause) Members of this Honourable House may recall that the decision to merge these two Forces was based on recommendations from at least five separate studies over two decades. And these studies cited many benefits, including the creation of a single command and communication structure; eliminating duplication of administrative activities and facilities and releasing more personnel for front-line duties.

Mr. Speaker, today the merger is effectively complete and apart from a few hiccups along the way, I'm very pleased that within just two months of Cabinet approval, the merger has been effective. (Applause) Even private sector managers must be impressed at the speed and efficiency of the merger of these two large organizations. And I'm sure that Members of this Honourable House will join me in commending both the leadership and the men and women of the now single Police Force on this occasion. (Applause)

Consequent on the increased number of personnel in the JCF, as a result both of the incorporation of the ISCF members, as well as the aggressive recruitment in recent years, the Ministry will be approving a fourth portfolio within the JCF. The Security Services Portfolio, which will be headed by a Deputy Commissioner of Police. This unit will be responsible for VIP protection, including persons such as Government Officials, Judges and Diplomats, as well as securing critical facilities such as Parliament, King's House, Jamaica House, the Courts, Ports and Airports and other critical infrastructure, including, for example, facilities to do with the Logistics Hub. (Applause) It will also incorporate the Marine and Canine Divisions.

The other measure that I want to turn to now, Mr. Speaker is an emphasis on proximity policing. And this is really a subset of community policing.

A more effective method of building a relationship of trust and confidence between the police and the citizenry is to locate the police within communities, and as much as possible to encourage stability in deployments to stations or posts so that the police personnel and community residents get to know each other well. This is an effort to move proximity or community policing into the mainstream of JCF operations. Accompanying this shift will also be a reduction in the use of the paramilitary style uniform in favour of the more civilian style red-seam or khaki uniform. We intend to increase the number of police posts throughout Jamaica by (a), utilizing mobile or modified 40-foot container posts; (b) repurposing existing public infrastructure at the request and agreement of communities

such as the RADA Office in Maroon Town or the former residence for the Nurse in Race Course in Clarendon.

And finally, we intend to increase this by encouraging large developers, or should I say developers of large subdivisions to build police posts within these divisions such as we saw at Irwin Meadows in St. James recently.

Mr. Speaker, we also want to increase the Cadre of Civilian First Responders. Evidence from the work of our local Peace management Initiative, as well as from overseas groups like Cure Violence has demonstrated that trained civilians can be very effective violence interrupters within communities.

(Applause)

We will expand training and funding of this type of work during the fiscal year.

And finally on the interrupting transmission measures, Mr. Speaker, you know that we have worked hard to pass the Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organizations) Act, 2014. This recently enacted piece of legislation popularly referred to as the Anti-Gang Law has created a new set of conspiracy type offences intended to deal specifically with criminal organizations. Heavy penalties will be incurred by the directing minds of these organizations for offences such as leading the criminal organization or recruiting children or adults to their gangs. Serious offences have also been created to deal with persons who facilitate the activities of criminal organizations. A great deal of research and consultation went into the development of this law which is now in effect. (Applause) The police has been training and sensitizing members to use this potentially powerful tool in the fight against organized crime.

I want to turn now Mr. Speaker to the second step in combating this epidemic of violence and that step is preventing future spread. The second step in combating an epidemic is preventing future spread to others in the group who are vulnerable to the specific disease condition, in this case, it would involve supporting persons who might be vulnerable to criminal involvement through:

1. Labour market attachment and employability programme.

(DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM MCNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment, entered and took his seat.)

2. Increasing access to justice services outside of the formal court system, and;
3. Reforming the Department of Correctional Services to focus on the rehabilitation of offenders, particularly juveniles and soon to be released adults.

(DR. KENNETH O'NEIL BAUGH, St. Catherine, West Central, entered and took his seat.)

Funding for the first two initiatives is currently in the final stages of negotiation with the Inter-American Development Bank

through the Citizens Security and Justice Three Programme.

We intend to develop comprehensive programmes for selected youth tailored by job readiness. The programme will include classroom and workplace training, life skills, job preparation and placement services, remedial and formal education programmes among others. And what we mean when we say by job readiness levels is that those who are in the lower job readiness group they will receive remedial education, particularly the literacy and numeracy skills which will really allow them to participate in more advanced vocational training and secondary school.

(MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILLIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern, entered and took her seat.)

The Intermediate Job Readiness Group will receive services such as on-the-job training, and work orientation similarly to the apprenticeship programme which we ran in the JDF Engineering Regiment. Summer employment internships, secondary education support, but this time and the Minister of Education might be interested to know, this time we will not just give scholarship to students but we will require them to do 120 hours of community service during the summer holidays.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Give back something.

Mr. BUNTING: Give back something, correct. And they will also get business development training.

(MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central, entered and took her seat.)

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the higher job readiness group or the final group, the higher job readiness group will receive services such as short term vocational and on-the-job training, job seeking placement and retention support and business development training.

The second programme I want to speak with is the community justice services component; this will be managed primarily out of the Ministry of Justice. It will increase access to justice services outside of the formal court system following - where is the Minister of Industry and Commerce - following evidence-based models. (Applause)

(MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

First, the Restorative Justice or RJ Programme which was initiated in ten communities during CSJP II which was expanded in order to bring eligible cases to resolution in target communities. Restorative Justice is motivated primarily by the need to address harm done, it does not take place until the person who has caused the harm has fully and freely admitted to their actions, and is willing to take responsibility for them.

The second programme, very important programme, will be a Child Diversion Programme implemented through a multi-tiered system for steering juveniles in conflict

with the law away from criminal charges. (Applause) And not just away from criminal charges but also away from prosecution and/or incarceration and providing them instead with structured community service task and a support committee.

And third, the supply of legal-aid, mediation and victim support services will be increased in targeted communities. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the CSJP II Programme is now drawing to a close. It has supported a number of programmes for at risk youths in 50 communities across 8 parishes. A recent evaluation of the programme shows that the CSJP II has met and in many cases exceeded the performance targets. Over 6,000 persons when compared to the targeted - originally targeted 3,500 benefitted from programmes in life skills, vocational skills, training and tuition support.

Under the JDF Engineering Regiment on-the-Job Training Programme, some 450 youths received training in construction skills, several of them have since joined the JDF and others have found employment locally and overseas. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to the reform of the Department of Correctional Services. The three principal correctional facilities; Tower Street, St. Catherine and Fort Agusta are centuries old institutions that are literally falling apart and have very limited scope for rehabilitation of inmates. While it has been recognized for decades that a new facility is needed, at the policy level we have been reluctant to prioritize the large capital expenditures and when I say large Mr. Speaker the estimates we have seen run from US$150 Million to US$250 Million for a new facility. And you can understand that there has been reluctance to prioritize the large capital expenditures required to replace these facilities. Further, the truth is there is little popular sympathy for the inmates being housed in these conditions.

This Honourable House may be surprised to learn that 70 per cent of the persons sent to the correctional system last year are for sentences of one year or less, and that is typical of recent years.

Further, that 28 per cent of that intake of the total are repeat offenders, so our correctional institutions are not filled primarily with hardened murderers and rapists, but with young men who are convicted of less serious offences and who are and should be redeemable. However, under our present system many of these young men are incarcerated with hardened criminals, given limited opportunities for rehabilitation and are confined to cells with no modern sanitary conveniences for 18 hours per day. Once released they are stigmatized and relegated to the backwater of the economy, unable to get a visa or to be employed in the public sector, or most private sector entities.

We should therefore not be surprised that many of these persons see no option but to return to a criminal lifestyle reflected in 28 per cent recidivism rate in the 2013 year.

The Minister of Justice is doing some work to reduce the range of offences that create a criminal record. (Applause) And also to reduce the period of time for expunging

records, however, we need to do more. No one is born a criminal, Mr. Speaker, and while individuals cannot escape personal responsibility, we recognize that many factors contribute to young persons coming into conflict with law enforcement.

Enlightened societies recognize that a first offence can be an opportunity to rehabilitate offenders to return to society as productive members. This Administration subscribes to that enlightened approach to dealing with persons who come into conflict with the law. (Applause) Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we are currently completing with input from the UK prison estate consultant, a 5 year strategic plan to transform the Correctional Services with the principal objectives of strengthening the systems of rehabilitation, reducing reoffering and complying with International Human Right Standards. (Applause)

And let me say, Mr. Speaker, we are very fortunate to have persuaded Commissioner Jevene Bent to postpone her retirement and to take on this task of reform. (Applause)

There is a special touch, a special care, particularly for the wards, but indeed, for all the clients in the system that, a woman takes on when they go in those roles. And I think we are going to see the benefit of her incumbency in a very short time. (Applause)

Key elements of the new plan are summarized as follows: In the short term in next 12 months, the South Camp facility has been renovated, retrofitted and designated a Juvenile Correctional and Remand Centre. The Centre has been operational since September 2013 and all of the female juveniles previously located at the Fort Augusta Adult Correctional Centre were transferred to this location. Additionally, members of the female population, the juvenile female population at Diamond Crest were also transferred to South Camp. (Applause) By consolidating them in one location, Mr. Speaker, including those who had previously been at Horizon, we are now able to offer a wider arrange of services in better facilities more appropriate for them and especially in terms of the range of subjects that they can be educated on.

But, Mr. Speaker, while this is an improvement on previous arrangements, it is still far from ideal; therefore, the Ministry of National Security is seeking a smaller, more child-friendly location for the juvenile population and to use the South Camp to house the population of 153 women currently at Fort Augusta. By various initiatives, we have reduced the number of female juveniles from close to 100 to now it fluctuates between 30 and 50 and so we don't... (Applause) So we certainly don't need the capacity at South Camp which is almost ten times the size we need. And Mr. Speaker I hope I have had some encouraging initial discussions with the Minister of Education, that we may be able to utilize one of those schools where the enrollment has fallen dramatically over time that we may be able to repurpose one of those facilities to be used in a more child-friendly environment for the female juveniles currently at South Camp. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I now ask that the Minister's time be extended to allow him sufficient time to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: Before I put the motion, let me just take this opportunity to welcome to our Parliament a delegation from the Namibian Parliament, who are visiting with us this week.

(Applause)

The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

(Applause)

Mr. BUNTING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to point out here that while we have a completely segregated system, in terms of the separation of juveniles from adults, there are still four boys who are held on remand in a completely segregated area of Horizon. It had been my hope that we could have de-gazetted Horizon as a juvenile institution.

However Mr. Speaker, on the advice of the Commissioner of Corrections, it is felt that it is necessary to continue operating this segregated area at Horizon for juvenile boys who are near eighteen, and who represent a high level of risk to the other wards, were they to be kept at Metcalf Street. And in fact, we have had experiences, and the truth is that these boys are in for very serious offences, in some cases multiple murders. And some of them even attempted to start a fire - or not attempted, they started a fire at Metcalf Street. And in our judgement it was the best option under the circumstances, to separate them from the other wards at Metcalf and to keep them.

We continue to provide educational support to them at Horizon. More generally Mr. Speaker, last year Boards of visitors were established for all of our juvenile correctional institutions to provide another level of oversight of the operations of the DCS, in respect of juvenile facilities. The members of these Boards are empowered to visit the juvenile centres, to observe and make recommendations for the safety and general wellbeing of children in the facilities. These Boards add to the oversight and collaboration already provided by the Office of the Children's Advocate and the Ministry of Youth and Culture.

And I would say Mr. Speaker, if we are concerned with things like the Beijing Rules and the Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of prisoners, our juveniles under detention are kept separate from adults and shall be detained always either in a separate institution or in a separate part of an institution that also holds adults.

And you should know Mr. Speaker that the Beijing Rules and the Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of prisoners, are both international instruments that are UN issued. They provide for the ideal situations but recognize that different countries will have different levels of implementation because of varying degrees of social, economic and cultural practices.

(MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

In Jamaica, our tight fiscal space has us doing segregation within an adult facility for just these four boys at this time, as an interim measure, while striving for the long-term goal of a separate facility for those hard-to-contain juveniles who are charged for serious offences.

Mr. Speaker I spoke earlier to the fact that most of our inmates are short-term. We are introducing a new behavior-modification programme in June of this year, within our correctional institutions, designed specifically for short-stay inmates, in order to ensure that all who pass through the correctional system will be exposed to some amount of rehabilitation before reentering society.

The Department of Correctional Services recently completed the establishment of a data system to facilitate the operation of the Sex Offender Registry. During the first quarter of this fiscal year, a meeting will be held to sensitize the stakeholders, including the Courts, DCS and the JCF, about their roles and responsibilities.

And finally Mr. Speaker, in an effort to reduce the overcrowding in the prison population, the use of parole is being accelerated. We are also addressing the issue of high-risk deportees, and we have increased the capacity of the JCF to monitor these high-risk deportees.

In the medium-term Mr. Speaker we will expand the facilities at Tamarind Farm and Richmond, so that the high number of medium-security inmates at both Tower Street and St. Catherine Adult Correctional Centres, can be moved to corresponding medium-security facilities and reduce overcrowding at these two maximum-security facilities.

We are also embarking on a systematic and ongoing reclassification of inmates, designed to ensure that as far as possible maximum-security facilities are used to hold maximum-security inmates, only.

(Applause)

In the longer term, three to five years, we intend to build a new but smaller than originally anticipated maximum-security facility. Potential sites have been identified and plans are being developed for the construction of a new facility to replace these two older facilities. A full submission will be made to Cabinet during the second quarter of the financial year.

And, before leaving the DCS, Mr. Speaker - and I don't mind spending some time because we usually don't touch - Ministers of National Security don't spend much time on the Department of Correctional Services. I want to touch on a final area and that is to do with the situation of inmates in our correctional facilities who are suffering from severe mental disorders. We are currently addressing this. There is about 260 of these inmates. We are currently addressing it through a collaborative effort with the Ministries of Justice and of Health.

At the end of this process we hope to have most of these inmates placed in more appropriate therapeutic settings. This approach

will be managed through a Release Programme, coordinated by the Community Mental Health Programme of the Ministry of Health.

And now to turn to the third and final step in reversing an epidemic. The long-term success of efforts to reverse any epidemic will ultimately be sustained through changing attitudes and behaviours of the vulnerable populations. So, for example, to combat an epidemic of a sexually-transmitted disease, at-risk populations need to be educated to change their attitudes and behaviours around issues of promiscuity and unprotected sex. Similarly, to sustainably reverse the epidemic of violence, we have to change the attitudes and behaviours around violence-related risks and causal factors.

In Jamaica we have developed a sub-culture of violence and lawlessness that has been reinforced and promoted by segments in our society over decades. Causal factors include, Mr. Speaker, weak family structures. We have single parents; we have children who suffer from paternal deprivation - no father in their lives. We have child neglect and abuse. We unfortunately have had over time some schools that have failed to educate or that haven't adequately been able to deal with children with behavioural problems.

We have had inadequate physical infrastructure and social services in many inner-city as well as other unplanned communities. We have communities that operate under the heel of criminal gangs, and over time have had to endure or tolerate their children being slaughtered as so much collateral damage, to gang warfare.

The connection between elements of both political parties and criminal gangs and dons, historically, is another causal factor. Criminals would support party candidates and were often rewarded with worse, contracts. Hopefully, Mr. Speaker, the worst days of this criminal-gang politics nexus are now behind us...

(Applause)

….but we must acknowledge the history.

Another causal factor is the glorification of criminal behaviour by some of our artistes who use their considerable talents to advocate hatred and violence, to denigrate our women...

(Applause)

….and warp the values of our children...

(Applause)

….and to elevate gun violence.

It is instructive Mr. Speaker that two of our most iconic artistes are now convicted felons, serving lengthy prison sentences in the USA and Jamaica, respectively.

Another causal factor Mr. Speaker is the unfortunate scourge of domestic violence that cause spouses and children to live in fear, and a high number of murders and murder/suicide that have their roots in domestic disputes.

Mr. Speaker - and I know the Prime Minister is very, very sensitive to this one, and that is the sexual predators who continue to prey on our under-aged children, and those family members, neighbours or teachers who turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to these activities.

Mr. Speaker, there is plenty of blame to

go around. Doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results is one definition of madness. It is time to change the norms, to change how we have been operating if we are to make headway in combating this epidemic of violence.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I deliberately was not coming here today to talk a lot.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. BUNTING: The Member from North Central St. Andrew is asking if the temperature in the Chamber is intended to make Members appreciate what being in a prison cell is like.

(Laughter)

I am not sure that was deliberate.

But, Mr. Speaker, I really wasn't coming here today to talk about crime statistics, whether they are marginally up or marginally down. Because that's not really significant when we have been experiencing for a very long time, an epidemic of at least four-fold proportion.

I am not coming here today to blame or point fingers, or to say how things could have been done better. But since the *Old Lady of North Street,* published on her front page today the statistics, I think it is important - they just gave the raw numbers but I think it would have been better journalism and a better service if they had put it in context. Rather than just saying "between January first and May tenth this year, there were 353 murders," they could have said that this is down eight per cent on the same period last year. And in fact, if we go back five years, it is down 44 per cent over that period of time.

(Applause)

Shootings are flat, year-on-year. But again, if you look at the trend over a five-year period, shootings will be down 36 per cent. In fact, serious and violent crimes, 2014 *versus* 2013 are down 11 per cent, and over the five-year period, are down 33 per cent collectively. And, Mr. Speaker, similarly we could look at acquisitory crimes down 14 per cent, year-on-year, and down thirty-plus per cent if we look over a five-year period.

But the truth of the matter, Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, a marginal increase or decrease one way or the other, year-to-year, is really not going to be significant when we have such a huge problem. So, what I want to do today is to point out what we are doing in the area of changing the norms to commend the good work that others are doing, and to invite likeminded individuals and other organizations to join in this crusade.

And when we talk about changing the norms, Mr. Speaker, we have to start at home, and we have to start, more specifically, in the Jamaica Constabulary Force. I want to speak to a number of things that we are doing to change norms; to change the way the police relate to communities.

The first initiative, or the first measure we are working on very, very assiduously, is to minimize the use of force. We are building a police force that must be seen by the society as committed to serving, protecting and reassuring, while maintaining a high level of

professionalism. Measures we have introduced, such as planning operations to minimize the risk of fatal confrontations, reinforcing the use of force policy; broadcasting, even to criminals, that they will not be harmed if they surrender and drop their weapons, implementing protocols to strengthen the independent investigation of police fatal shootings are all designed to produce a police service that is equipped and trained to deliver 21st century policing. Police personnel must operate in communities as peace officers, protecting and reassuring the law-abiding... (Applause) ...interrupting and preventing the transmission of crime and violence, and partnering with communities to rebuild respect for law and order.

(Malfunctioning of microphone)

Mr. Speaker, I am cautiously optimistic that these efforts are starting to bear fruit, and one clear indicator of this is in the reduced incidence of police fatal shootings. The data indicates...

(Malfunctioning of microphone)

(Applause)

….that there has been an approximately 40 per cent reduction in the number of police fatal shooting, year-to-date when compared with the same period last year. Mr. Speaker, this is not an insignificant reduction, and I know that the Commissioner and his team are working very hard to ensure that we, not only maintain that, but we improve on it.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, upon my appointment as Minister, I inherited an approach where curfews were utilized liberally in dozens of communities. Mr. Speaker, this is something that I have gotten complaints from. The Member from Central Westmoreland, I recall, and other MPs have been concerned. Member from Eastern St. Andrew and I had a community meeting where this was raised as a very serious issue. I have been uncomfortable with that approach because firstly, Mr. Speaker, I believe that citizens' rights must only be constrained in exceptional circumstances, and for the shortest possible time. (Applause)

And secondly, from a more pragmatic approach, curfews become ineffective when they are overused as the police cannot enforce it consistently in multiple communities. And when they enforce it occasionally, their behavior is interpreted as being arbitrary and capricious by the communities. So we have changed that approach Mr. Speaker and now curfews are used very sparingly and for the shortest possible time. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, you will recall that the police can only impose curfews with the permission of the Minister.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn now to an area where anti-corruption advocates have been very active and very vocal, and that is the idea of impunity, and that there are so many corrupt people and criminal elements, both in the public and private sectors, who year after year, decade after decade, continue to operate with impunity.

Two units within the JCF, the Anti Corruption Branch and the Major Organized Crime and Anti Corruption Task Force, MOCA, were established specifically to treat

with corruption, both within the force and in the wider society. We continue to detain a significant amount of assets and have redoubled our efforts in the assault on lottery scamming.

The Reports indicate a number of arrests, a number of charges, and a number of convictions of a wide range of persons previously thought to enjoy some levels of immunity in the society; whether they be lawyers, police officers, motor vehicle examiners, doctors, politicians, popular entertainers. The work of these units is indicative of the efforts we are making as an administration to reduce corruption in our country. No longer can any individual or group feel confident that they can operate with impunity by virtue of power, position, or popularity.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn now to the Unite for Change Programme.

Government MEMBERS: Good programme; good programme.

(Applause)

Mr. BUNTING: While we continue to interrupt the transmission of crime through our crime control initiatives, we are placing increased emphasis on crime prevention by addressing dysfunction at the levels of family, community, school, social services and society, recognizing, Mr. Speaker, that crime statistics are the outcomes of failures, or weaknesses, at all these levels. Sustainable reductions in crime and violence require a deliberate and focused strategy which coordinates law enforcement, justice and social development programmes at the national, community and individual levels to address the causal factors and prevent future spread.

We must, Mr. Speaker, first educate our citizens on the root causes of this epidemic of violence. Secondly, we must find a way to ignite their passion, energies and commitment to reverse the epidemic.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. BUNTING: And finally, we must create pathways to help people move from concern about the problem of violence to action against the problem. (Applause) This is what the Unite for Change initiative is about. Unite for Change will facilitate the national coordination of all violence prevention interventions within Government and across all sectors of society in a targeted approach, driven primarily through communities and supported by a national communications campaign.

The strategic objectives of the Unite for Change are sustained reductions in violence and crime, and perhaps almost as important Mr. Speaker, is sustained reduction in the fear of crime and related risk factors. We want a reorientation of our citizens away from a culture of violence and antisocial behavior and attitudes. We want to get enhanced collective efficacy of residence of priority communities, and their increased participation in the co-production of community safety. It is a little bit of citizen security jargon. (Laughs) But essentially, we want communities empowered to participate in planning of their own - planning and implementing programme to improve their own safety.

Critical to these outcomes Mr. Speaker, are increased volunteerism within the wider society to support violence prevention activities, things like increased support and mentorship for at-risk youth, increased private sector NGO/FBO intervention in under-served communities, increased partnerships between the public and private sectors in support of community change. And finally, increased collaboration between ministries, departments, and agencies in support of crime prevention action.

(Applause by Government Members)

The work of Unite for Change is organized in three broad areas: communication, coordination, and measurement. Through targeted public education and engagement Unite for Change will empower concerned citizens to act. The Communications Programme will also encourage pro-social behaviours and attitudes. One component of CSJP III currently being negotiated will be directly aligned with the UFC's Communications Programme and will address culture change through social intervention, including social marketing campaigns that aim to change attitudes that either promote violence or promote retaliation against informers.

In the coordination area, Unite for Change will prioritize and better target use of resources currently available for violence prevention and community safety.

And finally, again with an emphasis on the evidence base, Unite for Change will have a rigorous monitoring and evaluation programme to eliminate overlap of spending to facilitate optimal resource allocation and, where applicable, recommends the redirection of resources to underserved areas.

Mr. Speaker, we have had a tremendous amount of Unite for Change activities over the last few months. We started at the end of the year coming into the beginning of this year with 23 one-day corner league football competitions in various communities across Jamaica. We have negotiated with the World Bank access to a collaboration portal to facilitate communications among individuals and groups interested in working in violence prevention. This should be launched in June this year.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker we have engaged partner ministries, agencies and departments. The Ministry of Education indicated their early support in a Ministry Paper in February, and has since formed a committee to look at behaviour modifications in schools with a view to developing a programmatic response. And that's in partnership with the Ministries of Health, National Security and Youth and Culture.

We have held Unite for Change community meetings in a number of towns across Jamaica. We have partnered with PALS and the JCF Safe Schools Programme to target youth beginning with a Peace Day Concert in Emancipation Park and followed by a tour of 12 schools across the island. The schools were engaged for direct intervention via motivational talks with Grades 8 and 9 students where a Unite for Change School Pledge was introduced and the entire school

engaged in a Unite for Change discussion and lunchtime concert.

Mr. Speaker, we have had peace marches in at least nine communities in East Kingston, in Central Kingston, in West Kingston, in Old Harbour, in Spanish Town, in August Town, in South West St. Andrew. We continue our mass media engagement with billboards, television and radio ads, interviews and special features. Importantly, we have trained 20 communications managers within the public service as Unite for Change spokespersons.

Mr. Speaker, we really intend that there is a place in the Unite for Change Programme for every citizen of goodwill. Members of this Honourable House have a particularly important place in the programme as leaders, as political leaders in the country. You too can unite for change.

Today I present an opportunity for Members to commit to being a part of the change. Each Member of Parliament will be presented a Unite for Change start-up kit with collateral material and an opportunity to test the data version of the Stay Alert smart phone application. (Applause)

Members might recall, Mr. Speaker, that the Stay Alert App will be launched in the first quarter of this fiscal year. It will enable android smart phone users to report crimes or send information to the police by text, voice note, photograph or video and all anonymously. It will also feature alerts from the police, including Ananda Alert as well as information on new laws enacted.

Mr. Speaker, an important feature of this new application is a panic button that will allow users to send a distress signal to Police Control, and it not only sends the distress message but it also, because they have GPS and tracking capabilities, it allows for the police to respond directly to the location. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, this will increase the efficiency of police response particularly in communities that are not formal and may not have street names and street numbers, but Police Control can use the GPS coordinates overlaid on a Google type map and direct the response team exactly to where they need to go.

So Mr. Speaker in conclusion, there are a number of entities for which I have portfolio responsibility such as the Firearms Licensing Authority, the Forensic Lab, or the Passport Immigration and Citizenship Agency, or for which my Ministry has administrative responsibility such as the Jamaica Defence Force. These entities are doing well and their performance will be outlined separately as opportunities arise during the course of the financial year.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Shaw)

Miss HANNA: Why you don't keep quiet?

Mr. SHAW: He would have to unite for change down there.

Mr. BUNTING: I think what you need...

Mr. DALLEY: (Valerie) will take care of you.

Mr. BUNTING: I think what you need to share with the House, as my political

neighbour from North East Manchester, is that we have already united for change, you and I.

Mr. ATKINSON: To change him.

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, the path we are embarking upon is not one that will give a quick fix or earn kudos within an election cycle, but I am convinced that it is the correct one. It is based on the premise that law enforcement activities by themselves do not provide an adequate response to the problem. Sustainable reductions in crime and violence will therefore require a deliberate and focused strategy that articulates various law enforcement, justice and social development programmes at the national, community and individual levels, all addressing the causal factors.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes the task seems overwhelming. When faced with corruption, heinous murders and child abuse, it may seem that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, and we might be tempted to surrender to cynicism and resignation. But earlier this year, Mr. Speaker, I listened to a sermon on the story of Nehemiah, and I have been able to draw parallels as well as inspiration from it. Mr. Speaker, the book of Nehemiah describes the City of Jerusalem that had been destroyed by war, the walls were reduced to rubble and the gates had been burnt, their enemies could do with them as they like. Nehemiah, part of the Jewish diaspora, he was then the cupbearer of the King of Persia, upon hearing of the state of Jerusalem was sad and ashamed.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica too has suffered from a war, a long running war, not from external enemies but from internal conflicts and from predatory criminals. Our figurative wall comprised of decency, healthy values and respect for the law and each other has been reduced to rubble. Many Jamaicans at home and in the diaspora are often saddened and ashamed by the violent and predatory behaviour of some of our fellow citizens.

But, Mr. Speaker, returning to Nehemiah, he returned to Jerusalem and inspired the people to rebuild the wall. Often - and this is very important, often directing them to start with that section of the wall in front of their own house.

Rev. THWAITES: Start with what you have.

Mr. BUNTING: We too can start rebuilding the wall of peace, decency and respect for the rule of law. (Applause) And, Mr. Speaker, we can start within our own area of influence, the wall in front of our house. Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem were characters in the story who ridiculed, threatened and plotted to undermine the efforts at rebuilding the wall. Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem, they had an interest in a vulnerable Jerusalem.

Mr. Speaker, we also have our share of Sanballat, quick to ridicule and undermine the efforts of those trying to build; but Nehemiah and the Jews persisted, Mr. Speaker, the wall and the gates of Jerusalem were rebuilt, (Applause) many exiled Jews returned, the City of Jerusalem regained its pride and prospered.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe that if we can reverse this epidemic of violence, if we can steadfastly rebuild a safe, gentle, respectful

society that Jamaica, too, can prosper. (Applause) Some in the diaspora may even return home, but certainly fewer of our people will have to migrate seeking a better quality of life. (Applause)

(THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, entered and took her seat.)

Finally Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge some who are busy rebuilding. When you have a primary school principal like Mr. Grant at Bellfield Primary in Manchester...

Mr. SAMUDA: In Central Manchester.

Mr. BUNTING: ...in Central Manchester, who can, in four years, move Grade 4 Mastery from 44% to 79% in Mathematics (Applause) and 66% to 92% iin English, while increasing enrollment from 400 to 600 and not suspending or expelling a single child. He is rebuilding the wall in front of his own house. (Applause)

When Principal Corrine Richards transformed Kingston High School from a run-down physical plant with less than 20% of Grade 11 students sitting CSEC Exams to a renovated facility where 100% of final year students now sit exams; she is rebuilding the wall in front of her house. (Applause)

When retired corporate executives like Douglas Orane and Danny Williams dedicate their retirement to giving back to their alma maters they are rebuilding the wall in front of their own house. (Applause)

When the Grace and Staff Foundation adopt inner-city communities providing scholarships, mentorship and homework centres for at-risk children they are rebuilding the wall in front of their own house. (Applause)

When WIHCON not only build houses at Irwin Meadows but also donate a police post there they are building a community. They are rebuilding the wall. (Applause)

When Bishop Rowan Edwards takes on the gang culture in Spanish Town with his 10,000-man march, and when you combine that with SSP Castelle's policing from the heart resulting in dramatic reductions in violence in De La Vega City, Ellerslie Pen, Tawes Meadows, Gravel Heights and Tredegar Park, they are rebuilding the wall in front of their house. (Applause)

When President of the Jamaica Union of the Seventh-day Adventist, Pastor Everett Brown, at a peace march and youth rally in Old Harbour pledges the support of over 3,000 Adventist youth to be Unite for Change agents of hope and change, he is rebuilding the wall. (Applause)

Mr. SHAW: Redman, you *gwine* rebuild the wall down a St. Elizabeth?

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You and Andrew rebuild your wall first. (Laughter)

Mr. BUNTING: When Members of Parliament such as the young Member from East Rural St. Andrew when he can mobilize youth in Bedward Gardens to volunteer their

labour to replace zinc fences with concrete walls at a quarter of the price it would otherwise cost, they are literally rebuilding the wall in front of their own house. (Applause) When I marched two Sundays ago with the Member from Eastern St. Andrew...

Mr. PARCHMENT: Good Member

Mr. BUNTING: ...along with hundreds of residents in August Town for three hours across all the communities with peace advocates like Ken Wilson and Michael Rutherford who have worked for so many years with pastors, with UWI academics, with the MP and with so many others to bring August Town from what was known as a war zone to the point where they have not had a single murder so far this year. They are rebuilding the wall. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica needs more of these home grown Nehemiahs to unite for change, to unite to rebuild our wall of peace and caring so that Jamaica may, under God increase in beauty, fellowship and prosperity.

I thank you Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

(Cross talk/The Speaker gavels)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS
(Recommitted)

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, Members of this Honourable House would be aware of the recent move by the Jamaica Public Service to disconnect electricity to communities where 70 per cent of customers are non-paying and the subsequent public outcry accompanying these actions. In the absence of Minister Paulwell who is away on government business, I convened a meeting with JPS today with a view to resolving the issue. In clear and precise language I indicated to JPS that this practice is unfair and unjust. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBINSON: It is unfair and unjust, because it penalizes legitimate customers simply because they live or work in communities where the majority are non-paying residents. While we acknowledge the dangers and the consequences associated with electricity theft and the drive to rid the country of this scourge, it cannot be, Mr. Speaker, a case where the good has to suffer for the bad.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBINSON: This action by the JPS is not just affecting non-paying customers. It impacts schools, essential services as well as private sector enterprises. In the meeting this morning, I proposed to JPS that they examine alternative measures as the one being pursued is unacceptable.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBINSON: Notwithstanding my call for an immediate cessation of this case, the JPS indicated that they will continue this practice until the end of this week at which time they intend to conduct a review.

A MEMBER: What!

Mr. ROBINSON: As a 20 per cent shareholder in the JPS the Government of Jamaica is determined to pursue all possible options and avenues to ensure that this practice is discontinued.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBINSON: The Government remains committed to continuing the dialogue with JPS to reduce electricity theft and to bring equilibrium to our electricity sector.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, this clearly illustrates the level of paralysis that exists at the level of the political directorate in this regard, because when a company in which we have 20 per cent can simply say we are not going to do anything and we will allow it to continue as originally planned, I think that's a matter that must be taken up at the highest level. If ever there was something that the Prime Minister should take hold of is that.

Opposition MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SAMUDA: As the guardian of that 20 per cent that we own in that company, what I would like to ask the Minister is, when you say positive options what - just make the note for me what do you mean by positive options...

Mr. ROBINSON: Possible actions.

Mr. SAMUDA: ...or possible actions? I really am not sure, and you could illustrate what you really mean, but, Mr. Speaker, it is obvious and we all can sympathize with the state of JPS in terms illegal connections. But it cannot be that you break the law to satisfy a breach. That's going in the wrong direction (Applause) and what is worse is that within each community there are little micro businesses operating - sole proprietorships (Applause) and for eight hours during the day they will not be able to function efficiently, if at all?

Mr. SHAW: Schools too.

Mr. SAMUDA: Now, I don't know but surely they must be looking at their legal options because I think the JPS has exposed itself to possible lawsuits that are going to be horrific, and as far as I am concerned I support everybody who take out a lawsuit against the company for this kind of inconvenience loss. Now, it is not even going to do any good, Mr. Speaker, with respect Minister, because in my opinion if I knew that my light was going to be off from eight to whenever, I would simply do all the work I had to do at night and consume twice the amount that I would consume during the day, so if I *gwine* wash with a electric washer I would use it at night whereas before I wouldn't.

Mr. SHAW: Is an illegal washer *yuh* talking about?

Mr. SAMUDA: No illegal - if they are illegal, right, and you *gwine* to lock it off and what is going to happen is the washer is legal is the people who don't pay that is illegal. So all they do is to shift their hours of use and their pattern of use to satisfy the condition under which they find themselves. So it's a futile effort in my humble opinion. So, Minister, you have to - I would suggest to the Company, Mr. Speaker, and to the Minister that you seek to have convened a meeting of the Company not just for the Government but with the entire representation in Parliament. Let them explain in detail and let us collectively see what it is that we can do

to assist the Company to survive; that's number one.

Number two, they have before the OUR now a request for what I believe they call a community rate that is to be fixed within defined areas. The level of the rate that will be charged is something that is being assessed by the OUR. I would humbly submit Minister that you impose yourself on that process by going to the Company and trying to use your best efforts to get them to consider the lowest possible rate that would make it viable, so that the poor people in poor communities can survive legitimately. (Applause) They are doing these illegal things not because they want to but because they can't help it because they can't afford it. (Applause)

The electricity is too high and that's why publicly, privately and otherwise, we support the efforts to get the rate of electricity down. And that's is, why, Prime Minister you need to act quickly to bring a solution to this challenge that now confronts us with the construction of the 381Megawatt plant, so that we can get on with the job within a reasonable timeframe of getting that plant up and running, and anything below 30 per cent reduction is not going to have any meaningful impact; not going to have any meaningful.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. SAMUDA: So we must pursue the best option, the lowest price and we must insist that that price is on or around the level of the lowest price that was presented to the country more recently. Anything above that would put us into a position where we are now not going to enjoy the kind of reduction that will make a difference, but what is necessary is immediate action. So Prime Minister, we have heard what4s decision was; we're not fully clear on its full implications; we are not quite sure that we understand what is the process going to be like and the timeframe within which we will see action.

(Cross talk)

It is critical, Prime Minister that you use all your influence to make sure that that process is brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker…

Mr. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as the Member of Parliament for a section of a constituency that has been affected by this latest development, it is clear, Mr. Speaker, that present action being carried out by the Jamaica Public Service Company is not a recent one. This has been going on now, Mr. Speaker, for quite a considerable long time where several communities, especially in West Kingston, have been deprived of electricity. While I appreciate Mr. Speaker the fact and will readily admit that there are persons within my constituency that continue to use the service without paying, some of the concerns I have, Mr. Speaker, relates to the operation of the Denham Town Health Facility that had to close its doors on at least three occasions because of lack of electricity. Mr. Speaker, the Member from North Central made the point and I want to say that every effort must be made, Mr. Speaker. There are persons within these areas that are willing to

pay and will pay based on their ability to pay, Mr. Speaker, and some level of recognition should be given to those consumers, Mr. Speaker, who make an attempt to pay.

It is not just the loss of light during the day Mr. Speaker that is a challenge; there are significant portions of the Corporate Area, especially in my constituency that has no streetlights. It is not that these lights are vandalized, Mr. Speaker, but whenever the light goes out the Jamaica Public Service Company refuses to undertake repairs to these streetlights.

I had to write to the Commissioner of Police quite recently, seeking his assistance in having a meeting with the Jamaica Public Service Company to discuss the question of the security, not just of the residents but of members of the Police Force in executing their duties within the area during the nights, Mr. Speaker.

I think this is a national crisis and I can only do as the Member from North Central has done before me, which is to urge the Honourable Prime Minister to intervene, to let us seek a solution to bring some closure.

I have committed myself, Mr. Speaker, to engage members in my constituency, especially in the Denham Town Community to encourage them to regularize their situation and to pay, Mr. Speaker. But, as the situation presently exists, there is a need. And I am really concerned that the Minister has reported to this Honourable House that the Jamaica Public Service Company, despite the Minister's intervention, still continues to withhold service from these communities. I can only view that as a total, total disrespect, not just to the Government but to the entire Jamaican population, when a company can refuse the request of the Government to have sympathy, to have mercy and we have 20% shares in that Company, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's a matter that, while I support the efforts of paying, I am sure, Mr. Speaker that there are better ways that the Jamaica Public Service Company can go about dealing with this matter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. BARTLETT: Sorry....

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, let me assure the Members....

Mr. BARTLETT: Sorry, Member....

Mr. ROBINSON: Oh, Ed!

Mr. BARTLETT: Just, Mr. Speaker, just two quick questions for the Minister. One is that, Minister, the discussion you had this morning with the JPSCo., did you seek to find whether there was any technology that could be engaged to separate those paying customers from the others who are not paying? And whether or not that could be engaged as a matter of urgency, so that the continued practice of lumping everybody together in the whole area that is a problem would not continue.

And secondly, the problem of large communities of non-paying users of not just JPS services but utilities as a whole is not new, and certainly, I believe that there is need for the matter to be dealt with and this may

very well be the test-case that is required. Is the Minister contemplating having a wider discussion with the JPS as a shareholder, as a 20% shareholder as to how we are going to treat, in the future, with communities that are like those that were just dealt with yesterday? Because I know that there are many communities, informal settlements all over the country where problems of this sort are currently a reality. And so are we going to expect that; yesterday it was a section of Kingston, tomorrow is probably a section of St. Catherine, the next day is a section of Montego Bay, the following day is a section of St. Ann. We have to recognize that this is a serious problem in the country and we have to deal with it. So my question Minister is whether or not you have engaged that idea as to have a full discussion as to how this matter of ensuring that those who should pay, and indeed everyone should pay, are made to pay and that the consequences are not bleeding over to affect those who ought not to be affected.

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, let us assure Member of this House that the matter is being treated with the utmost importance. The Most Honourable Prime Minister has already intervened and there will be a meeting with JPS tomorrow morning at her office. (Applause)

The Members have raised questions here which we have discussed with JPS; the issue of looking at whether getting smart meters; the issue of looking at alternatives. Certainly, this morning, Mr. Speaker, we made it clear that we were not satisfied that the JPS have exhausted all other alternatives before coming to this conclusion of this policy. And we are going to continue and we are committed. And the dialogue with JPS around this issue is not something which only started today or recently, it has been an ongoing process.

So we are committed to continue with the dialogue. The Member asked what are the options? Those are being examined now so I can't tell you what the answers are right now, but certainly, as a shareholder, we have rights in that Company, and we do intend to exercise those rights and there are members of the Ministry, the legal team, they are now examining what rights we have as shareholders within the JPS.

So Mr. Speaker I want to assure the House that the matter is being treated with the utmost importance and urgency and we are moving as expeditiously as possible to find a solution to what we consider to be a national crisis.

Thank you.

(Applause by both sides)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, given the loss of time... (Inaudible) ....(No microphone) ....current situation with… the Member of West Rural St. Andrew has postponed his contribution... (Applause) (Inaudible) ....and as such, Mr. Speaker, we don't intend to do any further business today.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House stands adjourned.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: This Honourable House stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at approximately 4:18 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, May 14, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:38 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State

in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern

MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Daryl Vaz

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Mr. JACKSON: Mr. Speaker, on the matter of committees and the report to which I raised yesterday, by chance do you have any update you could convey, sir?

The SPEAKER: Yes I spoke with the Chairman and he had said that he had difficulty getting a date on the calendar. So I instructed the Deputy Clerk to make space and time available one day next week and we should be aware of that by the close of today.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, if I may? This highlights the extent to which the facilities of this Honourable House cause the whole process to be compromised. (Applause) First of all, it's not a question of not wanting a committee meeting to be convened. The fact is there are simply no facilities to cause that to happen. Repeatedly, we have asked and we are told that there are other committees that have taken precedent because they are out of the House dealing with Bills and so on, referred to committee; that's one. Two, there is the strain on the staff complement to deal with that and there is a strain on the other facilities that would attend that process. Mr. Speaker, this House has to come to, and the Government has to come to grips with those shortcomings and do something about it so that we can get the business of the House handled in an efficient manner. Thank you, sir.

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Samuda. What you have said speaks to the long term plan. What you have spoken to a while ago speaks to the long term plan and I'm saying that a date will be made available one day next week to deal with matter.

Mr. SAMUDA: And I wish to record my appreciation for your intervention using your considerable influence to ensure that a meeting be convened next week. Thank you. (Laughter)

(MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we will be continuing with the Sectoral Debate today. First, we'll take a presentation from the Minister of Transport, Works and Housing which will be followed by a contribution from the Member from West Rural St. Andrew.

SECTORAL DEBATE

The SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister Davies.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, thanks to my colleagues. Thanks to you, sir.

I rise to make my contribution to this Sectoral Debate. Mr. Speaker, it is universally recognized that the Ministry which I have the honour to lead, having been asked by the Prime Minister, is a most expansive one. Not only in terms of the central ministry, but also the several specialized agencies and the public entities which fall under the aegis of the Ministry.

I wish to publicly place on record my appreciation to those persons with whom I have worked during this period beginning with my political colleagues: the Minister without Portfolio and the Minister of State

who is totally in charge of the roads. (Applause) Sincere appreciation is also due to the Permanent Secretary and the other officials in my Ministry: the two Chief Technical Directors and the entire staff at all levels. (Applause) A special thank you would go to the staff in my immediate office who have to tolerate my idiosyncrasies and all that and even try to make me sound sensible when I speak publicly. (Applause)

(HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Water, Land Environment and Climate Change, entered and took his seat.)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Dr. DAVIES: I tell you I going easy on you; in case I change my mind.

(Laughter)

I want to pay tribute to the various Board Chairmen and the Board members who have volunteered to take on onerous tasks. Mr. Speaker, in many instances these positions have turned out to be virtually full-time jobs. I can look at few present here in the audience. In a time when so much of the public discourse reflects a sense of doom and gloom, Mr. Speaker, it is personally heartening that there are so many competent persons willing to volunteer their skills and time for national service.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it has become the norm for speakers in the sectoral debate to take few minutes to speak of their constituencies. I will be no different, but I will be different in that I will take the time but I will focus totally on the initiative which we have taken in the constituency over the twenty years that I have had the honour to represent them in the communities therein. So despite the small margin which I'm operating at the polls, I won't be saying anything here about the politics.

(Inaudible comment/Laughter)

Dr. DAVIES: You had a chance, you know. You had a chance.

Mr. Speaker, I take this step not simply to publicly proclaim what we have achieved but more importantly to share with other MPs possible step which they can take to raise educational levels in their own constituencies; I take the opportunity now to say special welcome to my two councillors and the support staff in my constituency office. I salute them because they are as committed as I am to making education the primary thrust of all political activity in South St. Andrew. (Applause) For that reason today, represented in the Gallery, are persons from each level of the educational system in South St. Andrew.

(HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, for the reasons I outlined before I will briefly describe the programmes which are in effect and indicate the successes we have reaped to date and the challenges which remain. As I said at the beginning of my presentation, last December I celebrated twenty years of representing the constituency of South St. Andrew. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. DAVIES: Time has flown. I must confess that at the initial period of being a MP my interventions in the education system were the usual: assistance with back to school expenses and support for the acquisition of basic pieces of equipment. The enormity of the problem which we faced in South St. Andrew - and I dare say in much of inner city Kingston - was brought home to me when I was presented with a Report from the Ministry of Education, which indicated that two-thirds of the students at the primary level in the constituency were quote "at risks". That meant that these students were either fully or functionally illiterate. Immediately after seeing those depressing statistics, I received a letter from a friend, Mrs. Paulette Lattibeaudiere, who was then President of an organization called the Jamaica Association for Children with Learning Disabilities. She and the team at the Association had seen the same data as I had and they requested a meeting with me to discuss steps, which - and I used this term - they claim could address the problem; she and the then Executive Director of the Association, Mrs. Joan Hernandez met with me and after we reviewed the disturbing statistics they claimed that they could fix the problem. They argued that teaching children to read was well-developed technique and once the children learned to read and more important had been taught to appreciate the world opened up through reading all things were possible.

Mr. Speaker, confession is good. I doubted their claims and I didn't know how people learned to read, but I didn't think they could just fix the problem. But the truth was the budget which they presented was small so I figure I had nothing to lose. The rest as they say is history. The first concrete signs that their formula was working, whatever they were doing, came in the results of the Grade 4 Examination followed by the rather spectacular GSAT results two years later.

Mr. Speaker at that time the usual number of GSAT passes to traditional schools each year was about 25, and Minister I have a word for you. The first year following the introduction of the programme there were over 100 such passes obtained by the students from primary schools in the constituency.

And now the word to the Minister, my colleague Minister, Minister, I speak to you and your planning officials. Any attempt to restrict children who take the GSAT from inner city primary schools to attend the high schools in their communities will be - and I am telling you this - strongly opposed by the parents who have sacrificed to support their children in school. They will see this as an

attempt to discriminate against them and their children. I can tell you this and I know this.

Mr. HOLNESS: Zoning.

Dr. DAVIES: Yes, if you embark on zoning the inner city students, the parents are strongly opposed to it, and I am telling you this…

Mr. HOLNESS: Zoning not right.

Dr. DAVIES: Well, I live now and it is when my students are doing it.

(HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, North, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service, entered and took his seat.)

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, I would allow the Leader of the Opposition, and all the theoreticians to work on it. I will tell you - and I know I am speaking for you too; I know I'm speaking for you too - that if you ever say to them, you get 95 and this is where you must go to... I'm just telling you.

Mr. HOLNESS: Not now... not now.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. DAVIES: That first - now, back to my students. My first cohort of students which I spoke about - that 100 - performed exceptionally well in CXC, and subsequently CAPE. Mr. Speaker, of that initial cohort of 100, 40 of them entered tertiary institutions in September 2010. (Applause) These were children who, a few years previously - nine years previously - were either judged as illiterate or functionally illiterate. Today, in the gathering, are two members of that initial group, Strisen Williams who graduated from the UWI with an Upper Second Class Honours in Banking and Finance last year... (Applause) ...and Troy Williams who is completing a Degree in Animal Biology at UWI... (Applause) ...and has been accepted to study dentistry at UTech in August. (Applause) So, these are persons who, 13 years ago, were virtually condemned by the system that they were semi-literate or illiterate.

Mr. VAZ: Well done!

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Smith)

Dr. DAVIES: I may be wrong about them but not about you. That character fits you. Mr. Speaker - well, my - no, no, no, the - I am getting a little lobbying here from a colleague to mention the critical contributions of colleagues. I was about to say a former colleague; I consider him more of a colleague when he was making the contribution, than when he was complaining about his own problems. But, I should put on record - I was about to say a c-word, and not colleague, but the Member from Central Manchester...

A Government MEMBER: Cousin.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. DAVIES: Yes, the Member from Central Manchester used to be a major supporter of the programme.

Mr. Speaker, there is a peculiarity about the results of our intervention in South St. Andrew, and I have asked the academicians to help me. As I speak, there is a special selection panel which I have put in place to select five students for support in pursuing

their tertiary studies. The Members of the panel, first of all - and they always do this - have indicated a challenge in selecting from the students who have been shortlisted. They have five scholarships, but they say because of the high quality of the applicants, they don't know how to cull. But, most interesting, Mr. Speaker, of the 11 students who have been shortlisted, nine are males. We don't know what we are doing but there must be something there. (Applause) This is totally contrary to the national statistics.

Mr. Speaker, following on the successes of the Remedial Reading Programme, some parents of the children who had benefitted approached me about (a), as she said, a problem, although she was expressing gratitude for the improvements for the children. They complained that I had forgotten about adults and that adults also had aspirations. After consultation with Mrs. Hernandez, she developed a programme called ACE, Adult Continuing Education. ACE utilizes the facilities at Charlie Smith High School after their regular classes are completed. And we started operations in 2004.

ACE has provided a second chance for hundreds of adults and the lives of many have been changed once they have been able to, as they call it, acquire their subjects. There are no fees charged for ACE, and teachers are paid a small stipend, financed through the Constituency Development Fund. The latest development with regard to ACE is the opening of a second campus - that's how we talk *'bout* it - the second campus at the Jones Town Primary School. And this is being done in collaboration with the Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning.

Mrs. Maria Jones who is from Jones Town - and I think the Member of Parliament from West Rural may have been around at the same time - he is from Jones Town, his major achievement, to date...

(Laughter)

(DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Mrs. Jones, a former PS in the Ministry of Education and Board Chairman of Jones Town, was the prime mover in getting collaboration between the primary school and the Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning. The use of the Jones Town Primary School facility for adult classes, together with the opening of an Internet cafe - and I must thank my colleague Minister - STEM - in facilitating that - is making the school the focal point for a range of activities in the Jones Town community.

Mr. Speaker, in total 388 students are registered in the Adult Continuing Education Programme. Notwithstanding, the data shared with you concerning the male/female ratio in the applications for tertiary support, now when the national statistics come back, in that the ratio of female to male at Charlie Smith is 210 females to 77 males, virtually three to one. This looks like the University ratio. And apart from just saying these guys are lucky, but in all seriousness, we still haven't found the key to turn on the aspirations of the boys. At Jones

Town Primary, with the JFLL facility, it is 64 females and 36 males. It is better, but we still have that underlying programme.

Mr. Speaker, the final element of educational initiative in South St. Andrew, is called the Basics Initiative. The programme is partly financed by the CHASE Fund, and it links to 28 early childhood institutions, serving students in the communities of South St. Andrew. The objective is to spread best practices amongst the institutions; simultaneously bringing about improvements in the physical facilities, as well as seeking to raise the capabilities of staff, as well as the nutritional levels of the students.

There have been several positive spinoff developments, some of which we did not anticipate when the project was launched. I give three examples. The first is a Child Find Programme, whereby - and I want people to listen to me carefully - we utilized the political organization as my late and great friend would say, the *pulitical* organization, to identify youngsters who should be enrolled in an early childhood institution, but who are not, mainly because their parents - usually their parent - cannot afford either the fees or the lunch money.

Once the students are identified, an enlightened businessman who seeks no publicity - and for my friends across there, he's a strong Labourite... (Laughter) ...has committed to providing funding to ensure that the fees for these youngsters are paid; that they are provided with appropriate uniforms, shoes, and an allowance for food.

(MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central, entered and took his seat.)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. DAVIES: The paradox, Mr. Speaker, is that whilst primary school is free, the basic schools have a fee, and by missing the basic schools, they arrive in Grade 1 not properly prepared, and it is a challenge which is there. And so, we have established the Child Find Programme, and we use the political organization which is by and large homogenous in my constituency... (Applause) ...to find the missing students...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. DAVIES: Totally... democratically. Yes...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. DAVIES: Yes. The second development which holds out hopeful continuing gains after the project funding is completed is the formation of a Principal's Association whereby the principals of the early childhood institutions meet on a regular basis to share best practices, and to assist each other in whatever way possible.

The final development and the one which holds out our greatest hope for sustaining the new thrust, even after the project is over, is a parenting organization which has been formed, and which meets weekly under the guidance of Dr. Beverley McKenzie. (Applause) As a result of the interactions at these workshops, the parents have taken a far greater interest, not only in the welfare of their

own children, but also in the general operation of the institutions which their children attend.

Mr. Speaker, before closing this discussion of the range of educational programmes which are helping to transform the communities in my constituency, let me congratulate the Ministers of Education and Finance and Planning for the innovative changes which have been announced, in terms of the operations of the Students Loan Bureau. (Applause) These changes won't solve all of the problems, but they will go a long way to help to remove one of the major obstacles in our system, and which could be seen as slamming-shut the door of opportunity in the faces of those students from low income households.

Mr. Speaker, those students have done well. They have done all we have asked of them, but often cannot develop to their fullest potential simply because of the fact that their parents have low incomes and cannot assist with the range of expenses associated with tertiary study.

Mr. Speaker, all of us in here as MPs are aware of tuition fees, but one of the problems we face is, having helped during that hurdle, you find that the other fees and the other costs exceed expenses, combined to be even greater than the tuition fee.

However, the major point I wish to make in this regard is to appeal to the Minister and the officials of the Ministry of Education to utilize a resource which because of long established prejudices, have remained unemployed or under employed. That resource is the organizational reach of the political parties; not talking about my party, the organizational reach. I fully appreciate the concerns about political interference in appointments, *et cetera,* but what I am speaking about is to use that organizational reach to assist in disseminating information about education opportunities.

There are many times youngsters in inner city areas - I don't know whether the guidance counsellors have fallen down on the job or not, but they aren't aware of opportunities, in terms of assisting them with their expenses.

It is the resource we have employed in our Child Find Programme, with great success, and I dare say, Mr. Speaker, that neither PATH nor the Ministry of Education itself could have a similar reach to that which we have. For many - nothing about the officials - but for many of them, it is a job. For the political organization, it is critical to know every single adult and know about them. Every single MP can indicate which principals demonstrate drive and initiatives, and which expect that all problems will be resolved by the Ministry.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I am saying to the Minister that we should seek to utilize - and it appears in many other instances of governmental activity, that MPs and elected representatives are the last to be brought into the loop, almost as if - and I could name specific institutions which deals like this - almost as if we are going to pollute the stream. And I am just saying that dealing with this most important aspect of national life, the

educational system, methods must be found to formally incorporate us in that monitoring. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, let me now turn to my substantive areas of my ministerial responsibility, and I start with the Growth Agenda. Last year when I opened this Sectoral Debate, I spoke to the challenges which we were facing as a country. I made reference then to the IMF Agreement and the resulting fiscal constraints within which we are required to operate. Then, as now, it is necessary to reiterate that the passing of IMF Quarterly Tests, important as they are, is not the solution to our problems; they are only a means to an end. The real test is the stimulation of economic growth, coupled with increased employment.

Mr. SHAW: Hear! Hear!

Dr. DAVIES: Yes, we agree on one thing, all right. Mr. Speaker, in my own Ministry, we fully understand that the Macro Economic Policy Reforms being undertaken must be supported by adequate levels of infrastructure services which are a prerequisite for enhancing the economic growth. It has been established worldwide that infrastructure development can contribute to economic growth by:

(a) Reducing the cost of production;
(b) Contributing to the diversification of the economy; and
(c) Raising the economic returns to labour.

In this regard, we have been taking strategic and incremental steps toward the achievement of some key developmental goals which underpin our growth agenda. Among some of the notable achievements were the conceptualization, rapid start-up and successful implementation of JEEP, advancement of the process for securing private investment for the development and operations of the Kingston Container Terminal, as well as the Norman Manley International Airport.

We have secured financing for the Major Infrastructure Development Programme (MIDP). And my friend and colleague, we started it before the end of the fiscal year contrary to your dooms day prediction.

Mr. SAMUDA: I said the calendar year.

Dr. DAVIES: Remember we can go to....

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hansard. See what they say about Dooms Day.

(Laughter)

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, we have also committed time, energy and resources to rehabilitating the public transportation system, beginning in the Kingston Metropolitan Region. (Applause) And I promise you, Mr. Speaker, I have to spend some time on that, because I have to put some things....

Dr. PHILLIPS: In perspective.

Dr. DAVIES: ...in perspective and correct....

Mr. CRAWFORD: Within the realm of...

(Inaudible)

Dr. DAVIES: Yes! Yes!

Mr. Speaker, although there is much work to be done, there is a strong commitment to pursuing the implementation of an integrated transport system and the modernization and optimization of infrastructure and services.

Such developments have a positive impact on the socio-economic indicators while directly impacting the people's lives. To quote the Prime Minister once more, "balancing the books whilst we balance people's lives". (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I would be less than forthright were I not to explicitly acknowledge that for several of the activities falling under the agency of my Ministry, there are questions in the minds of the public about the level of transparency, which characterizes decision-making and service-delivery. That's a euphemistic way about saying that there are questions about some of the operations of the agencies.

In that regard, without fanfare, we have been taking steps to reduce and/or eliminate those practices which give some substance to these suspicions. Some members of the public have started writing to me to describe their experiences with officials. I encourage more persons to do so. I assure you that every case will be investigated and whenever the charges are proved or shown to be credible, appropriate action will be taken. (Applause) We have to deal, Mr. Speaker, with this matter of charges being levied.... (Chuckles) ...which nobody knows about. And I am not going to call any areas, but we all know that in certain areas of operation within our Ministry, there is work to be done.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say something about a task or a set of tasks which - although related to my position as Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, it belongs under the aegis of the Infrastructure Sub-Committee of Cabinet. One of the first initiatives we have taken up, Mr. Speaker, is to simply begin to track the progress of each contract from the day the RFP is issued, the request for proposal to when the contract is presented to us for approval.

When this Administration took over in January 2012, the contracts which were being brought to the Sub-Committee were two years, up to two years after the RFP had been issued. And so, what we have required and it's amazing - we have taken a step, which is costless in terms of additional expenditure. We have simply asked every Ministry or every entity to list from the day you issue the RFP what exactly did you do why it has taken you this time. And some of the responses have been embarrassing. You get a three-week delay between someone receiving a letter and writing to send it on, and that by itself plus the, in a sense, embarrassment of trying to explain to the Committee why these delays took place, we have now... There is one instance, from the Ministry of Agriculture and I can state that one because it is a positive one. In carrying out a housing scheme development, three months from the issuance of the RFP to the presentation of the contract. (Applause) Three months.

And it is also interesting to note that the person who does it in three months wants to get out of the room so he can start the work, while the person who has gone 18 months wants to stay with you to explain why it has taken 18 months.

Mr. CHUCK: Until it happens, I don't believe.

Dr. DAVIES: Well the houses - some have been delivered? The housing have been delivered, it is possible.

Mr. CHUCK: You ask Richard.

Dr. DAVIES: The sugar houses. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have gone further to track the rate of project implementation following Cabinet's approval. This task has been assigned to the PIOJ and already this has produced results in terms of identifying those Ministries and/or agencies which are delinquent. The task given to the PIOJ has been expanded by drawing on the data collected by the Office of the Contractor General about all GOJ projects. I am not criticizing but sometimes I wonder what they are doing with all this data.

(Inaudible comment by an Opposition Member)

Dr. DAVIES: The ultimate objective, and I am coming back to it , is to monitor all GOJ projects from the moment they are planned and the RFP issued through to completion. Because, whilst our initial job was to track from RFP issued to us approving the contract, what we have discovered that even when entities receive the approval from Cabinet months before anything else happens and so we are tracking that.

Mr. Speaker, in seeking to streamline the GOJ's contracting process, we have identified three specific areas on which Central Government and the public entities expend billions of dollars annually on security - private firms providing security, on catering and porterage, mainly from the Ministry of Health and on insurance placement. But in those three critical areas, the rules and procurement are inconsistent and sometimes lacking in transparency.

My colleague, the Minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning will address this matter in greater detail. And I assure you, it will be greater detail in his presentation.

Mr. Speaker, in seeking to broaden the role…

Mr. SHAW: You need to pay the Nurse's salary.

Dr. DAVIES: (Chuckles) You have a special thing about nurses.

Mr. SHAW: I married one.

(Laughter by all)

Dr. DAVIES: I didn't go into any details, and you have a special thing about nurses. But that's the pleasant part, the tape is another part.

(Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, I want to raise another thing. We have also been concerned about the registration process for contractors who wish to bid for GOJ Projects.

It's been a matter of concern to members of the construction sector - and they have formally written to me on that, that firms could be denied registration without specific reasons given nor a specific timeframe within which their cases would be resolved one way or another.

Mr. Speaker, it's little known that there were 84 contractors who were denied registration or re-registration, some dating back to 2009, and their files had been submitted to the Fraud Squad of the JCF for

review to determine whether criminal charges should be pressed, but some dating back to 2009.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Minister's time for speaking has expired.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we ask that the Minister's time be extended sufficient to complete his presentation?

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Minister's time be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

(Applause)

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Thanks to the colleagues.

I was making the point that, we were concerned about the fact that people were denied registration or a re-registration, but they had no idea what's the process they had to go through. So the Members of the Infrastructure Committee were of the view that we needed to be able to have a resolution one way or the other to this system.

Consequently, I convened a meeting involving all the major parties; the Minister of National Security, the Minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning who has primary responsibility for procurement, the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General, as well as the Contractor General, the Chairman of the National Contracts Commission, the Commissioner of Police and all the relevant officials.

After a thorough investigation and the agreement by all parties, I can announce that the Fraud Squad of the JCF has determined that whilst there may have been errors in the registration process, these were, in the view of the investigating officers, could not be elevated to a charge of fraud.

Interestingly, interestingly...

Dr. PHILLIPS: Some (Inaudible)....

Dr. DAVIES: (Chuckles) Interestingly, Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner recommended that a more rigorous education programme be instituted for the applicants. This represents Mr. Speaker, a more sensible and pragmatic approach to policy, rather than attempting to brand individuals as corrupt and not being able to substantiate that claim. And so I have pleasure in indicating to this House and to the 84 contractors that based on the findings of the Fraud Squad, they all will be invited to reapply for registration or re-registration by the National Contracts Committee. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, given the number of departments and public bodies falling within my Ministry, it would be simply impossible to review the work of each. And those who are not covered today, I apologize. It's not an attempt to devalue the contribution of an entity....

Mr. PICKERSGILL: The Minister of State will deal with that.

Dr. DAVIES: Right. And so the Minister without portfolio with primary responsibility for Housing will be making a separate and perhaps lengthier presentation. And my Minister of State, who will also be making a presentation, focusing on the enormous amount of work, which brings about wonderment and amazement from the Opposition, which he has been able to carry

out on the road network, the bridge and drainage systems. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, let me just briefly review where we are with the various privatization issues. Starting with the Kingston Container Terminal and I know my colleague has particular interest. This has long been regarded as a prime asset of the GOJ, contributing significantly to the country's GDP and job creation, especially at the high-end. Efforts to secure the privatization of the Terminal was commenced in the latter part of the 2012/2013 fiscal year with the engagement or the appointment of an Enterprise Team and these efforts advanced significantly in the last fiscal year.

April 2013 witnessed the top 22 Global Terminal Operators along with three entities, other entities. They expressed an interest in being involved in the process and they were invited to submit bids for a long-term concession to finance, expand, operate, maintain and transfer the KCT.

Mr. SHAW: And dredge the harbour?

Dr. DAVIES: Five bidders expressed an interest in the privatization of the KCT. And subsequent to assessing the bids, three entities were prequalified and they were recommended to proceed to the next stage. These three entities were: Ports of Singapore, Dubai Ports, Terminal Link Consortium, then consisted of CMA, CGM and China Merchant Holdings International.

The bidding stage of the KCT transaction commenced on January 16, 2014. This saw the issuance of the Confidential Information memorandum and the Request for Proposals to the three prequalified bidders. The draft Concession Agreement was subsequently issued on February 14, 2014.

As part of their due diligence in preparing for the completion and submission of bids, site visits by the three bidders were facilitated in February and March. The date for submission of bids has been revised from May 22 to July 3, 2014. And this was at the request of one of the short-listed companies. We expect, Mr. Speaker, by August to September, the provisional preferred bidder should be selected, followed by contract award and signing in another two to three months.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to state whilst the Administration is committed to the privatization process, I want to make something abundantly clear, and I have indicated this in our meetings with the IMF - there will be no fire sale either of the KCT or any other asset. (Applause) We are not going to be offloading an asset such as the KCT simply to satisfy any demand, there will be no fire sale.

As regards the Norman Manley Airport, the privatization of this airport remains a priority. An important reason is that there is need for capital works in the physical plan as well as to put NMIA in a position to meet the requirements of its licence. The Development Bank of Jamaica, as the Secretariat and the IFC, International Financial Corporation, as the financial advisers, has been pursuing the privatization of the airport. Mr. Speaker, if all goes according to plan the airport will be in

private management by mid-year 2015.

The Jamaica Railway Corporation - Mr. Speaker, let me indicate that this is a complex matter. It's a complex matter because of the demand for travel, passenger travel by rail is down. There are problems with the bridge across the Sandy Gully. There are problems with squatting on the extensive real estate holdings of the JRC, and so there is an enterprise team and they have been in discussions with two companies that had submitted expressions of interest. The companies are Herzog Contracting Corporation and Railmark Holdings Limited.

Mr. Speaker, against that background, these two companies were offered the opportunity to submit a detailed proposal for the privatization of the JRC. Both companies met the deadline of March 31, 2014. Subsequently, we have been informed of the interest of a third firm and it was asked to provide evidence of its capability. The GOJ will be meeting with the three firms, the two which have already submitted their business plans as well as the third firm to outline the GOJ's objectives for the railway.

Simultaneously, the GOJ is also in the process of conducting pre-market due diligence for sections of the railway that are deemed commercially viable. If you look in Spanish Town, in Kingston itself, in May Pen, the railway is the owner of significant real estate. And so in order to be prepared we are simultaneously pursuing the privatization of the company as one and at the same time we are looking at the possibilities if the only rational response is to break up the assets.

Now Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the - I said there was no fire sale, but in terms of the KCT there will be no transfer of the freehold property rights of the KCT (Applause) and similarly with the Norman Manley Airport, the property, the location will continue to be in the ownership of the Government of Jamaica. (Applause)

Dredging is going to be part of the negotiations, but the companies have been asked to submit either a plan to take that in which will clearly affect the fees which we would negotiate for.

Mr. SHAW: Part of the divestment plan?

Dr. DAVIES: Yes, but they will be asked to submit, either they will take it or not, because there are varying assessments of the cost. One company I know feels that the ability to attract the post-panamax is going to take some time, so they feel you don't need to expend that now when it won't be needed until you have actually booked additional. It will be part of the negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, let me go to major projects. Let me start with the North-South link of the Highway 2000, and I won't make my usual comment which was that the Opposition had gone quite far but then got cold feet, I won't make that usual comment.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: I think you should.

Dr. DAVIES: You think I should?

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Lest they forget.

Dr. DAVIES: But this development is fully funded by external sources.

Mr. SHAW: ...finance.

Dr. DAVIES: But I have said it over and over again that you did but then you got cold feet.

Mr. SHAW: I never.

Dr. DAVIES: Okay, who got cold feet?

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Andrew!

Dr. DAVIES: But there is considerable government interest through NROCC.

Mr. Speaker, this is a project to which I have given personal attention, not only because of the magnitude of the investment, over US$600 Million; I don't think people have fully grasped it. I can't recall when last there was an investment of US$600 Million in three years; it's a significant, (Applause) it's not really been given the attention.

I will announce again that Section II of this toll road will be completed in July of this year and will be open to the public in August by the Most Honourable Prime Minister. (Applause) The completion of this Section, Linstead to Moneague will eliminate the delays that all of us have become accustomed to in traversing Mount Rosser.

Mr. SHAW: You want to toll it?

Dr. DAVIES: But you can't collect the toll though, you know.

Mr. Speaker, work is progressing apace on Section I of the highway, Ferry to Linstead and Section III, Moneague to Ocho Rios which will end - will meet the North Coast Highway just west of Dunn's River. The target date of completion for those two sections is 2016, and I don't know why the PM insists on it, 2016. (Applause) She has told me non-negotiable, 2016. We are going to complete the other two sections of the highway, but we won't open them at the same time, can't have two big functions.

But Mr. Speaker, and I have said this over and over again and I want local entrepreneurs to hear me. The benefits of the toll road when completed will far exceed the provision to commuters of a modern highway thus reducing travel time. That is important, but that's not the real point. The potential benefits in terms of economic activity line the exploitation of the lands along the highway for a range of development. (Applause) The investors in the highway with China Harbour have clearly indicated - already indicated that construction on the toll road, important as it is, is not an end in itself, their plans involved development of commercial, housing, tourism, assets in sections of the country which are now inaccessible and will remain inaccessible. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, however I need to stress that we need local entrepreneurs to commit themselves to the long-term investments. (Applause)

I have made a presentation to a major pension fund manager that herein is a glorious opportunity for long-term investment by Jamaican entrepreneur. Mr. Speaker, it would be ironic indeed if a foreign firm demonstrates greater faith in the long-term future of our country. Remember this is a 50-year concession than our own local entrepreneurs. They see things in terms of using the road as the basis for development. I am appealing to our local entrepreneurs to come with ideas.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, let me say something about the Major Infrastructure Development Programme, because it affects all of us here. It should be expenditure over three years of US$352 Million. There is a loan from China EX-IM Board for US$300 Million and a GOJ counterpart fund of US$52 Million. And in terms of the major projects, corridors identified for improvement under the programme include the Mandela Highway, Hagley Park Road and Marcus Garvey Drive. (Applause) We have looked at this, Mr. Speaker, and we have divided the $352 Million as follows: US$50 Million will go to JEEP. Because as 1 have said before and I will say again, it's oft the case that you have these major investments, major roadways and people in the communities do not feel a sense of being involved or that they are benefitting from these major investments. So there is US$50 Million which will be allocated to JEEP.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: It should be more.

Dr. DAVIES: There is US$82 Million reserved for local contractors/but the reality is that it will be $50 Million plus $82 Million, so there is US$132 Million which will be allocated to local contractors - but I am going to come back to that division - and then $220 Million will be for China Harbour for the major projects which will be implemented. And if you ask why, we only have obtained the concessionary financing on condition that the majority of the funds would go to them.

Dr. PHILLIPS: So you are going to spend the same amount on Hagley Park Road like the Christiana bypass?

Dr. DAVIES: To tell you the truth I was thinking of Colley Smith Drive.

Mr. SHAW: However...

Mr. Daryl VAZ: How many for major projects?

Dr. DAVIES: The major projects to be implemented by CHEC. They can subcontract, it is $220 Million.

Dr. BAUGH: Go that again.

Dr. DAVIES: The agreement calls for $220 Million which will be allocated to the projects to the major contractor, but the major contractor as they have done other times, can sub-contract, but that is their discretion. There will be US$82 Million for what we had hoped would have been Grade 1 and possible 2, US$82 Million and there was US$50 Million for JEEP but I am going to come back to the JEEP situation.

The JEEP component of the programme was launched on March 18, 2014 and the commencement order was issued on March 24, 2014 and several colleagues participated in that.

Mr. Speaker, we concentrated on small projects, and we in writing designed the programme, spoke to the fact that this US$50 Million should be spent by contractors in Grades 3 and 4 and all Members of Parliament were asked to submit projects in the first instance, but also to indicate the recommended contractors. Mr. Speaker, we sought to make special provisions for Grades 3 and 4, including having checked established outside

of the formal arrangement a special imprest account to facilitate prompt payment to the small contractors; that one has been a problem.

(Applause)

However, the attempt to give preference to small contractors has met with mixed reactions. Several MPs, and they are on both sides of the House, have requested that this restriction be waived because they do not have reliable small contractors, et cetera. So I must confess that at the beginning what we had hoped to have been spreading the work even amongst the smallest, but several of my colleagues have said, I hear you but I want a reliable contractor, so I want to use a one or two. And we will certainly have to accede to the wishes. We don't want to impose a contractor in whom you have no faith.

But Mr. Speaker, I don't want to dwell on the matter, but I urge Members, briefly, to reflect on the contrast between how MIDP is structured, and going to be unveiled. You know everything you want to know. It's no mystery or secret. There has been in the recent past counter example...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Opposition Member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Full transparency.

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, I honestly cannot recall a programme implemented by any administration which has had a greater buy-in from Members of Parliament.

Mr. Daryl VAZ: You want to buy more.

Dr. DAVIES: The truth is I see more Opposition MPs in the yard of the NWA and the Ministry than they turn up at Belmont Road. I was thinking of hosting the Standing Committee...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Daryl Vaz)

Dr. DAVIES: Don't let me start calling names, you know. I see more Opposition MPs. I see a few of mine, too, but you outnumbered them in there.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Andrew come up there?

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, he has been most delinquent in submitting his projects, he has been most delinquent. I have had notes saying that the Leader of the Opposition reminded that he has to submit a project. And I have several projects submitted for your constituency, you know, and I have to respond to them.

Mr. Speaker, since inception to March 31, 2014, a total of 44,255 persons have been employed under JEEP.

(Applause)

Mr. SHAW: Employed again.

Dr. DAVIES: You know I knew you would say so.

Today, in today's paper, there is the name of a prominent company - and give praise for it - which indicated how many people have been employed in a similar way. But you wouldn't say so 'bout the company but you say so 'bout JEEP, eh. It's amazing. There is a standard way of calculating employment, and we can't change it, that's how it is, whether it's government or private sector. But I knew you would say so.

Mr. SHAW: But you have temporary or permanent...

Dr. DAVIES: Okay. But I just want to know that.

Mr. Speaker, a total of One point Six Billion ($1.6B) will be spent on infrastructure projects, and of this amount, Six Hundred and Thirty Million ($630M) has already been allocated although a few MPs are still delinquent. Target employment is 20,000 persons.

But Mr. Speaker, JEEP has stretched beyond what we indicated. There is the construction of 1,200 wooden units island wide in housing. And I accept we recognize that there have been some challenges, and we have worked with Food for the Poor, and we think we have a resolution. And what you say is absolutely true, but he speaks for you, too.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is another project, the "Recycle Now" project, where...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. D. SMITH: Out of the twenty you have gone before?

Dr. DAVIES: We can't build on squatted premises.

Mr. D. SMITH: We are overwhelmed with that.

Dr. DAVIES: And we can't build on gully bank and we can't build on squatted premises.

So Mr. Speaker, the Recycle Now project - it was launched on February 12 through a public/private partnership. It will hopefully lead to the reclamation of 35 per cent of PET bottles, and this represents, as we all know, a major scourge on the land.

When fully operational, the project is going to create a minimum of 300 jobs while generating valuable foreign exchange. The PET bottles will be chopped up and exported. The GoJ will provide Fifty Million ($50M) per year over the life of the three-year project and the private sector will also contribute. We have got on board every major user of PET bottles, and it is a significant breakthrough for all of us. (Applause) And I encourage you once you kick off, get your schools involved, because we are going to try to build in rewards.

Mr. SHAW: You are going islandwide?

Dr. DAVIES: It is island wide, it is island wide.

Mr. Speaker, let me say something about the Portland Bight Economic Zone and Transshipment Port. Although not a GoJ project, for a host of reasons, I have to speak to this matter.

Over the past year much has been said and written about this proposed investment by China Harbour Engineering Company. I have deliberately refrained from joining in the debate, much of which is sometimes based on erroneous claims, and there have been several questionable assertions. Consequently, whenever I speak I simply give the facts.

Mr. Speaker, the project, if finally approved for implementation - and we have deliberately phrased it that way - will be a major transport and logistics hub, serving both regional and international markets.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. DAVIES: CHEC is currently working on a detailed technical and feasibility study, whilst the Port Authority is evaluating the proposed conditionalities. I signed an initial non-binding Framework Agreement with CHEC, on March 21, 2014.

CHEC, on completion of their feasibility studies, will submit Terms of Reference to NEPA, for their approval in order to facilitate the commencement of the EIA, the Environmental Impact Assessment. This phase, inclusive of final designs, is expected to take approximately nine months.

Mr. Speaker, the Administration does not pretend that it is ambivalent about the project. We want to implement it. Both sides are seriously engaged in carrying out the necessary preliminary work for implementation.

For example Mr. Speaker, just this Monday, the Prime Minister, my colleague Ministers in my Ministry and I, met with Dr. Hailiang Song, the Chairman and President of ZPMC, at OPM. And Dr. Song is not just a bureaucrat, he is very strong in the companion organization which goes alongside government, the Party, in China.

(Inaudible comment from an Opposition Member)

Dr. DAVIES: No, of ZPMC...

Mr. Speaker, by way of background, ZPMC manufactures 70 per cent of the world's demand for cranes used at transshipment ports. Those monstrosities you see, they make 70 per cent of those cranes.

ZPMC is seriously examining the establishment of a manufacturing facility in the economic zone, which if established, will fabricate these cranes for the Caribbean and Latin American markets. They are looking on this. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, even whilst the preliminary work proceeds, all regulatory processes will be duly followed. And there has been no attempt to bypass any step. Only when these approvals are in place will a final decision be taken on the project by Cabinet. And full respect is being paid to the authority of NEPA. But there are some persons, if NEPA rules with them, then NEPA is a good institution, but if NEPA doesn't rule in their favour, then it shows the total - the fact that the Government controls. And we are going through the process.

The work which we are doing on both sides will be nine months, including the EIA. They are now doing their own drilling, *et cetera*, to determine what's needed in drilling.

I would like to point out Mr. Speaker - and it's very important - that the activities being contemplated in the Portland Bight region are to be seen as complementary to the activities being pursued in the privatization of the KCT. The KCT is a going operation and they have that advantage. The other will have to be built from scratch, so there is a construction period.

Mr. Speaker, let me say something about the housing scheme which has been proposed for Bernard Lodge, under the aegis of the HAJ. This scheme was announced and units were advertised for sale by the Housing Agency of Jamaica. The proposed scheme was designed as a public/private sector partnership, where equity by the partners would be the provision of land by HAJ, and the funding for the development by the private partner.

Potential homeowners demonstrated effective demand by entering into sale

agreements and making deposits. Unfortunately, to date, the private sector partners have not demonstrated the capability of living up to their commitment and their obligation, that of securing financing for the development.

Be that as it may, I wish to assure the House - Members of this House, but perhaps more important, the depositors who see themselves as future homeowners, that despite the deviation from the originally-announced timetable, I want the following points to be noted:

1. the Government of Jamaica will honour the obligations in accordance with the sales agreement - the Government of Jamaica, through the HAJ; (Applause) the development will be executed;
2. for those citizens who made deposits, your deposits are safe, secure in a commercial bank, and can be accounted for at any time. (Applause)
3. any depositor who wishes a full refund, this will be accommodated immediately. (Applause)
4. and we admit to deficiency here - communication will be developed with depositors, including but not limited to meetings, as necessary, in order to inform you of what's happening.

In the meantime, I have taken action, including meetings with representatives of the new HAJ Board, the management, and other government agencies, to finalize the programme to move ahead. In particular, I should indicate that discussions have been held with the National Housing Trust - the Chairman of which is present in the Chamber - to explore possibilities for collaboration on this and on other projects.

Mr. Speaker, based on the professional and technical advice presented to me, I have instructed that a more precise and in-depth cost analysis be conducted on what is required for the supporting infrastructure, especially sewage disposal and storm drainage, to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of installation.

Mr. Speaker, the promised date of delivery of the units will be delayed in order to complete the required due diligence. Notwithstanding, deadlines have been set for supply of the requisite information to avoid further delays.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say something - and I hear the question posed all the time - if all these investments come, are they simply to employ foreigners?

One of the points I want to - and I want to speak about a special institution, the Caribbean Maritime Institute. (Applause) And when we speak about training for the Growth Agenda, this institution is going to play a critical role, in terms of producing qualified professionals to support the Growth Agenda.

The CMI Board, chaired by Mrs. Joan Ernandez, who is a creative educator, totally committed to the view that everyone, both young and not so young, can be trained to be a productive citizen.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. DAVIES: The Executive Director, Dr. Fritz Pinnock, shares an identical viewpoint.

The first point I wish to make is that working in collaboration with my colleague Minister, the Minister of Education - work is far advanced to upgrade the CMI to being a specialized university, catering to maritime, intermodal transportation and logistics...

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Multimodal.

Dr. DAVIES: ...offering global certification, which meet and surpass international standards.

(Applause)

The student population of CMI is projected to grow to over 4,000 in the next two years. (Applause) One of the reasons we are confident about the growth of the CMI - and listen carefully to this - is that this tertiary institution has the highest placement record of any tertiary institution in Jamaica. An average of 93 per cent of graduates obtain high-paying jobs immediately after graduation, 93 per cent. (Applause)

I wish to highlight some of the initiatives in which the CMI is engaged. There is a FESTO Lab - FESTO is brand name. CMI is partnering with FESTO Didactic to establish a centre certified by the world's leading company in the field of industrial automation and - then a new word for me - mechatronics.

The funding for this project, Two Million US (US$2M) is being supported by a grant from the PetroCaribé Fund. (Applause) The FESTO Centre will produce certified technicians needed for the maintenance and operation of ports, not just to meet the demand in Jamaica, but also regional and international demand.

Then there is the Siemens PLM Platform. The CMI is currently in the process of acquiring software from Siemens valued at US Fifty Million (US$50M). And I checked this figure, and Dr. Pinnock assures me that that figure is correct. This software will enable CMI to change the way students learn, facilitating learning through simulated training - simulators, right - which is computer-aided practical learning. That's an explanation for you, okay.

The CMI will be an assimilation centre of the Americas equipped with over 50 different simulators to satisfy the needs of lands, maritime and air sectors. (Applause) The CMI now boast a modern simulator centre and there is nobody who can beg as well as Fritz, Pinnock, a modern simulator centre equipped with nine new state-of-the-art simulators valued in excess of US$1.5 Million funded by the Universal Service Fund. CMI is also involved in researching and implementing alternate energy solutions. The institute entered into a partnership with JPS for the retrofitting of streetlights along the Palisadoes Road and in the Port Royal Community. And I don't think there is - it is just a mere coincidence that these areas are represented by the Minister of Energy, but good work is being done.

The existing Cobra streetlights have been retrofitted; using the CMI's own patented circuit board. This retrofitting exercise will reduce energy costs by up to 70 per cent for

each streetlight. The institution is in the process of establishing and I find this most exciting 125 KW solar system which will generate 15 per cent of the energy the institution consumes.

A new ABM, NCB is installing a new ABM which will be the first hybrid wind and solar powered ABM in the Caribbean. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, why I stress this is that this institution is demonstrating the possibility of producing world-class professionals even whilst surviving on limited resources. There is a pre-college programme being implemented with institutions such as Kingston High School.

In addition, next year, using space which the Ministry has provided to them in the Air Jamaica building they will be training an additional 2,000 students drawn from institutions such as Sam Sharpe Teachers' College and Kingston High School. (Applause)

Special credit goes to my PS who incidentally is the former PS in Education and has worked assiduously in ensuring that this space be made available to CMI. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I have come to say something about bringing order to the public transportation system. It is no secret that I am not satisfied with the state of the public transportation system which mainly serves lower income households as well as students, elderly and the physically challenged. And I am not speaking only about public transportation in the Kingston Metropolitan Region but island-wide. I am not satisfied with this thing and no well thinking Jamaican could be satisfied. Critical to the process of modernization and greater discipline is the work of the Transport Authority, one of the agencies in my Ministry.

The Transport Authority is presently implementing a range of initiatives aimed at improving the service provided to the commuters of the country and they are not focusing only on the private franchise holders, but their regulatory authority also extends to the JUTC.

In March of this year the Transport Authority introduced the jot information system, which has greatly improved the efficiency in identifying PPV drivers and conductors. Similarly, a Road Management Information System will facilitate the automation of road inspection and will be implemented during this financial year. It will enable road inspectors to access real time information on public passenger vehicles and operators on the road using a tablet computer. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the authority is acting to link the application for road licences to the drivers; it is now a requirement for owners/operators of public passenger vehicles to register their drivers with the Transport Authority. One of the discoveries we made in the changeover in the JUTC system is that several operators couldn't tell you who their drivers were. What they are just interested in is cash at the end of the day and anybody who is driving the vehicles. All drivers of public passenger

vehicles are required by law to be the holder of a Transport Authority badge; so we do background checks to determine whether you should be given.

Mr. Speaker, both the Ministry and the Transport Authority are aware of widespread allegations about the operations of officials employed to that Authority. Whilst all these allegations may not be correct, I wish to assure my colleagues as well as members of the public that we take them seriously and provided that specific details are given, they will be investigated and the necessary actions taken.

I will return to this issue Mr. Speaker because too often we know that a problem exists and we duck it and pretend that it is, you know, just rumors, we know, we know that there is a problem. Therefore, I urge that persons involved in the sector should send in to the Ministry and to me in particular, specific on incidence and corruption about which they have knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, I now go into an in-depth discussion of a most important aspect of the public transportation system, the JUTC.

Mr. Speaker, the JUTC was awarded an exclusive licence to provide public transportation services in the KMTR. It is you or it is Horace?

Dr. PHILLIPS: But remember where it coming from you know, what they did in the '80s.

Dr. DAVIES: I know, I am going easy so far, I am going easy so far and I am going easy with you too. But for a variety of reasons private operators were granted licences to assist in serving the commuters. One reason was that the JUTC did not have enough seats to cover the number of commuters.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to go into a long statement on JUTC's financial problems but suffice it to say for the entire period of its existence, it has faced financial challenges caused in part from the fact that successive Governments and Ministers of Finance, including myself, have been reluctant to allow for fares to be set at a rate which would allow the entity to break-even, but even that is a theatrically proposition because you don't know - if you try to set the rate for break-even what the impact will be on ridership.

Mr. Speaker there is obviously no requirement that such a fare be allowed. However, if an administration is unable to provide a subsidy to meet the deficit between operating costs and revenue collected, the company will inevitably face challenges in meeting its basic obligations. This is not theory, Mr. Speaker, these are facts, right.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mathematics, well it is Maths.

Dr. DAVIES: Okay. Alright I will accept.

Mr. Speaker, there is an interesting point I want to make about the JUTC. If you look at the company, it is almost totally dependent on foreign exchange, the buses the tires, the fuel, are all imported, at present the spare parts. The JUTC is the single largest consumer of motor vehicle fuel averaging purchases and that word is used deliberately **purchases,** of $38 Million per week equal to 10 per cent of the country's total consumption of such fuel. Put simply Mr. Speaker, compensation of

employees is really the only significant expenditure of the JUTC which is totally denominated in Jamaican dollars, only compensation of employees everything else.

Mr. SHAW: You tell him to hold the dollar because of that, you tell him to hold the dollar?

Dr DAVIES: I am coming to you. Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that because of the inadequacy of the support provided to the JUTC, there have been times in the recent past when the size of the fleet on the roads daily has been reduced to 250. In fact, sometimes that 250 size fleet on the road was only made possible by cannibalizing other buses which themselves were off the road because of the unavailability of spare parts.

Mr. SHAW: Really so how you a kill mi fi all of the new buses?

Dr. DAVIES: I am coming to you. It was partly in recognition of that fact of this desperate situation and I am gathering that in 2011 the previous Administration ordered an additional 230 buses from the Belgium Company which builds the buses. This Administration inherited this order, but we discovered that there had been no Cabinet approval of the loan to purchase the buses. Although we had serious concern, this Administration formally ratified the order of the buses in 2012 and although I can't show you this, this Cabinet submission signed on the 28th of March 2012, sought approval of a loan agreement to finance the purchase of...

Ms. HANNA: 2011?

A MEMBER: 2012.

Dr. DAVIES: I don't make that breed of mistake. 2012, the approval of a loan agreement to finance the purchase of 230 buses for the public transportation sector...

A MEMBER: When was that?

Dr. DAVIES: 2012.

Mr. SHAW: So you don't need the buses anymore. Take them back.

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, since he is shouting, I will repeat only for the record that whilst the loan agreement to purchase these buses were signed by the then Minister of Finance who may be here or not here in...

A MEMBER: When was that?

Dr. DAVIES: …In 2011, there was no approval by Cabinet of the loan until March 2012. Such that situation, Mr. Speaker, such a situation could have provided ample opportunity to score political points, but after consultation with the Prime Minister and with Cabinet colleagues it was determined that I would simply formalize the matter by taking the submission to Cabinet and set things right.

Mr. SHAW: And you needed the buses?

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker - But you pushing your luck now you know.

When this Administration speaks of finding ways to unify the country...

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Dr. DAVIES: I told you before I started speaking that I am cool with you today.

...we mean it, we made no attempt to exploit the possible political gains about the order and no rational person could have questioned the need for the additional units. We took that approach...

Mr. SHAW: Say it again, no rational person...

Dr. DAVIES: Question. The need, but every rational person questioned why the Minister of Finance did not get their approval from Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, and I am being honest here; we took that approach because Jamaica not some two-bit banana republic that one....

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Dr. DAVIES: And I said something was done, we know it, why it was done. We are not a two-bit banana republic where we go and say internationally that the Minister of Finance signed it but we are un-signing it and that is why nothing was made of it.

After obtaining Cabinet's belated approval, I travelled to Belgium from where the buses are imported to negotiate with the suppliers to reduce the number of buses and to reallocate funds from the loans to purchase solely needed spare parts. We are buying 230 buses, we had another whole set probably another 200 laid up, and so we reduce the number of buses and sought instead to purchase more spare parts.

Now Mr. Speaker, with the - over the past two years with the phased arrival of the buses, the number of roadworthy buses in the fleet has been increased from an average....

(*Sotto voce* comments of Mr. Warmington)

Dr. DAVIES: ...from an average of 240 daily to the present figure of just under 500 and this will be increased to 565, not only because of the addition of the new buses, but because now that we have spare parts we have repaired and more importantly, there is a more exciting development taking place where JUTC and HEART/NTA are going to combine to establish a facility along Lyndhurst Road to meet two objectives, one to provide youngsters in training, in repairing, major repairs and secondly to save the JUTC. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is against the background of an expanded fleet that the Ministry, together with the Board and management of the JUTC, sought to reassess the number of prime JUTC routes which had been awarded to private sub-franchise holders. A careful analysis was carried out which indicated that a return to the provision of an acceptable level of service would require the JUTC to re-examine the number of such franchise licences which had been issued. There would also be the need for sustained programmed interaction with the holders of the sub-franchises/outlining the process through which the JUTC would reclaim routes which had been granted to private operators before particularly, on the most profitable routes.

Mr. Speaker, I've deliberately spent so much time to present the background, because I wish to place formally on record a total rejection...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes.

Dr. DAVIES: ...of the unfair...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes.

Dr. DAVIES: ...untrue and the misleading assertion made by Leader of Opposition in his contribution to the Budget Debate.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: What!

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, I quote from the Leader of Opposition's presentation. I would hope that I am not the only reader - page 9 in his discussion of the JUTC's dealings with the sub-franchise holders - in speaking of programme to reclaim some of more profitable routes the Leader of the Opposition stated, and here the quote:

> *"It is presented in the most arrogant take it or leave it manner. There is no consideration that people's livelihood are at stake. This move is about the Government subjecting bus operators to pain and punishment to meet its IMF target.*"

Mr. Speaker, I'll not only refute this wild and malicious charge, but I'll now read into the record nine separate meetings which were held with representatives of the private sub-franchise group including three involving my Minister without Portfolio and myself and one involving the Most Honourable Prime Minister.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: What!

Mr. CHARLES: An agreement...

(Cross talk)

Dr. DAVIES: Yes, at which Mr. Speaker, January 15, 2014, JUTC held meet a meeting with the representatives of JATOO and JUTC; January 23, 2014, JUTC held meetings with NATO; January 28, there is a meeting between the Ministry, JUTC, the transport operators and JATOO. I was in that meeting and so was my Minister without Portfolio. February 14, 2014, your man tell me *sey* him *dun wid* you, because you *caan* help him. (Laughter) Your man. You know him. Him tell me *sey* you *caan* help him.

(Inaudible comment by Opposition Member)

Dr. DAVIES: You *dun wid* him too? Okay.

Opposition MEMBER: Yeah man, *dun wid* him from *bout* two years ago.

Dr. DAVIES: From two years ago, okay.

Mr. SHAW: Is a mutual *dun wid* him. (Laughter)

Dr. DAVIES: February 14, there was this meeting; February 21, there's a meeting with the Most Honourable Prime Minister - I was involved in the meeting, representatives of JUTC, the Transport Authority, JATOO, the police and the bus operators. February 25, we met with one Bruce Miller, a bus operator, of Western Transit. March 4, there is the seminar held by JUTC with all sub-franchise bus operators where we went through in detail what would be taken.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Wow!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Consultation.

(Cross talk)

Dr. DAVIES: March 29, there was follow up meeting of sub-franchise seminar with all sub-franchise bus operators; seminar down - one was at the [Jamaica] Conference Centre and one was at the Elletson Road Police Station.

A Government MEMBER: What!

Dr. DAVIES: Yes.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

And then April 17 meeting with myself, with the Minister without Portfolio and with Minister Hylton and his bus operators from his

constituency. Mr. Speaker, in those meetings not only were the private operators allowed to state their case but I draw specific attention to two of those meetings: in the meeting held in the Ministry's conference room on January 28 after listening to their concerns, I extended unilaterally - overruled the Board and extended the deadline for applications. And furthermore, when they complained about the routes which had not been, I authorized at the JUTC to accept applications for routes which had not been advertised. I not only said to them the deadline must change, but I said even when the route was not advertised make your case and then we will deliberate.

Mr. ATKINSON: So we consulted, consulted, consulted.

Dr. DAVIES: And overruling my Board, and overruling my Board. In the follow-up meeting, Mr. Speaker, I again overruled the Board and management instructing that an additional thirty licences for the most lucrative routes should be issued to sub-franchise.

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: And then dem call that arrogant and....

Dr. DAVIES: Yes.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Oh shame! Shame! Shame!

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, it was this blatant misrepresentation of the facts which caused me to halt the Leader of Opposition trying to stop him from further

Dr. PHILLIPS: Misleading the House and the whole country.

Dr. DAVIES: This is unsolicited advice, but if you plan to rewrite history you can't do it less than three months after it happen. You wait a couple years before you start rewriting history. It leaves you to being exposed as being either misinformed or....

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Or mischievous.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Reckless, reckless.

Dr. DAVIES: No, no, I'm not going down there.

Mr. Speaker, every Member of this House would confirm not only me, but the rest of the two Ministers in my Ministry are acceptable to all my colleagues. If the Leader of the Opposition wished to have information on the process all he needed to do is to pick up the phone. There is no reason for him to be misinformed on this. Apart from misleading the House the Leader of the Opposition advanced to Parliament two solutions to the problem.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Babsie or Sharon?

Dr. DAVIES: Yuh eavesdropping? (Laughter)

He proposed, one, reducing the number of standing passenger on the JUTC bus thus using more buses to carry the same number of passengers; and two, awarding off-peak hours exclusively to sub-franchise operators whilst restricting JUTC operation to peak hours. To put it mildly and euphemistically, these proposals could not have benefited from any serious reflections and/or analysis.

A MEMBER: What!

Dr. DAVIES: They could not have benefited. Mr. Speaker, first, given the precarious financial situation of the JUTC every month and my Permanent Secretary moving from account to another trying to find

some money to pay another outstanding bill; and given that precarious situation, what logic is there in the proposal to eliminate standing passengers? In other words, incurring the same operational cost whilst cutting your revenues in half by having sitting passengers only? If the Leader of Opposition had asked, I would have told him that one of the major challenges faced by the JUTC is its low load factor. It only has a load factor of 52 per cent. Is he saying that a lower load factor is desirable? Is he willing to indicate where the additional funding would come from?

In terms of handing over the off-peak hours exclusively to private franchise holders, again, if the Leader of Opposition had run this wild idea by me, I would just tell him, calm down. (Laughter) I would have told him - and we have the number and we can give it to you - the monthly collection in those off-peak hours is $132 Million or approximately $1.6 Billion per year: So his solution is to give that up so you have the bus system and you say give away the $1.6 Billion. How would we compensate for this loss of revenue? And if you doubt me ask your colleague. Him know that all the numbers that I am telling you here and I know he faced the same challenge he faced.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Pickersgill)

Dr. DAVIES: You don't think he consulted - I not getting into that.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Charles)

Dr. DAVIES: We deserve better. Your system didn't have any subsidy, but any fowl coop - every fowl coop with four wheels was on the road licenced by you. (Laughter/applause) We deserve better than this from the Leader of Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, whilst it's a nice touch relating anecdotes of a ride on bus, operating a public transportation system is not based on gimmickry and anecdotes. There are some hard facts for us to analyze. Mr. Speaker, I've spent so much time seeking to layout this problem, because although the existence of an efficient transportation system is a prerequisite for any major urban centre, there is a more important fact which applies to this matter. This controversy has led to violence. I would even venture to say terrorist responses to which the JUTC buses and their workers have been subjected. It's not a joke business. A rock thrown in the windshield of a moving bus cannot be regarded as an idle prank. It could lead to the driver and worse yet a fatal accident leading to further loss of life. I noted with dismay that whilst the Leader of the Opposition found time to speak at length on the matter of the JUTC's reclaiming of its route, there was not one word, not one word of condemnation of the terrorist actions.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Shame!

Dr. DAVIES: There was not one word of solidarity with the workers of the entity who have been placed under unnecessary stress and whose lives have been endangered by the behaviour of criminals.

Government MEMBERS: Shame! Shame!

Mr. BUCHANAN: Insensitive!

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, these workers and the Minister, the PS and I visited them at four in the morning, 3 mornings....

(Cross talk)

No, four, because they move out at 4:15 and apart from my admiration for them generally, I was amazed the people could knock off fry dumpling and….

(Inaudible comment by member)

Dr. DAVIES: No, I reached there on time. I reached there on time. I was leaving the office at 3 okay, good. Yes, there is not one word of solidarity with these workers and I think they deserved that.

Mr. Speaker, in his closing presentation, the Minister of Finance and the planning spoke to the need for the country to reach the point where we can determine that certain issues need not be the subject of unnecessary divisions, partisan or otherwise. Public transportation must be one such issue deserving of a coalition of well meaning who seek for a better treatment of our commuters and who oppose violence and anarchy. (Applause) On behalf of the Ministry and, indeed, on behalf the administration we commit to bring order and organization to the public transportation system not just in the KMR, but island wide. (Applause) Our people deserve no less.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I have a section called doing more with less. My Ministry and the associated public entities have accepted the reality that the GOJ will be short of cash, but the euphemism is limited fiscal space for the next several years. Consequently, we are constantly seeking ways to use each dollar more efficiently, more bang for the buck. I will now briefly describe two initiatives which without spending an extra dollar can reap real benefits.

First is concrete roads. During the Standing Finance Committee - I can't remember which - I think it may have been the Opposition Spokesman on Finance asked whether any effort was being made to explore alternative road construction methods and I answered in the affirmative. I recently invited two firms: one local and another multinational, which have an interest in this area of activity to make a technical presentation to the political directorate and officials in the Ministry and the NWA. Following the presentation, there was a frank exchange of views, some technical leaving me behind, but my colleague was on top of all the technical specs and I wish to among announce a major policy undertaking by the Ministry. For future road construction activities the bid documents prepared by NWA will invite responses which speak only to the technical specifications required for the structure of the roads to be built or repaired. In other words, responses can either be for constructing using asphalt or concrete.

Mr. Speaker, this represents a significant breakthrough, in terms of exploiting the most cost-effective road construction methodology - and I'll keep colleagues and the public fully informed on the matter. So, those who have long been advocating concrete, we give the assurance that the request for proposal will speak only to the specification. You can determine the material you wish to use.

I next turn to another issue for my colleague, the Minister of Local Government who is from the right part of the right parish.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: St. Catherine?

Dr. DAVIES: He didn't have the opportunity to, but it would have rubbed off him from his siblings who attended Glenmuir, but he is a good man.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of responsibility for various sections of Jamaica's road network has long generated a great deal of discussion. It is well-known that even whilst the officials of the NWA complain about inadequate resources to address the roads which are specifically identified as their responsibility, the Ministry of Local Government and the local authorities express even stronger views, that they don't have enough money.

Mr. Speaker, those views have become more passionate as they feel that they were duped in giving up some of their resources; the resources specifically allocated to them, and they were duped to give that up to support the servicing of the JDIP loan in return for the promise of a more equitable allocation of resources.

Mr. McKENZIE: Cheap argument... cheap argument...

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, I don't intend to enter that debate, but speaking as a private citizen, I can indicate that the average taxpayer is not too concerned about which arm of Government has legal responsibility for the maintenance of the roads which he or she uses.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Absolutely!

Dr. DAVIES: I know because I am bombarded by requests from individuals; individual parish councillors who probably write me more than they write you - and local authorities, to repair roads which did not fall under the aegis of the NWA. Yesterday, I showed the Minister without Portfolio, a list from his parish, indicating a whole list of roads. Nonetheless, since taking office, I have recognized that these calls for repairs to non-NWA roads cannot be ignored.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's right.

Dr. DAVIES: In fact, during fiscal years 2012/2013 and 2013/2014, my Ministry, through the NWA expended close to $6 Billion on the roads belong to local authorities. (Applause)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Did you consider South West St. Catherine in that?

Dr. DAVIES: I am in contact with your councillors.

(Applause) (Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. WARMINGTON: (Inaudible) ...you haven't repaired a single one.

Mr. McKENZIE: Cheap argument...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Speaker gavels)

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Local Government and I have agreed that as a matter of urgency we will begin working on this matter. (Applause) It is a low-hanging fruit. It is not necessarily going to bring us more resources, but with greater coordination in assigning priority to the roads, for which local authorities are responsible, in terms of their need for repairs. (Applause)

This is not simply about my Ministry passing over additional resources to the local authorities, but the greater coordination in designing responses as well as the technical specification and procurement policies, have indicated that we can't have two different sets of procurement policies, it must be the same standards. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. DAVIES: There can be no doubt that the result would be a more efficient use of what is without doubt, inadequate resources, but the cooperation will make the difference.

Mr. Speaker, in concluding, as I indicated at the beginning, the Ministry which I have the honour of heading is responsible for numerous entities, and consequently, indirectly responsible for the quality of services they provide. Given the time limitations, several institutions, each of which deserves full coverage, have not received such in this presentation. I have focused on the operations of the JUTC, the Transport Authority and the Caribbean Maritime Institute.

In terms of projects, I have dealt, not only with those financed by Government but, in addition, those financed by private entrepreneurs. This is consistent with the policy of seeking private sector investors for sectors which were formally the exclusive responsibility of GOJ.

One of the critical points I hope is coming through, Mr. Speaker, we are not just talking, talking, talking; we are working, working, working. (Applause)

The total value of these privately funded projects is significant, choosing the partners with whom Government will do business, or to whom Government awards contracts, provides my Ministry, both the political directorate and the officials, with great influence in determining how significant sums are expended. In executing these tasks, integrity, transparency, and equity are non-negotiable requirements. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker that is why we have routed the Major Development Infrastructure Project through the Budget, such that every one of us can have a comment on the projects which are selected. (Applause)

Mrs. NIETA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. DAVIES: This is foreign territory. I didn't even get the chance to indicate that under JDIP, not even one single road got fixed in South St. Andrew.

A MEMBER: You too?

Dr. DAVIES: Not even one chance to do that, or even to commend, Opposition Spokesman on Finance on getting about 90 per cent of the money in Manchester. I didn't get a chance to do that.

A MEMBER: For the bridge or the road?

Opposition MEMBER: You are too generous.

Dr. DAVIES: (Laughs) I just born *suh.* Mr. Speaker...

MEMBERS: The bridge... the road...

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, let me indicate that the Administration has zero tolerance for the misuse of any of the powers which are accorded both the political directorate, and the workers, and the civil servants. Let me indicate zero tolerance.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that all of us are here to serve only for a while. Consequently, apart from being held to the highest levels of accountability, it is also incumbent upon us to be accessible to the general public, to the community and special interest groups, but also no less important to political representatives.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. DAVIES: I would dare to say that there is not one of my colleagues in this House who could truthfully claim discrimination in the allocation of resources.

(Applause/*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. DAVIES: I discriminate for Delroy against you but - you agree with that?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: That's slow.

Miss GRANGE: They can't call somebody else.

Mr. McKENZIE: Shut *yuh* mouth - zip, zip, zip...

Dr. DAVIES: We all have aspirations. Mr. Speaker... you thought I was joking but our parking lot has more Labourites in there - MPs that is - than Comrades so I can tell you that they know that justice will be done, not to mention the phone call *dem.* And the truth is, Mr. Speaker, there is ample evidence of that. I am most proud of the way - and I repeat it...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Miss Grange)

Dr. DAVIES: Okay, okay, I see.

Dr. PHILLIPS: That's what he is saying; that's exactly what he is saying. She gets it.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Speaker gavels)

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, I speak about - I made reference to it before, and again. The way in which the post Sandy housing reconstruction was carried out is a model which should be endorsed. The Member from West Portland, the Member from East Portland, the Member from East St. Thomas and the Member from West St. Thomas, I receive not one -1 forgot St. Mary...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Where the Member from West St. Thomas?

Dr. GUY: Not true, not true - mostly in Portland.

Dr. DAVIES: No, no, no...

A MEMBER: St. Catherine was neglected.

Dr. DAVIES: Yes, because we can't just make up a storm, you know. (Laughter) There has to be an actual... you can't just create a storm, you know.

Mr. SAMUDA: All the money was spent in St. Mary.

Dr. BAUGH: St. Catherine was neglected.

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, we are not suggesting that we have been perfect, and we welcome comments, suggestions and criticisms, particularly in instances where there is the claim that equity has not prevailed. I want to hear it. Our commitment is that all who work in the central ministry, and the agencies and entities, will seek to assiduously carry out the nation's business in the manner which will lead to us earning and retaining the trust of the public. That's a commitment, and I thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips...

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker...

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, I hear the House Leader asked for recommittal.

The SPEAKER: But you don't know what the Minister has arisen for.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker - there is not a thing to re-commit. It is on Public Business; it's on Public Business.

The SPEAKER: Yes, Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill shortly entitled: The Banking Services Act, 2014, be withdrawn from the Table of the House.

The issue, Mr. Speaker, is that in the copy which was printed, there were some discrepancies which had been noted between the long version, which had been laid, that is to say, the cyclostyle version and the printed version, and in fact, there were some typographical and other errors that were noted. It was felt that the easiest way of facilitating the work of the Select Committee, and of the House, was to withdraw the Bill that is before the House and to present this.

So, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill shortly entitled: The Banking Services Act, be withdrawn from the Table of the House.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be withdrawn from the Table of the House.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I now ask for recommittal of the Item Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Mr. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, you know, I am amazed at what you tolerate in this House, in relation to set procedures. It really is unbecoming, sir, based on your experience as a Speaker in this House.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You a *dis* up the Speaker.

Mr. D. SMITH: I am speaking facts which you will never understand.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. L. Buchanan)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith...

Mr. D. SMITH: Yes, sir...

The SPEAKER: What is the point you are trying to raise?

Mr. D. SMITH: The point I made, sir, is that the Member who spoke earlier about the order which was incorrect, is accurate, and you should have recognized that.

The SPEAKER: Based on what, sir? What are you basing that accuracy on?

Mr. D. SMITH: Based on the fact that what the Member brought to your attention was not under Public Business, and you know that.

Mr. WARMINGTON: It cannot be under Public Business.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, this is at Public Business.

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, no, no!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hold on, we received the advice from the Clerk as to the procedure to be followed. What the procedure is, first we indicate our intention to withdraw...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Continue, Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: There is no need for any contention. The House Leader, acting... pro tem, has now asked for Notices of Motions to be recommitted.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. PHILLIPS: At that point... he has now asked... she just did it.

The SPEAKER: But you're not following...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. D. Smith)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, no, the first.

The SPEAKER: No, you are not following what is happening, man. We are withdrawing one Bill-

Dr. PHILLIPS: Let me try and break it down again, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: ...and introducing a new one.

Dr. PHILLIPS: The first thing is to withdraw one; that's what has been done. The second thing is to seek leave of the House to present a new Bill, which is now being sought by leave of the House, notice of which has been sought - has been offered by the House Leader.

When we get the Leave of the House, we will give notice and seek to present the Bill. It is not the other way around. You first have to withdraw, so that you can't have two Bills with the same thing in the House.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, there is no such item on the Order Paper; there is no such item on the Order Paper.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: The appropriate officer to advise, I would say, is the Clerk.

The SPEAKER: Thank you for the explanation, Minister.

The question is for the recommittal of Item Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY
(Recommitted)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move to introduce and have read a first time the Bill shortly entitled: "The Banking Services Act, 2014". I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today, I will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to introduce the Bill, have it read a first and a second time and refer to a Special Select Committee for consideration and report.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable the Minister to introduce the Bill?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker I now move for suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to introduce and have read a first time, a Bill shortly entitled: "The Banking Services Act, 2014", to give notice of second reading, have it read a second time and referred to a Special Select Committee for consideration and report.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Standing Orders be suspended to enable the

Minister to introduce the Bill and have it read a first time, and a second time and referred to a Special Select Committee?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Bill shortly entitled:

"The Banking Services Act, 2014",

read a first time.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker I beg to give notice of second reading of the Bill and ask that it be read a second time?

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be read a second time?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Bill entitled:

"AN ACT to Repeal the Banking Act and the Financial Institutions Act, to amend the Bank of Jamaica Act and the Building Societies Act, to make new provision with regard to the supervision of banks, financial holding companies and other financial institutions and for connected matters",

read a second time.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I now move:

Be it Resolved that notwithstanding Standing Orders 76.1, this Honourable House of Representatives appoint a Special Select Committee comprising the following Members:

Dr. Hon. Peter Phillips, MP
Hon. Peter Bunting, MP
Hon. Julian Robinson, MP
Mr. Fitz Jackson, MP
Mr. Mikael Phillips, MP
Mr. AndréHylton, MP
Mr. Audley Shaw, CD, MP
Mr. Karl Samuda, CD, MP
Mr. Gregory Mair, MP,

to sit jointly with a similar Committee to be appointed by the Senate to consider and report on a Bill shortly entitled: "The Banking Services Act, 2014".

Put to the House and agreed to.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Orders 77/8, I further seek your permission and that of the House for the Committee to meet outside of the precincts of the Parliament.

The SPEAKER: Permission granted.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we now have the contribution from the Member from West Rural St. Andrew.

SECTORAL DEBATE

The SPEAKER: Mr. Buchanan. (Applause)

Mr. P. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise in a gentle retort to my colleague Member from South St. Andrew in affirming that the journey has been long, but this boy from Jones Town, a great community, that spanned five Rhodes Scholars in a decade feel a special sense of pride in rising to participate in the Budget Debate today. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, once more there is the need to report on developments in West Rural St. Andrew. This time, Mr. Speaker, I must go further. It behooves all Members of this Honourable House to draw on our experiences to make some recommendations towards the growth agenda, which is the central imperative of our time. Later on, Mr. Speaker, I'll address some specific issues in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, the journey that we began in December 2011 continues. Permit me a moment to acknowledge the work, worth and commitment of my Councillors who have been my fellow travellers on the journey. First from the Brandon Hill Division, Let me acknowledge the support of the long-serving Councillor Garrick Walker (Applause) in Red Hills, in Red Hills, Otis Hamilton. (Applause) My caretakers, the well organized Abby Hill in Stony Hill and the hardworking Homer Cameron in Lawrence Tavern. (Applause) Mr. Cameron's work along with Councillor Walker in designing a Low-Cost Medical Treatment using a Discount Card for the people of West Rural St. Andrew must be commended. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I also particularly want to salute the CDF staff at OPM, ably led by Moveta Munroe and Pauline Scott-Blair, and at the SDC Office the tireless unsung labour of Miss Lois Levy and Jean Johnson. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, my purpose here is not simply to list all our accomplishments that would keep us here until night.

(Inaudible comment by Opposition Member)

(Laughter)

Mr. P. BUCHANAN: (Chuckles) Mr. Speaker, I'm going to do some, however, it would be an injustice to the Minister of Transport and Works if I did not.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that despite the woeful state of the constituency infrastructure we inherited, we find great satisfaction in the many improvements we have made thus far. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, West Rural St. Andrew is now looking much better. Whether you go to Stony Hill, Lawrence Tavern, Red Hills or even Rock Hall, they are all cleaner, no potholes growing with the people's holdings appreciating.

Mr. Speaker, to place our work in perspective, let me simply confirm that in the 24 months that have elapsed, we have completed a highway, a new Basic School, a new Primary School, a new clinic at practical completion, two bridges, a new water supply to one of our divisions and an IT Training Programme with fully equip labs in five locations. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. P. BUCHANAN: There can be few parallels with such advances in so short a period.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You are a true Buchanan.

Mr. P. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, let me provide more details on the progress we have made.

The Eric Malcolm Basic School at Cushnie Road completed. The new Red Hills Primary School completed within schedule and budget, and officially opened in February by the Minister of Education. (Applause) The fully repaired Mount Ogle Breakaway; the fully repaired Allman Hill Breakaway; the fully repaired Oberlin Breakaway, the Stony Hill Water Supply.

Phase I of the George Mason Drive where finally after several decades, we have brought some dignity to the memory of an outstanding Mayor. (Applause) And completion of one of the bridges at George Mason Drive.

The Halls Green Bridge for the first time in a generation, we have removed the danger to residents, allow for vehicular traffic over the Wag Water River, add value to the homes of the people, show care and uplift their wellbeing. The work of Councillor Walker is to be commended here and also the George Mason Drive.

Mr. Speaker, we have achieved practical completion at the new Golden Spring Clinic in less than four months. In fact, when the Honourable Minister of Health visited, he expressed not only his complete satisfaction at the workmanship, but was astonished at the speed of the work; the workers deserve our total commendation. (Applause) And the roads, we often forget how terrible these roads have been.

The Stony Hill to Castleton Highway now completely upgraded. The Tom's River to Florence Hill Roadway; the Belmont Roadway; upgrading of the Temple Hall to Border Roadway. After a very long time the JUTC buses have returned to Border.

For the first time in a lifetime the construction of paved roads in the forgotten communities of Mount Zion and Burkewood in Red Hills. At Boon Hall Housing Scheme we were able to work with the leadership of the Housing Trust to find the necessary funding to pave the roads in that project after a generation of neglect.

Mr. Speaker, last but not least. We have shown commitment to our education programme by delivering approximately $14 Million in scholarships and book grants over the two-year period.

Mr. Speaker, last year I announced our intention to launch The Vision 2050 Information Technology Training Programme with its motto being; "From Beginners to Programmers", or "From Level I to Level 3". Today, I proudly report that on the 29th of March, 2014, the Honourable Minister of Science, Technology and Mining officially launched the programme.

Mr. Speaker, the classes have begun at five locations, most of which are over-subscribed. Some of our partners and stakeholders who assisted us in this noble enterprise are here with us today.

Firstly, we are indebted to Minister Paulwell, Minister of State, Julian Robinson and the UAF Team, Universal Access Fund Team for the funding of 130 computers, plus networking and two years of Internet free. (Applause)

Secondly Mr. Speaker I want to not only thank Minister Thwaites in particular, his HEART/NTA Team that gave technical support and is now providing training and certification.

The team led by Mr. Denworth Finnikin, Senior Director, Workforce Development and Employment; Mr. Aston Spencer, Acting Director/Principal and Miss Bernadette Robinson, Deputy Manager at the HEART Eastern Institute Stony Hill campus. They are here with us; their support has been invaluable and their partnership underpins the authenticity of the Vision 2050 Programme. We cannot thank them enough. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, apart from giving a second chance or a third chance to residents from age

16 to age 60, Vision 2050, a community-based NGO, has allowed people to dream again, political rivals to sit together and learn again as they once did when they were at school; when they were at primary school long before political hatred and acrimony. Mr. Speaker, it has been a beautiful experience to witness the unfolding of this new political culture that speaks to civility, tolerance, respect and the primacy of performance over blind adherence to political partisanship. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker on the 30th of this month we intend to complete the model with the programmers, with the launch of the programmers section of Vision 2050. Mr. Speaker, we have assembled 25 of the brightest and best potential and trained programmers from West Rural St. Andrew; they will begin a period of training, research and ultimately new software production. This is the crowning intent of Vision 2050. We hope and pray that our Prime Minister will be able to grace us with her presence at so important an event.

Mr. Speaker, before ending this section on West Rural St. Andrew, I would want to highlight some of the plans for the coming year. We will begin our JEEP programme this month with road work at Arthur Leon Drive; Mount Prospect; Belvedere, Cypress Hall where work has already begun and the community where my mother grow in, in King Weston. (Applause) At the same time, we will be upgrading a number other roads in the four divisions.

We will continue to work with NWC to solve our chronic water problem. The JPSCo and the REP to bring light to areas that for too long had been subjected to darkness and lack of power. I would specifically ask the Minister and his team to urgently repair the Stony Hill to Finger Post section of Parks Road which threatens to cut off access to a number of communities as the bus route, especially between Stony Hill and Guava Gap is virtually impassable. I would also urge that in this financial year we finally bring some relief to the longsuffering people of Mount Horeb by fixing the bypass road at the breakaway.

Minister, I would also like to make another appeal for the dedicated taxpayers of Stony Hill and Red Hills in upgrading some of the roads in their respective communities.

Mr. Speaker, I specifically want to thank Minister Ferguson on behalf of the people for his care and understanding in signing-off on the upgrade of our health centres at Lawrence Tavern, Rock Hall, Red Hills and Padmore. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues do not begrudge West Rural St. Andrew its good fortune in gaining the attention of the Minister, as they might not be aware that the Minister has deep roots up there. His mother is from the great community of Brandon Hill.

Mr. SAMUDA: Labourite community.

Mr. P. BUCHANAN: Well we need to understand the link.

Mr. Speaker, a further work - too often we fail to recognize feats of extraordinary vision and courage by our people. It is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that while our Minister of Health is being cited and honoured by the international community, here at home is work has been largely unsung and resisted by influential

stakeholders. We in West Rural St. Andrew want to place on record our full acknowledgement of his outstanding contribution to Jamaica, (Applause) not only as the Minister responsible for Health, but prior to that he served the people tirelessly as a dental surgeon for St. Thomas, his chosen profession for which he has been appointed a Fellow of the International College of Dentistry. (Applause) And in January of this year becoming...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Opposition Member)

Mr. P. BUCHANAN: He has given me already and I haven't even announced the Stony Hill Clinic....

Mr. DALLEY: You getting the Stony Hill Hospital.

Mr. P. BUCHANAN: I am leaving that one for next year.

... in January of this year in also becoming one of only three practising dentists in the world to receive the Presidential Award from the 85-year-old organization of 12,000 members. Well done, Dr. Ferguson. (Applause)

His laudable, single-minded dedication to Jamaica not only taking it to a smoke-free destination but also the health and wellness hub of the Caribbean have also earned him the Commander of Distinction by a grateful nation. Thank you, sir. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, let me turn to the Growth Agenda. Mr. Speaker, my theme in making these suggestions is that we must grow smart. Mr. Speaker, let me also underline my complete admiration for the relentless drive of the Minister of Finance in preparing the platform for growth. Mr. Speaker, from my vantage point in these benches I have watched him carefully, and as a man of sports I have likened him to a great centre forward N.A.D Tapping of Munro Melbourne and Jamaica; similarly stout a frame as Tapping, I have noted how he weaves and turns on his way to delivering a decisive shot to achieve his economic goals, eliciting the grudging admiration of even his fiercest opposition. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Minister Phillips has indeed earned the full support of all well thinking Jamaicans.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognize the sterling work of Minister Dalley in garnering critical wage restraint agreements from the public sector without which the economic platform for growth would not now be in place. (Applause) He has been a valid partner to the Minister of Finance and a long servant of this nation.

Then, Mr. Speaker, the captain of the team, our Prime Minister, (Applause) playing in the sweeper's role, enduring the pain of a nation; she has orchestrated our successful economic performance thus far with quiet determination, flawless timing and unerring coordination of our forces and critical stakeholders. (Applause) This, Mr. Speaker, is the reminiscence of her earlier state in 2006/2007 when single-digit inflation was recorded, low unemployment, increased NIR, tolerable debt-to-GDP ratio and solid GDP growth, long may she serve her nation. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, let me also affirm that in all of classical and neo-liberal economics there is no governmental edict or mandate that can institute a viable rate of exchange where a nation as the kind of debt and balance of payment problems that Jamaica has.

Mr. Speaker, we know that this will require a process, a number of deliberate steps, a series of actions to create non-inflationary growth to be competitive earned significant foreign exchange and thereby achieved a competitive rate. This is the platform that our Prime Minister and Minister of Finance are preparing. In this they have scored critical goals with the passing of IMF tests and the further fundamentals that are now in place. (Applause) To help them on their way we must apply our minds to facilitate smart growth models in our respective constituencies. Indeed, without adequate foreign exchange flows a fixed rate would lead to a return to the black market and shortages and civil unrest.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to my growth-smart suggestions. Let me start by thanking our Minister of Transport and Works for the wonderful job he has done in West Rural St. Andrew.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mrs. Neita-Headley)

Mr. P. BUCHANAN: Let me also say that great Ministers of Finance or good Ministers of Finance make even greater Ministers of Transport and Works. (Applause) In fact, they might even make greater football presidents. And, Minister, despite the loss on Monday, you know, you brought Arnett Gardens from the cellar, mid-way the season to be fighting for final spot. You have done well, Minister, and there is nothing... (Applause) Having said all that, I would request that the Ministry in concert with the Ministry of Agriculture endeavour to fix our roads to coffee country, and Mount Horeb, Mount Airy, Mount James and other areas of Brandon Hill and the adjoining areas of East Rural St. Andrew.

Mr. Speaker, following on the Government's wise decision to privatize its holdings; coffee prices are up again, now approaching $7,000 per box of coffee, per box of beans. Our people have gone back to resuscitate their farms after regrettable decades of downturn in the sector. But there are no roads in or out. This is a sector that we must prioritize as our Blue Mountain Coffee is a solid foreign exchange earner, a critical component of the growth agenda, Mr. Speaker, we must grow smart. Let us not forget also, Mr. Speaker, that there is urgent need to assist our farmers to modernize their farming practices and, even more critically to support their aspirations towards value-added productions such as pulping, washing, drying of beans as an initial step in this direction.

Mr. Speaker, this is very important as we must never again make the mistake of achieving growth without equity. The little farmer cannot survive by producing beans alone regardless of price. I have listened with great interest to the debates in this House about growth but I have not heard often enough about growth with equity. History is our guide here, Mr. Speaker, as between 1967

and 1972 there was cumulative GDP growth of 38.8%, perhaps the largest in our history, but total unemployment stood at thirty-three and a third per cent classifying the period as one of growth without equity.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that that was the time when The Ethiopians sang their famous tune "Everything Crash". Inevitably, the socioeconomic anomalies compounded by widening inequalities between the haves and the have-nots named by a former leader from that side, the Most Honourable Edward Seaga, led to Michael Manley's massive victory in 1972 after all that growth, we must never grow without equity. (Applause) We dare not leave the ordinary Jamaican behind to wallow in poverty. We must grow smart. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I turn again to West Rural St. Andrew for guidance on my growth-smart campaign. Mr. Speaker, as I have said previously, the central plank of our agenda must lie in ICT. The Vision 2050 initiative shows the way. We will grow smart when we begin to ensure that most of our intellectual property flows are owned by local-based companies.

Mr. Speaker, we have won international competitions in IT, but we will continue to lose the battle for growth at home if we do not protect our earnings from the knowledge-based sector advances we have made. It is only national pride we gamer by acknowledging, for example, that a number of our people are leaders in some form of IT innovation abroad, but we are the flows. Even now, daily at our airports some of our best minds, best programmers are going abroad. The flows from their creations will be lost to us.

Let us look at India, how they moved from a Third World status to a First-World economic power. They sent some of their best talents abroad to study at MIT, they kept some back at home, and when those from MIT came back, the fusion created the Indian Institute of Technology, which is perhaps the major player in software programming in the world.

Mr. Speaker, we must Grow Smart. Like India, our Government must lead in the localization strategy; we must take up equity and fund the creative aspirations of some of our programmers. We have seen it in West Rural St. Andrew, we see people coming from abroad to invest, but they are investing in their own company, they want to take the intellectual property and make it a part of their company. We must remove that danger. That is the only way the Government can mandate - the only way they can mandate is if they take equity in the intellectual property rights, and those rights must be owned by local-based companies, Mr. Speaker. In this way, the Government will secure significant tax revenues, flows from its equity stake, and concretized exponential GDP growth. That is what Vision 2050 doing and is asking the Government to do on a wider scale. Mr. Speaker, we must Grow Smart.

Mr. Speaker, while foreign direct investment is welcome, the need to ensure local ownership is paramount. Accordingly, our local programmers must have a significant stake in the product they create, as the sector will grow, but without equity the little people,

the real producers, among them, our would-be scammers converted to community-based programmers. We must Grow Smart, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to Housing. Mr. Speaker last year I thought I had convinced the Opposition Spokesman on Housing on the inflationary consequences of second mortgages, but I note he has recommended the use of this facility once again. This acridly conflicts with my Grow Smart recommendation.

Firstly, the housing sector is inherently inflationary. Our housing stock is a production of high cost construction; consequently, our mortgage balances are high, leading to servicing problems and the need for second mortgages. Beyond all of this, second mortgages are debt instruments that are intrinsically inflationary. They create no significant amount of goods and services. Generally, these funds are requested to refinance their mortgages - their first mortgages, or to add a bathroom, or maybe the small expansion of a house. There is no justification for government to expend funds here, leave that to the Building Societies.

Mr. Speaker, in a period of serious financial stringency beset by diminishing fiscal space and grave primary surplus targets, not to mention the unconscionable bank fees, we have to make hard choices. Every decision has to be properly assessed on the basis of opportunity cost.

The claim that the JMB facility brought down mortgage rates is nullified by the concepts of marginality and opportunity cost by spending on primary housing that is low-cost quality housing, especially on prime or greenfield lands. You will not only increase supply, but also reduce mortgage rates by multiples of that which the JMB facility can achieve. Simply put, the margin of reduction in rates will be far greater with expenditure on new housing, and the opportunity cost of foregoing the second mortgage expenditure is the increase in the stock of low-cost housing solutions. Even the Capital Market packages he speaks of will be derived from debt.

This initiative could be welcomed in a time of plenty, but not now. This is a time of frugality, inflationary conscious decisions and hard choices.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels - 5:15 p.m.) The speaker's time for his presentation has expired.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we now ask for the extension of the speaker's time for an additional fifteen minutes, to complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the speaker be allowed fifteen minutes to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Buchanan.

(Applause)

Mr. Paul BUCHANAN: And here, Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a public servant extraordinaire, one who bestrode this hallowed Chamber, former Minister of Housing and Environment, Easton Douglas.

(Applause)

I am happy also Mr. Speaker that his Minister of State - one who also graced this

Chamber - is also here with him. I speak of former MP, Phyllis Mitchell. (Applause)

I cite his contribution, not only as a Minister under whom I worked, but more critically, a leader in the struggle to halt the trend towards inflationary shelter solutions, and an ominous explosion of informal settlements in this country. He continues in that role as a firm, experienced and progressive Chairman at the National Housing Trust... (Applause) ...an expert on procedure and technical details. In a sense, he has built the roads that others now walk on; he has provided trees - planted trees that give shade to the weary without fanfare and without real acknowledgement.

In his time he was a legendary Town Planner before becoming Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of National Security, and later Construction and Housing. He went on to become Minister of Health, Minister of the Public Service and the Environment, before ending his tenure at Housing. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, his wide array of roles and long innings in the public sector is unmatched in the modern history of Jamaica, and perhaps will never be replicated.

Mr. Speaker, there are many persons living at the Pines of Karachi, Long Mountain Country Club, and many other middle-income projects emanating from the PRIDE programme, who do not know or care to understand the role that Easton Douglas played in taking them there. (Applause)

It was during his tenure as Minister, under the leadership of former Prime Minister, P.J. Patterson, that the price was capped for a townhouse at Long Mountain, at Four Million Dollars ($4M), and the detached unit was capped at Seven Million Dollars ($7M), despite the fact that these units could easily fetch Thirty/forty Million Dollars ($30M/$40M) at the time. This allowed our working and professional classes to live on the once off-limit high-cost lands of Beverly Hills. At Karachi, the sale of units at Two point Six Million ($2.6M) and serviced lots at Eight Hundred Thousand ($800,000) tell the story. At the end of it all, Mr. Speaker, the mostly working-class purchasers and professionals have moved into a stratified middle-class status within one generation, a phenomenal accomplishment. (Applause)

His hands can be seen in all this, Mr. Speaker, because he arose from a generation that extolled the primacy of education and public service. It is not a coincidence that among many other roles, his brother, Dr. Conrad Douglas, has served as the Chairman of the Scientific Research Council. Apart from the middle-class, the essence of Easton Douglas' work can be seen in many planned communities whose residents have graduated from the national disgrace of shelterless degradation to the dignity of owning their own piece of ground all over Jamaica.

And, so Mr. Speaker, his selfless contribution will be forever etched in the annals of the land development history of this nation. I say glory to the work of Easton Douglas. Well done, my Minister and my friend! (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in the interest of time, let me quickly look at another Grow Smart area, the

Small and Micro Sector. Mr. Speaker, the spread between government's wholesale rate and lending rate to the little man with the good idea, is too large. The Minister has indicated that he will be addressing that when he comes to speak, so I will say no more on that.

However Mr. Speaker there is another issue which undermines the Growth Agenda, it's the question of collateral. As Technical Director of MIDA, we had instituted what was called the "Four to One Loan to Savings Ratio". That proved inadequate. Instead, Mr. Speaker - because many people couldn't find even the 25 per cent needed to seed it.

I proposed that the Government approve lending agencies, and institute 110 per cent loan feasibility facility. In this, the borrower would receive the full 100 per cent funding for the proposed project, with relevant operational safeguards as to draw down, and the remaining 10 per cent would be placed in a savings account for the borrower. This 10 per cent may be used during the life of the project, based on the assessment of the creditor. The 10 per cent over and above the feasibility requirement will be invested in aggregate with other 10 per cent savings increments, and will form an investment pool of funds, appreciate and indemnify the loan. The loan will be amortized on the full 110 per cent pay out.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot drop our hands and bypass this sector because of the collateral and delinquency issue. With this facility, it is not a matter of whether or not the loans will be repaid, but when. The sector is too critical to the Growth Agenda to be neglected, and for good ideas without the requisite collateral to go to waste, we can Grow Smart by implementing the 110 per cent feasibility mechanism. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I close with a call of hope to all Jamaicans. I say to my country men and women, we will win, because failure is not an option.

We will win because we will leave no one behind. That is why we will work with the Lifelong Learning Centre, to bring literacy to those so challenged in West Rural St. Andrew. (Applause)

We will win because we will ensure that potential scammers join the struggle for growth as reputable participants in our Vision 2050 Programme. (Applause)

We will win because we are leading the way through Vision 2050 to establish centres of Remedial Mathematics, English, Information Technology training, Software Innovation, Research and Product Development. (Applause)

We will win because we will be establishing 15 other such centres throughout West Rural St. Andrew.

(Applause)

We will win, Mr. Speaker, because through Vision 2050, in partnership with UAF, HEART Trust/NTA, and the schools in West Rural St. Andrew, we will provide capable well-trained and certified workers for the logistics hub. (Applause)

We will win because in West Rural St. Andrew there is a new culture of non-tribal political leadership and educational transformation.

(Applause)

We will win because there is a new wind of personal development blowing that challenge the pants at the knee culture. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we will win because we are encouraging all our colleague MPs not to send one more person on farm work or any other overseas work programme without those persons taking up the opportunity of literacy classes or attending the pre-tech training offered by HEART/NTA.

We must stop sending men abroad who are into the habit of exposing their underpants... (Applause) ...let them first go back into the classroom to upgrade themselves and cease degrading brand Jamaica on foreign shores regardless of their political affiliation.

I urge my colleagues to adopt the Vision 2050 model in their respective constituencies and together we will all grow smart for the benefit of our beloved country.

Finally Mr. Speaker, after a long night in the valley of tears, the mountain top beckons. Our best years begin in the morning for those who come after, let historians record that he who lived in the first half of the 21st century rose to become the giants who finally took Jamaica to greatness, fulfilling the promise of the generation of 1938 and the heroes and heroines who went before. So put on your armour Garvey's children, go now, be bold and let us win the dawn.

As Nettleford often reminded us, we have an ancestral obligation not to fail.

Mr. Speaker, may it please you. (Applause)

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business today, I therefore ask for the adjournment of the House until next Tuesday May 20, at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House do adjourn until next Tuesday, at 2:00 p.m., May 20, 2014.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House accordingly adjourned its sitting at 5:28 p.m. until Tuesday, May 20, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015

TUESDAY, May 20, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:28 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern

MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern

MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central

MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern
MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern
MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern
MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western
MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern
MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western
MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern
MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern
MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central
MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern
MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western
MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western
MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern
MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western
MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western
MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western
DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Mikael Phillips.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Today is a special day for the Deputy Speaker; let us wish him all the best. (Applause)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we are all joined in the best wishes that you have offered to the Deputy Speaker. We have a Statement by the Minister of Finance and Planning.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TAX REGIME

The SPEAKER: Dr. Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of the House, proposed changes to the tax regime which were recently approved by Cabinet.

The House will recall, Mr. Speaker, that when we - during the recent Budget exercise, there was a matter which had been delayed for implementation. And there are some

additional issues arising from the Fiscal Incentives Act which we have - for which we have to make changes.

(HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General, entered and took his seat.)

The first broad set of changes Mr. Speaker relates to the amendment to Stamp Duty Act to provide for reduction and additional stamp duty on alcoholic beverages. Members of the House will recall that in response to a request from the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association for additional time to discuss the implementation of alcohol regime to unify the specific consumption tax on all alcoholic beverages, the Government took the decision to differ the implementation of this measure for one month for the tourism industry only. The tax measure resulted in the change of the rate to the tourism sector from 700 per litre pure alcohol to a unified rate of 1,120 per litre pure alcohol.

The purpose of the amendment which I bring today and which I announce today is to provide for reduction in the specific additional stamp duty paid on alcoholic beverages. The change is being taken consequent upon the impact of the unification of the specific consumption tax, is likely to have on the tourist industry's continued competitiveness and secondly, on the basis of a more rigorous calculation of the revenue to be garnered from the alcohol measure which revealed that significantly more revenue would have been received as a consequence of the original announcement which was made.

In order to counter some of the impact of this measure, the Government has taken the decision to provide tax relief by the removal of the additional stamp duty which will result in a relief for the industry of approximately $J200 Million. In determining the form of the relief, the Government was mindful of the principle that guided the imposition of the tax measure namely, that the unification of the specific SET on all alcoholic beverages based on LPA was desirable and essential. In light of this, another form of tax relief was contemplated and the additional stamp duty regime was chosen as the best option.

(HON. DR. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing, entered and took his seat.)

The specific additional stamp duty regime is therefore to be amended as follows by decreasing the specific additional stamp duty on alcoholic beverages on wines, liquors, cordials from US$1.60 to US$1 per litre and two, decreasing the specific additional stamp duty on alcoholic beverages, beers, imported beers from US90 cents to 60 cent respectfully. The extent of Government revenue from both measures will be unchanged; the measure will become effective on June 1, 2014.

(DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM MCNEILL, (PNP) Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment, entered and took his seat.)

The effect of this, Mr. Speaker, is to make the tourism product more competitive in terms of their ability to offer high quality liquors, wines, *et cetera*, to their clients, and while at the same time facilitating the revenue flows that were intended by the Government and enhancing the compliance, the tax compliance environment for these particular products.

(DR. KENNETH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP) St. Catherine, West Central, entered and took his seat.)

The second broad change relates to the amendment to certain laws to allow for regularization and expansion of tax treatment for Free Zone operations and for tourism subsectors. These are consequent upon the general fiscal incentives regime that was announced earlier in the year. The changes being proposed under these amendments fall into three categories.

(HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, entered and took his seat.)

First, changes to the GCT Act to allow for the regularization of benefits currently enjoyed by Free Zone operators in particular in the business process operation entities and in the tourism accommodation subsector hotels and resort cottages. The benefits to be gained by some entities were affected as I have said by the introduction of the Fiscal Incentive Legislation last year. The aim is to provide for GCT concession that was previously enjoyed on goods and/or services. These benefits have previously been approved on a case by case basis by way of administrative measures. The proposed changes are in furtherance of the stated objectives of tax reform of simplicity, equity and transparency in taxation and it will result in the embedding of the benefits in the appropriate legislation which we will bring subsequently to this House. Specifically, there is an amendment to the GCT Act to provide for zero rating in respect of the purchase of locally supplied goods and services by operators within the Free Zones including business process operations within Free zone, with the exception of utilities such as light and telecommunication services.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, simply put, as the law now stands they would enjoy benefits on imported services but not on services purchased within Jamaica which obviously would not facilitate our objective of building greater linkages between the different economic sectors. So this amendment is facilitated... (Applause) ....and we believe will encourage greater growth in the exchange of goods and services or the supply of goods and services from the local economy into the Free Zones.

The second element relates to the purchase of locally supplied goods by the

accommodation subsectors, hotel and resort cottages. The applicable GCT concession would be restricted in this instance, to those items currently on the respective entities approved listings. The benefit is only provided, Mr. Speaker, to entities that have chosen to remain under the specific Incentives Act previously existing instead of opting to go on the Omnibus Fiscal Legislation. Services would remain subject to GCT.

(MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP) St. Thomas Western, entered and took his seat.)

The second change relates to the - the second set of changes in this regard, relates to the classification of motor vehicle and animal feeds as inputs into the attraction subsector and the ground transportation subsector, thus making those items eligible for productive input relief. Remember, Mr. Speaker, just to remind the House that in the Fiscal Incentives Legislation, productive inputs are relieved using the tourism sector and in other sectors, manufacturing are relieved of duties once they are part of the regular input into the productive process.

Some items had been excluded and given different treatment. The aim here is to provide for an amendment to the Fiscal Incentives Act to allow for these items to be treated similarly to other inputs as productive and to receive Productive Input Relief.

Specifically, there is to be an expansion of the inputs allowed under the PIR to include motor vehicles to certain sectors. The amendment will provide a 100 per cent relief to the Common External Tariff chargeable on motor vehicles. The sector currently pays CET of 20 per cent and will still be required to pay the applicable additional stamp duties.

This relates, Mr. Speaker, first to the car rental sector, motor cars as per Section 11 of the Road Traffic Act with a rating up to maximum of 2500cc and a CIF value up to a maximum of US$35,000 under the PIR will be treated under the PIR for the car rental sector. Vehicles exceeding these limits will not be allowed under the provisions for Productive Input Relief and will be subject to full liability.

The sector will be allowed to claim Productive Input Relief up to 800 vehicles per year to facilitate the car rental sector which is an essential part of our overall tourism product. Contract carriage operators also will benefit. It is proposed that contract operators policy be modified to accommodate motor cars with seating capacity of eight or more with a maximum cc rating of 2500 and a maximum CIF value of US$35,000. In this case, the sector will be allowed a maximum of fifty vehicles in any given year. The actual number of vehicles that will be allowed will be dependent on the available fiscal space. Tour operators will also qualify.

It is proposed to expand the benefit to this sector by making provision under the Productive Input Relief provisions to include town cars and limousines. The vehicles allowed will be limited to those with a minimum of 2500 to a maximum of 3500cc and CIF value of up to US$35,000. Full duties

will be payable on the value in excess of $35,000 CIF. This sector will be allowed to import a maximum of twenty vehicles at this rate. Similarly, the number of vehicles to be imported under this category will be dependent on the available fiscal space.

Mr. Speaker, there is also an expansion of the inputs allowed as under the PIR regime to include animal feed for the attractions subsector. I ask the question, Mr. Speaker, what does this refer? This is things like, you know, the horse riding attractions that are there and animal feed will be allowed as a productive input with the exception of the following categories:

- goods listed in Part I of the Fourth Schedule of the Resolution; and
- goods of a type which the Commissioner of Customs is satisfied can be obtained in adequate supplies from a local manufacturer or from a manufacturer within the CARICOM Single Market.

In order to prevent abuse, the system of certification by the Ministry of Agriculture will be monitored to ensure that only animal feed destined for the attractions subsector will be given this specific tax relief. If we suddenly find that the horses are eating three times the amount that they used to previously then what will happen, we'll obviously have to review this provision, Mr. Speaker.

A MEMBER: Put him on a diet.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw/Laughter)

Dr. PHLLIPS: (Referring to Mr. D. Smith) Ask him how much the horses eat.

Mr. Speaker, the third issue that I will be speaking to relates to the question of smart phones. You'll recall, Mr. Speaker, that during the recent Budget exercise we indicated that the category of telecommunication device that they call the phablet would be treated as a computer for our purposes and come in at zero duty, because of the Government's commitment to improve productivity (Applause) generally in the economy and utilizing the most up-to-date telecommunications. At the time, Mr. Speaker, the decision had also been taken to seek consideration from CARICOM for the removal of the CET on smart phones so that they could receive a similar treatment. This process has now been completed and we took this decision in light of the increasing use of smart phones to enhance business communications and operations generally and the resultant improvement in productivity across all sectors of the economy which could flow. (Applause)

As a consequence of our appeals, our application to COTED, that is, the Council for Trade and Economic Development of CARICOM for the suspension of the CET for smart phones and given the approval that has been received, effective July 1, there will be a removal of the 20 per cent CET presently payable on smart phones imported into Jamaica. (Applause)

Mr. ROBINSON: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHLLIPS: Mr. Speaker, these measures are part of our general effort at tax reform, but also aimed at enhancing the general levels of productivity and enhancing

the possibilities of economic growth for the critical sectors of our economy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Announcements.

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, no!

The SPEAKER: My apology.

(Cross talk)

Mr. SHAW: Your apology is accepted, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister - I was advised by the Leader of Opposition Business in the House earlier today that the Minister would be making a Statement in Parliament and I asked him on what subject and he said tax matters, and I said, "That's all? He said, "Yes, tax matters". And you know, Mr. Speaker, I remember very well when I was sitting on that side as Minister of Finance...

Government MEMBER: It was brief.

Mr. SHAW: Brief, but effective. Brief, but effective. I remember when I was sitting on that side of the House, on matters related to taxation, the now Minister along with his colleague, the former Minister of Finance, kept hammering home what is the purpose of the Taxation Committee?

Mr. WARMINGTON: Hear, hear!

Mr. SHAW: The Committee on Taxation in Parliament that was established to look at tax matters. And I, therefore, feel obliged in these circumstances Mr. Speaker to repeat that question, what has happened to the Taxation Committee? Because certainly as erudite and educated as I might be...

(Cross talk/Laughter)

...it is unreasonable to expect that I would able to provide the kind of forensic and clinical examination of this document within a few short minutes, but notwithstanding that I will.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

But, Mr. Speaker, it would have been better that the Committee on Taxation, that is now chaired by the Honourable Minister, would have looked at these issues because certainly after his presentation on the tax package during the Budget Debate and in my own response we had called out issues concerning the likely impact on the competitiveness of the tourism sector. That's an issue I raised specifically and it is obvious that the Minister has seen the light on that and has now come with this proposed change to the tax measures. So beyond the Tax Committee which the Minister obviously is now making a farce of that effort, since it is just apparently some effort to have little a PR exercise, but the real issues come by way of a Statement to Parliament as it now comes.

My first observation Mr. Speaker has to do with the adjustments that are proposed for the tourism sector in relation to the abolition of certain additional stamp duty for alcoholic beverages presumably to mitigate the increase in the rate from $700 to $1,120, which is the rate in terms of the alcoholic content of liquor. And the Minister has promised us that there is a $200 Million benefit to be gained for the tourism sector from this initiative. But my first observation that I want to make to the Minister is that he will recall that the concerns we had expressed don't have to do alone with

the tourism sector. We had expressed a concern - and I know the Minister of Agriculture is here and he is being very attentive to my presentation - that we had expressed a concern that it would not be the tourism sector alone that would be affected;
it would be the consumption of a locally produced alcoholic commodity, especially white rum.

And I had made the point Mr. Speaker that if this regime stays in place, it would amount to a discouragement of the consumption of locally produced white rum in which people are employed locally, in which value is added locally and that this would be an encouragement instead to consume foreign alcohol namely, vodka, whisky and other types of alcohol, which would now be coming in literally especially vodka would be now cheaper than a local drink of white rum. Cheaper based on the alcoholic content and based on the regime that the Minister had introduced and which he has not addressed today. So while he has mitigated the tourism industry to a point, he has left the local rum industry out to dry. He has left the local rum industry out, Mr. Speaker, where in a matter of months, if not weeks, you're going to see a further sharp reduction in the consumption of white rum locally in favour of foreign-produced alcoholic beverages; where people are employed abroad, potatoes are produced abroad to produce those products, people are employed and the industry will, therefore, in consequence be threatened in Jamaica.

(Inaudible comment by Government Member)

(HON DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. SHAW: Now, Mr. Speaker, when I mentioned that one particular company, Worthy Park Estates, mentioned to me that as a result of the earlier increase that the Minister had imposed that it had resulted in a 50 per cent reduction in the sale of white rum from that particular company, Rum Bar Rum. I said in this House during the Budget Debate that it led to the loss of fifty jobs at Worthy Park. The Member of Parliament, Mr. Speaker, from that constituency in *sotto voce* remarks said that I was telling a lie. I subsequently checked the figures and I want to apologize to that Member that I was misleading the House. It wasn't fifty persons that lost their jobs; it was fifty-four.

(Applause/Laughter) (Cross talk)

It is fifty-four persons that lost their jobs, Mr. Speaker. And I am to point out to you, Mr. Speaker that those job losses and the reduction in the sales of rum came before this final measure was imposed by the Minister of Finance.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Minister - he has made an accommodation for the tourism sector - I want to ask the question, where is the accommodation for the local sector?

(Applause by Opposition Members)

The local sector in which local jobs are going to be affected; people are going to lose their jobs as a result of his failure to make an amendment in favour of the local industry.

(THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. Speaker, in relation to other areas that has been proposed today in which he seeks to regularize the benefits that are enjoyed by free zone operators, similar to the business process of outsourcing people, that this will be done now - to use his words - the benefits to be gained by some entities were affected by the introduction of the Fiscal Incentives Legislation last year.

Mr. Speaker, I had mentioned then, and I can repeat now, that the rush - the mad rush to introduce legislation without adequate contemplation, and without adequate review, these are - and explanation - these are now leading, Mr. Speaker, incrementally, to the Minister having to come to Parliament to make adjustments, including this particular adjustment as a result of the deficiencies coming out of the rushed introduction of the Fiscal Incentives Legislation.

Now let me turn briefly to the question of the car rental sector, the contract carriage operators, the tour operators - and I note, Mr. Speaker, that certain quota limits have been imposed on those sectors in relation to the new rates that have been announced today. My question to the Minister is, how are these - how is this quota to be applied on a fair and equitable basis; 800 vehicles for the car rental sector, 50 vehicles for the contract carriage operators and 20 vehicles for the tour operators? Has the Minister ensured that in the interest of fairness and equity, that the distribution of these vehicles will be done on a basis that is considered by everyone to be fair and to be impartial?

Mr. Speaker, I noticed that the Minister has finally decided to remove the 20 per cent Common External Tariff on smart phones. I regret that I had bought mine in Trinidad on a recent visit there.

A MEMBER: So you couldn't buy two?

Mr. SHAW: My final question that I would like to ask of the Minister of Finance is that he has been silent on telling us what is the total revenue that is being given up by these initiatives, and if there is a deficit that has been created, how will that deficit be covered? Finally, I simply want to return to the fact - don't make a mockery of the Taxation Committee; don't have the Taxation Committee meeting on general issues and then you come like Nicodemus in the afternoon... (Laughter) ...Nicodemus in the afternoon, when we are told a Statement is to be made on tax matters, and then come without giving the Opposition adequate time for due diligence, and adequate preparation.

If it pleases you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, let me say as far as the Tax Committee is concerned that I believe that in the short period of this Administration, the Tax Committee has met more frequently than it did in the entire four years when the Minister had stewardship.

(Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: The fact of the matter Mr. Speaker is that we would welcome an approach - we have included a role for the Tax Committee in the consideration of general tax proposals, for the simple reason that it was said - if I am not mistaken by the Minister himself, if not given by another colleague - that it would never be the case that they would agree to the imposition of specific tax measures.

Mr. JACKSON: That was his opening statement…. (Inaudible)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Therefore it is the responsibility of the Government to devise taxation. We would welcome - and so, if at any point in time, if he is indicating a change in that, what I would call benighted position, which he expressed earlier...

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Benighted... born of a determination to remain in the darkness.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Davies)

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...that we would welcome... because we do think it is of value to have a forthright deliberation about the alternatives for raising revenue in the country. So that is point one.

Point two, this particular statement, Mr. Speaker, comes, not as a surprise to anyone, because we had indicated in the very Budget Debate concluded that, one, we were going to be entering into discussions with the tourism industry in order to resolve issues which they have raised, precisely because we believe in consultation on this side, and with those who will consult, and who will do so with an open mind.

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce entered and took his seat.)

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition entered and took his seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: And these proposals have been arrived at as a consequence of consultations with the tourism sector, and indeed, with the other stakeholders in the BPO industry and with the free zone operators, and the like. There is - he made much of the white rum issue, I would call it. It is a pity that his inclination to go local with alcohol is not equaled with phones. But anyway, let's put that to one side.

(HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce entered and took his seat.)

Mr. SHAW: Are you making any phones here?

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, we have local businesses that sell them.

Mr. SHAW: You not making phones here.

Dr. PHILLIPS: We have local businesses that sell them.

Mr. SHAW: We employ people... (Inaudible) ...don't talk rubbish.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: As we do for beer; as we do for beer. And look here, man, this is not your bar in Christiana; this is not your bar in Christiana. Behave yourself.

(Applause)

Mr. SHAW: You can't come to one of them.

Dr. PHILLIPS: This is not your bar in Christiana.

Mr. SHAW: You can't come to one of them... (Inaudible)

Dr. PHILLIPS: This is not your bar in Christiana. You tell it to... (Inaudible)

Look here, Mr. Speaker... Mr. Speaker, the country has obligations...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. PHILLIPS: The country has obligations with the rest of the global community, under the World Trade Organization to have a unified rate for liquid alcohol, LPA. (Applause) Jamaica is going to unify the rate. Without a unified rate, there are tremendous opportunities for the leakage of revenues. He makes a lot about compliance elsewhere; this is part of what we need to do to ensure we have compliance, not to have two rates, either between sectors or between alcoholic beverage types. That's what we are doing and that's what we have done here.

I have every expectation that in relation to rum, in relation to the other alcoholic beverages manufactured in Jamaica, including beer, that the consequence of the overall reforms that are being undertaken, will be to facilitate their competitiveness, both in the local economy and even moreso in export markets because that's what we want to see them do.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I have announced these measures, so that the public will understand that they have an administration that listens, an administration that is committed to having the best set of measures in place to facilitate growth in this economy.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

(Applause)

Mr. SHAW: Only half of them clap. Roger side don't clap.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid the following on the Table of the House:

- **Ministry Paper No. 96**
  Cabinet Agenda Issues dated April 22, 2014

(The Speaker gavels)

- **Ministry Paper No. 97**
  Cabinet Agenda issues dated April 28, 2014
- **Ministry Paper No. 98**
  Cabinet Agenda Issues dated May 5, 2014
- **Ministry Paper No. 99**
  National Family Planning Board, Annual Report for the Financial Year 2012/2013
- **Culture, Health, Arts, Sports and Education Fund**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the period April 1, 2012, to March 31, 2013

- University of Technology, Jamaica, Annual Report for the Financial Year 2012/2013
- Fair Trading Commission Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year ending March 2009
- The Firearms (Amendment of Firearms Act) (Payment of Appropriate Duties) (Licences, Certificates and Permits) Order, 2014 Under
  The Firearms Act

The SPEAKER: Minister... Minister Davies, you need to - you and Minister Robertson need to...

(Mr. Robertson returns to his seat)

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House, I will move:

Whereas by virtue of Section 44(6) of the Firearms Act, hereinafter referred to as the Act, the Minister may, from time to time by Order, revoke, increase, reduce, or alter any duty payable under Section 44 (1) of the Act;

And Whereas on the second day of May 2014, the Minister made the Firearms (Amendment of Firearms Act) (Payment of Appropriate Duties) (Licences, Certificates and Permits) Order, 2014;

And Whereas it is provided by Section 44(7) of the Act, that an Order be made under the section, shall be subject to affirmative resolution of the House of Representatives;

Now Therefore Be it Resolved by this Honourable House as follows:

1) This Resolution may be cited as the Firearms (Amendment of Firearms Act) (Payment of Appropriate Duties) (Licences, Certificates and Permits) Order, 2014 Resolution; and,
2) The Firearms (Amendment of Firearms Act) (Payment of Appropriate Duties) (Licences, Certificates and Permits) Order, 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 20th day of May, 2014, is hereby affirmed.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we continue this afternoon with the Sectoral Debate. The speakers in this order will be firstly, the Minister for Youth and Culture, the Member from South East St. Ann, followed by the Opposition Spokesperson on National Security and the Member from North West St. Andrew, and then thirdly, the Member from East Portland in that order.

SECTORAL DEBATE

The SPEAKER: Miss Hanna.

(Applause)

Miss HANNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before I begin my presentation, I would really like to pause in a very sympathetic way to pay tribute to the family of the twin boys that were washed away by water in Montego Bay in St. James, young Brandon and Braden, nine years old, it is a sad and very tragic event and our prayers today are with the family and with the people in that community as we seek to really make some kind of headway as to how something like that could have happened.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this Sectoral Debate. I do not take this opportunity for granted and I remain committed to the people of South East St. Ann who have reposed their confidence in me. My sincere gratitude to my constituency executive, my cluster managers, my workers, my personal office staff, my family of constituents, who consistently go over and beyond the call of duty; to my four Councillors, a special thanks; Councillor Bell and Councillor Richards who are here with me. (Applause)

I wish in particular to salute Councillor Lydia Richards, who achieved a milestone this year, 41 years of dedicated service as a teacher. (Applause)

A special tribute to my Prime Minister, who not only gave me the opportunity to serve Mr. Speaker but continues to provide wise insights and guidance. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I must also say thanks to my political colleagues in this House, my Regional Executive Management Team, and the Regional MPs who are here, Patrick, Dayton, Wally and our councillors from the region. A very special commendation to my Permanent Secretary, my staff in the Ministry of Youth and Culture, my Board Chairmen... (Applause) ...and Heads of Agencies, the Multilateral Agencies, the Diplomatic Corps and I really want to welcome everyone, especially the students who are here, the students from Fern Court who have journeyed to be here this afternoon.

(Applause)

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I wish to pay tribute to my family, my mother who is here. (Applause) My rock, Richard... (Applause) ....and my inspiration, Alexander, who continue to love and support me. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I'd really like to take a few minutes to speak about my South East St. Ann. I wish to highlight a few projects that will be implemented this year. These projects will provide extensive benefits to the constituency and to the nation as a whole. These are the Highway, better health care, agricultural development and water. You see, Mr. Speaker, I represent South East, St. Ann and a few realize that the South East St. Ann of today is quite different from the South East St. Ann of yesterday.

In my last election I received a boundary-cut that almost removed 50% of my old voters and replaced them with voters from an adjoining constituency. This time, I increased my margin of victory to 4,245 votes. (Applause)

Opposition MEMBER: What!

Miss HANNA: As one of the largest rural constituencies, the need for adequate roads is paramount. We spent in excess of $45 Million over the past year doing some major

road repairs. Importantly, however, the new Highway, which will open shortly, will reduce the transport time and transit time to the constituency, opening up opportunities to people in Kingston and other parishes to come to St. Ann and do business.

Mr. Speaker, finally, this year, we will be upgrading the water systems for Claremont, Higgins Town, McNie, Moneague, Roadside, Walkerswood, Thatch Hill, Beecher Town and Parry Town.

Mr. Speaker, on April 25 we completed the laying of approximately 1000 meters of water pipes, so that all sections in the eastern side of the community of Parry Town can now have access to water. We will roll out the other projects shortly, and I really want to thank the Ministry of Water, Land and Climate Change... (Applause) ....as the residents of these areas would be able to breathe a sigh of relief soon.

Mr. Speaker, my Prime Minister has spoken about having parks in every parish for families and that is something we are doing in South East St. Ann and I am grateful for CHASE, for providing the funding to complete the layout and the completion of the Community Centre at Rio Hoe with a full lifestyle park and sporting Facilities for families to visit and enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, I am also grateful to the Ministry of Health for responding to my tireless appeals to have better health care facilities in my constituency. In another couple of weeks, we will open our medical facility, the Centre of Excellence in Claremont. This will assist persons not only in South East but across the parish with longer opening hours, more space, high-tech technology and additional days. Patients, especially our elderly will no longer have to travel to St. Ann's Bay but will be assisted close to home for minor primary care. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this is an exciting one. Like most rural constituencies, the majority of my constituents earn their living through agriculture. Many farmers speak of the glory days of the AMC when they had a market for their produce. I was really disappointed when the closure of National Meats took place in Lydford and the consequential job losses. However, even though Lascelles relocated their distribution centre there, they too closed the cold storage in June of last year. But, Mr. Speaker, when one door closes another one is opened. And I am happy to report that as of June 1 this year, the facility will reopen at my urging. The focus this time will be on exports and supporting the local agricultural sector. (Applause)

I wish to assure the Member from North West St. Elizabeth that I have already implemented what he came to the House espousing and we have the full knowledge and the support of the Minister of Agriculture, who has been on the journey with me every step of the way.

(Applause)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Moving in the right direction.

(Laughter)

Miss HANNA: At Lydford we will have cold storage facilities for farmers, not only in

South East St. Ann but nationally, provide added processing to create more value-added, integrate our agricultural production to demands in schools and the Government of Jamaica institutions and most importantly, open up export markets.

I have been meeting with farmers in South East and representatives of RADA to coordinate and supply an integrated chain and we've met with over 400 farmers so far. A lot of work needs to be done, Mr. Speaker, but we've laid the foundation for a brighter future for agriculture in this country.

Mr. Speaker, my goal is to improve on the solid principles and objectives of the AMC and I am happy that a local investor has taken up the challenge.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

(Applause)

Miss HANNA: Finally Mr. Speaker I wish to express my support for the pending possibility of the reestablishment of the bauxite alumina activities in Lydford that were recently announced by the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining. (Applause) And we truly hope that this will come to fruition.

Mr. Speaker, chance has never yet satisfied the hope of a suffering people. Those were the wise words of our first National Hero, the Right Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey. His words, simple yet profound, amplified the necessity for all of us as leaders to actively recognize that our people are the fiber which constitute the fabric of our societies and their needs must form the nucleus of our development agenda. Our priorities must not be accidental or coincidental, but we must take control of the development agenda and implement policies and programmes that will address the critical needs of all humanity.

I stand here today to speak on behalf of the majority of Jamaica's population and to confidently affirm to them that what we do is expressly inspired by their dreams and aspirations.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Miss HANNA: That we recognize that "if the ends we serve are selfish, it will take us no further than our individual selves, but the ends we serve that are for all in common, will take us all into eternity together". (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Garvey's wise counsel has hastened the steps and fuelled the energy of the Ministry of Youth and Culture so that today, I can honestly report to this House that our commitment to achieving three significant objectives that we set for ourselves has been focused, strategic and deliberate.

We have been focused in improving the conditions for children and adolescents, especially those in need of care and protection. We have been strategic in seeking greater opportunities for the empowerment of our young people, especially in the growing face of youth employment and commensurate broadening of the cohort of youth at risk. And we have been deliberate in enhancing Brand Jamaica through the revision of the cultural policy and the creation of a cultural industry's framework for the enhancement of economic contribution of culture and the creative industries to the national economy.

Mr. Speaker it is abundantly clear that we have to be shrewd and strategic in the use of our resources. And I am happy to say that we have managed to achieve these objectives through the creative and symbiotic relationship between our Head Office in setting and monitoring the policy framework and our agencies through the implementation of the programmes and activities.

We have achieved a new level of integration and interconnectedness in our programme delivery among agencies, which I will demonstrate throughout my presentation. Mr. Speaker focused, strategic and deliberate, we cannot and we will not leave it to chance.

And so Mr. Speaker, in being focused, strategic and deliberate, we were able to make significant strides. Here are some of what we were able to achieve for our children last year.

1. We were able to remove all children from Adult Correctional Centres. (Applause)
2. The OCR and the CDA are now active in tracking and removing children from police stations who spend more than 48 hours in lock-ups. (Applause)
3. We improved our efforts to locate missing children. Of the 2,205 children who were reported missing, we identified, reported and returned 1,723 to their homes.

   (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say, however, that you might ask what happened to the 482. We are informed by the Police that sometimes they are returned but it is not recorded, because the parents had asked that it not be recorded. And 14 of this 2,205 unfortunately, are deceased.

4. We obtained a Cabinet decision to remove from our legislation label the label of uncontrollable behaviour ascribed to children who display extreme behavioural problems.
5. We implemented a mobile health service for the South East region to provide accessible and consistent mental health services to wards of the State (Applause by Government Members) - in critical need of assessment and therapeutic care.
6. We initiated the Art For Life Programme featuring the use of the programming arts and performing arts as therapy and recreation at the South Camp Correctional Facility.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, we didn't stop there. For our youth we trained almost 9000 young people for job placement. We trained another 5000 in personnel and career development across the island and we launched the Graduate Work Experience Programme (GWEP), in which we placed more than 300 young university graduates…

(Applause by Government Members)

A Government MEMBER: We are working, working, working.

(Applause by Government Members)

Miss HANNA: …to work as interns. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that many of them have transitioned to permanent work.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Good, good.

Ms. HANNA: In culture we completed the dossier for the nomination of the Blue and John Crow Mountains to the World Heritage list, our nomination documents were accepted at UNESCO and we now await the arrival of the technical experts who will evaluate our bid.

Mr. Speaker through our focussed, strategic and deliberate action, Jamaica was elected to the membership of the important World Heritage Committee of UNESCO for the first time.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

(Applause by Government Members)

Miss HANNA: This is an important committee which decides among other things, which sites in the world are inscribed on the World Heritage list, and to that we have a seat.

We also introduced the Culture Card programme in some of our Corporate Area high schools, giving young people free access to a variety of cultural and creative programmes offered by museums, heritage sites and national cultural events, free of cost. We also began upgrading and enhancing the JCDC's events production capability through the acquisition of much-needed equipment and the training of young people in events production skills in collaboration with the NYS.

Mr. Speaker, if I have learnt just one thing in this post over the past two years, it is simple. Aim not to overshoot the moon but just to land on it. (Applause by Government Members) So we are quite heartened by these accomplishments and quite frankly in spite of all the challenges we faced over the past year, I can truly say that we have been encouraged by the strides we have made as we continue to aim high. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that this debate is taking place during Child Month. This is not only a very special time of year when we celebrate our children, but it is also the time when the nation makes a very deliberate effort to assess the state of the Jamaican child and how we really are all doing as leaders, parents, caregivers, teachers, to give each child a better life.

Mr. Speaker I can confidently say that the Ministry of Youth and Culture has been doing our part to work and certainly improve the lives of children in Jamaica. Sometimes the local commentary does not reflect this, however, the world has taken note of our achievements, so much so that when I spoke at the United Nations last year November, Jamaica was congratulated on the progress the Government had made for children over the past year and we were invited to host the Cross-Regional Conference focussing on eliminating violence against children.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Miss HANNA: This Conference by the United Nations will be held in Kingston next month and I want to say a very special thank you to our development partner, UNICEF which continues to work with us as we seek to improve the lives of our children.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, last year, I said we needed to be honest with each other, to speak the truth, to see things exactly as they are and not to

pretend otherwise. It is only when we commit to confronting truth without fear that we can really see the magnitude of our problems and can earnestly begin to tackle them head on. So even though we present achievements, on which we are proud, I am also the first one to say that there is much, much more that we can and must do.

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to children in care. I turn to an area of challenge and great concern to all Jamaicans, the residential care of our children. Currently, there are 59 residential care institutions for children in Jamaica. Nine of these institutions are run by the Government through the Child Development Agency. The others are owned and operated by private interests including faith-based institutions with significant sponsorship from the Government. A preliminary audit of the operations of the private institutions shows that the CDA contributes up to 90 per cent of the funding of these privately operated institutions. I wish on behalf of the Honourable House to express our gratitude and appreciation to the many women and men who run these residential care institutions and take care of our children.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, when I visit our residential care institutions, whether our children's homes or places of safety, I can see that we are doing what we are supposed to be doing, under the Child Care and Protection Act. Yes, we give them three meals a day, yes, we provide them with education by sending them to school, yes, we provide them with security, but in my interactions with the children I can still feel that something is wrong. There is a gap. Something is still missing. And earlier this year when I met with a group of senior caregivers to evaluate the level of care being offered to our children in our residential care institutions, one by one they ticked off their checklist the services being offered, and they were convinced that the institutions were doing well until I asked this one question that I had been asking myself. If you and your family were wiped out today would you rest easily knowing that the State would be taking care of your only surviving child? I now put that question to the House and to the nation. Would you? Would any of us be comfortable knowing that our child would be raised by the State? What would make you or I comfortable?

Mr. Speaker, I believe we would rest a little easier knowing that every single child in care was guaranteed to be treated with as tender loving care as we treat our own children. (Applause by Government Members) We would be a little bit more comfortable, wouldn't we? If every child in care was being given or was being exposed to experiences that contribute to them developing into rounded and productive individuals.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Ms. HANNA: We would also feel better knowing that our children would not be exposed to institutional indifference by staff who sometimes learn to become numb to problems. You see, it is not enough to just feed and clothe a child and give them a safe and comfortable place to live. Children need to be loved, they need to feel loved, they need

access to extracurricular activities, they need to be nurtured, they need to develop self-worth and self-esteem. Yes they need discipline but we need to encourage them to be the best that they can be - (Applause by Government Members) - and, Mr. Speaker, my Ministry says that we cannot and we must not leave it to chance.

Mr. Speaker, surely the answer simply is not to just increase the Budget year after year and hope that more children will actually get served. The answer is to reorganize the Child Care Sector beginning at the point of entry. Yes, this will go a far way to ensuring and assuring that the answer to that very thought-provoking question that I asked will be, yes, ensuring that the $1.7 Billion that we currently spend every year is being properly utilized. Accordingly, this year we have made a number of changes to our finances to improve the residential care system. These changes will be effective through:

a) increased capital expenditure for the upgrading of some of our State institutions, including the allocation of some of our recurrent expenditure towards significantly improving the care offered in our homes;
b) ensuring that the right people with the right skills and training and attitude are in the positions to take care of our children;
c) implementing co-curricular and extracurricular programmes as well as training in social graces in our Children's Homes;
d) making amendments to the legislation and regulation to enhance child care and protection; and
e) strengthening and expanding the children and family support unit of the CDA to continue the rollout of our parenting seminars.

Mr. Speaker, to make it all happen, we will have to introduce the following to the sector: A new case management system as the technological upgrade to bolster our efforts to standardize and harmonize the services to our children. We also have to introduce a model care centre to point the way to new standards of care, and we also have to build a therapeutic facility to cater to the needs of a significant cohort of children in care.

Mr. Speaker, the Case Management System will be rolled out this year…

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Ms. HANNA: …and it will make it possible to track a child from entry into the system until he or she leaves.

(Applause)

The system will also allow for the seamless sharing of information between the CD A and other child-serving institutions such as the OCR, the Office of the Children's Advocate, CISOCA and the Children's Court. It will streamline the management of the intake process at all facilities including referral screening for any behavioural challenges. This is to assist our approach to placement management by ensuring that when we match children we match them to the best placement alternatives. It will also improve

our client information management, ensuring that at a moment's notice we can locate the child's medical and academic records. The other benefits of this Case Management System include service delivery monitoring, court processing and caseload management. Mr. Speaker, this kind of approach is long, long, long overdue.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Ms. HANNA: We have identified the budgetary resources to roll out the Case Management System this year. The total cost of the system is approximately J$58 Million and it will be implemented over three years in phases. We are confident that through this management tool we will see a significant improvement in the operation of our residential care institutions in short order, and the children will be the better beneficiaries through better controls and standardized service. Before, Mr. Speaker, we were doing this manually. This time we are taking deliberate steps to improve the system because we cannot and must not leave it to chance.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, for many years the Maxfield Park Children's Home in the constituency of a very important Minister, has attracted significant contributions from companies and individuals. Let's face it, the Maxfield brand is strong, however, it is the Government of Jamaica that ensures that the facilities stay open. Maxfield Park currently houses about 83 children but it was designed to accommodate over 170 children. Unfortunately, over the past couple of years, the facility has limped along facing challenge after challenge. Maxfield this time around must not limp, it must run smoothly.

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

(Applause by Government Member)

Ms. HANNA: In fact, Mr. Speaker, we believe that Maxfield should become the standard for residential care institutions. It was therefore critical to identify a team with the drive, passion and commitment to effect the change we all envisioned.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the previous Board, led by Ms. Minna Israel, for their service. (Applause by Government Members) And I also want to thank the new Board of Maxfield, led by Ms. Lucille Brodber, that has been tasked with transforming Maxfield Park into a model children's home and creating a template for the transformation of other homes overtime.

A Government MEMBER: Very good.

Ms. HANNA: Mr. Speaker I am pleased to say that already Mrs. Brodber has hit the ground running, demonstrating the kind of energy, commitment and enthusiasm necessary if we really want to make a difference. They have tapped into the generosity and goodwill of a number of public and private sector partners, and have already identified a number of initiatives which will be implemented immediately. These include the physical development of the facility by building new dorms, introducing appropriate monitoring and spiritual programmes for the children, as well as a review of all the structures and operations of the home.

In order to achieve this, there are a number of matters which have to be

addressed, including a review of the legal status of the home to see how it can become an incorporated Government of Jamaica institution. We are very fortunate to have two lawyers on the Board and they are now being tasked with liaising with the Attorney General on this matter. Again, Mr. Speaker, we are not leaving it to chance.

(Applause by Government Members)

On another occasion I will publicly acknowledge these partners and the nature of their contribution, but just allow me today to commend their generosity and willingness to assist when asked.

Mr. Speaker, therapy is a word we don't really like to use in Jamaica. But let me now turn to the third item of our policy actions for this year, the construction of a child care therapeutic facility. It is important for me to give the House the background to the problem that this action will help to address.

This year the Office of the Children's Registry recorded and referred a total of 5,326 reports of child abuse to the Child Development Agency for investigation. The number has been increasing and at the same time we have been strengthening the Registry and expanding its reach across Jamaica.

In the last financial year we ensure that the Registry commenced operations in three new parishes sharing spaces with the Child Development Agency in Manchester, St. Ann and Westmoreland. The sharing of resources helps the Registry to keep down its overheads and put more resources into the direct services to the public, particularly our children. This year the Registry will expand to St. Mary. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, child abuse is really more than bruises and broken bones; it is also emotional abuse and neglect. Those invisible types also leave scars. One of the consequences of child abuse is the significant short and long-term physical, psychological and behavioural health problems. Mr. Speaker, for a long time we have been seeing children displaying behavioural challenges and while we used to call them uncontrollable and took them before the courts, they were remanded to a detention centre operated by the Department of Corrections on corrections orders. Detention centres were never designed to effectively support behaviour modification and so the children ended up in a worse situation than when they entered State care. It is accepted that child abuse and neglect may adversely impact a child's physical, cognitive, emotional and social development and that timely identification and appropriate intervention with individualized assessment and tailored support are needed to minimize negative consequences.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed therapeutic centre is intended to address the effects of abuse against our children and gives them the support to lead healthy and productive lives. The new facility will be staffed by mental health professionals (Applause) who will assess children in care and design individual programmes to support their treatment. It will be equipped to offer behaviour modification and therapeutic intervention with the

complementary care planning activities that embraces the best practices, as outlined in the Child Care and Protection Act, and all right-based approaches provided for under the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

In keeping with our policy to ensure that where possible a child should be reunited with his or her family, all programmatic solutions will involve parents, guardians and caregivers. The facility, once established, will cater to both new entrants into the system, as well as those children who are already in the system but who would have had his or her order revoked.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Youth and Culture is partnering with JSIF on the construction of the therapeutic centre and JSIF has committed J$60 Million for this financial year.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the new licensing regime. We will also begin in this financial year a review of the licensing regime for privately operated children's homes and places of safety. The aim of this exercise is to ensure that all entities licensed to operate as children's homes and places of safety not only have the physical facilities but are also fit and proper with staff and the requisite training and experience to offer the new standards of care that we will be insisting this year upon them. We will insist that these licensees present credible business plans to sustain the required levels of service that we expect. This is also part of our programme to improve the management of the facilities and enhance services to our children.

Mr. Speaker we cannot and must not leave it to chance. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, we have to find ways of preventing abuse and neglect. This will be a challenge because most often the abuser of a child is a parent or a caregiver or someone that they know. Most of the reports of child abuse that we receive at the OCR is for the neglect of a child usually by a parent. This is evidence of an uncomfortable and worrying truth. Too many parents are not living up to their responsibility. The easy and simplistic response would be to punish the parents who have neglected their child and take the child away from the parent.

Mr. Speaker, even if we had the resources to do that we would have to tread lightly because in many instances that is really not the best solution for the child.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time be extended sufficiently to allow her to complete her presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently for her to complete her presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister Hanna.

Ms. HANNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, thank you colleagues.

I was saying that even if we had the resources to take all of the children who are being neglected it would not be the best remedy in some instances. The best place for children is really with a family, preferably their natural family. And we must do all that

we can to keep children in or return them to the care of their family.

Mr. Speaker, let me be very, very clear less someone gets it misconstrued. I am not proposing to keep children with parents who harm or neglect them. What I am proposing to do is help parents to become better mothers, better fathers and fit to raise their own children. (Applause) We have begun the process. This first step required us to expand the mandate of the CDA to include helping parents to become better caregivers by giving them the support they need to nature and raise their children and effectively assuming their child-rearing responsibilities.

We see it as our duty to keep families together by assisting parents to become more effective in their responsibility to look after their children. We have held over 121 parenting seminars across the island to help develop best practices for effective parenting and we have impacted over 1,500 parents who have participated in the CDA Parenting Assistance Programme so far and we plan to go even further. (Applause)

Over the past few months Mr. Speaker, we began construction of child- friendly spaces in police stations in selective parishes. This was a controversial move Mr. Speaker simply because there was some misunderstanding about what we were doing so I want to be clear. We do not and we are not building comfortable places to lock up people's children. The truth is Mr. Speaker that several children interface with police stations every day. Children who are lost, for example, and sometimes they have to spend some time waiting for their parents or children's officers to come and get them. Shouldn't they be able to wait in a proper facility with good ventilation, comfortable and secure accommodation, suitable bathroom facilities and perhaps books or games to reduce their level of anxiety as they pass the time?

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we started with four stations in the first phase: Barrett Town in St. James, Moneague in St. Ann, Bridgeport in St. Catherine and Nain in St. Elizabeth. The facility at Bridgeport has been completed and we will put in operation as soon as possible all the stakeholders, because they have done their inspections - and when they continue to do their inspections and give us the all-clear sign that facility will be open. Work is also progressing at Barrett Town and Moneague. The facility at Nain was delayed but the design has been done and the project has been sent to tender.

Another four police stations are to be selected for improvement under this project in this financial year. Our goal in the Ministry of Youth and Culture in conjunction with the Ministry of National Security, Justice, Education and Health is to have one child-friendly police station per parish that children are taken to if needed. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the review of the Child Care and Protection Act is proceeding. We held our national consultations and received our written submissions with recommendations for amending the Act. The Multi-sectoral Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the

submissions and made recommendations to the Attorney General for consideration ahead of the submission to Cabinet. Drafting instructions will be given once Cabinet makes its final decision.

Mr. Speaker, I should also add that we are undertaking a review of the Adoption of Children Act which was first introduced in 1958. It is way overdue for an upgrade. In the review we are attempting to harmonize the Adoption of Children Act with the Trafficking in Persons Act to help address new and emerging practices that affect the safety and well-being of our children. (Applause) And this is something that is particularly dear to our Prime Minister's heart, because she has been speaking about the trafficking of children now for some time.

We have held our consultation sessions across the island and are now combining and compiling the inputs for review and consideration by the consultant guided by the Multi-sectoral Technical Advisory Committee. We are working towards bringing those recommendations to Cabinet so that drafting instructions can be issued by the end of the year.

Mr. Speaker, we have been focused, we have been strategic and we have been deliberate. We are heartened by the strides that we have made and we have been energized and encouraged to move forward to create the spaces we envision, implement the changes to manage the process and give the children in our care more than a chance but amazing possibilities to grow. We cannot and we must not leave it to chance.

So Mr. Speaker, following the principles of the art of possibility, after this year, here is what it will look like for a child entering State care. A child comes to care for whatever reason; he is six-years old, frightened and vulnerable. Using our new Case Management System he is registered, screened and placed in a care facility appropriate for his needs as presented at the time of entry. Soon after he will be scheduled for an assessment either by the Smiles Mobile Unit, or at the new therapeutic centre to determine his needs and how to address them. He is then placed in the institution best suited for his care and support. In this home, which will be modelled on our agreed best practices, he will be nurtured by specially trained caregivers selected for their passion and vocation. He will be well fed with nutritious meals and healthy snacks, adequately clothed and comfortably housed.

Let's say that he has been assessed with behavioural problems, he is then taken to regular counselling sessions and receives, if necessary, his medication, dental checks and treatments. He also attends school every day and enjoys extracurricular activities at school, as well as those offered at the home coordinated by the Art-for-Life Programme and sport facilitators, including music, dance, drama, art and craft, chess, netball, cricket and football. Attending church is one of the things he enjoys doing and he is mentored spiritually and emotionally through appropriate relationships with suitable role models. He is excitedly looking forward to an annual excursion that will be putting in place as one of the many national attractions and to use his

Culture Card periodically, giving him and his caregivers at the home free access to our museums, heritage sites and national cultural events by the JCDC. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, he might not remain in care, he may be returned to his parents who have benefitted from our parenting seminars and are not able to take care of him, or he may become a part of a foster care programme or adopted by a caring and loving family. But, Mr. Speaker, if he l remains in State care we intend that he will be given more than just a fighting chance, but instead be careful and by careful and deliberate means he will be given the opportunity to become a healthy, educated, well-adjusted young man achieving his full potential. We cannot and we must not leave it to chance. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to youth. This generation of young people is the largest the world has ever seen. The latest estimate puts the number of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 on the planet to 1.2 billion. Each year around 120,000,000 young people turn 16 and most of them begin seeking jobs. Young people make up a quarter of the world's total population, yet they account for 40% of the unemployed.

Last year the ILO, the International Labour Organization estimated that 73,000,000 young people were unemployed across the world, which is estimated at 12.6% and close to crisis peak. Additionally, the ratio of youth to adult unemployment stands at 2:7 and unfortunately our young people continue to be almost three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. These figures, however, do not include the vast [number of] young people who are underemployed and unemployable.

Here in Jamaica, the unemployment rate for the 14 - 24 age group is around 37 per cent. That's roughly 65,000 unemployed youths in the island, as reported by STATIN. I suspect by and large that this problem is also repeating itself throughout CARICOM.

Mr. Speaker, the job market has changed so much in the last thirty years, and the primary focus of these changes has been technology and the global economy. It worries me that young people are still seeking training for jobs that will not exist in a few years, while at the same time ignoring the skills that will provide them the greatest opportunities.

In order for us not to be marginalized in the global economy, we have to solve the problem of the disconnect between our youths' understanding of economic fundamentals, capital markets and Jamaica's competitive advantage in the world.

Additionally, we must teach our young people how to go outside of their comfort zones, take risks with unbridled determination, break from the traditional career paths without fear, and most importantly, we have to teach them how to think big. We cannot and must not leave our young people to chance, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is that we have to make a choice for our young people. We are either going to be world producers taking our place at the global table, or world consumers being marginalized in a world without boundaries. It is estimated that the world will need to create

half a billion new jobs by 2030, as more and more of our young people join the job market.

The truth is Mr. Speaker that our youths today in Jamaica are savvy, they are in tune. They have access to information and are not shy to ask for what they want. Right now I have about 30 of them sitting in my office at the Ministry of Youth and Culture, watching me as I speak.

Persons under 30 represent 53 per cent of our population. What many lack, however, is the mindset that enables them to connect the dots of how their lives are directly impacted on and by the global economy. Many in this segment ask me on a daily basis, why are there no jobs for my friends? Or, why is there no job when I have a college degree? Or, why can't I get more money for the job that I have?

You know Mr. Speaker I believe that every Member of this House has been asked similar questions by the young people they interact with each and every day. These young people make no bones about holding the Government accountable for their career development, as many were looking towards the public sector expansion for job opportunities. That is not unique to Jamaica, and in reality for most countries, that is no longer an option.

For the most part, we have to reset our thinking of how our youth are, how we train them and how we give them the courage, Mr. Speaker, to do things and think about things differently. This is what we have set out to do in the Ministry that I lead.

How will we respond? We have to prepare our young people to compete with the best in the world, and we have to give them the skills and the support to build new and viable enterprises. In short, we have to create a new generation of entrepreneurs. Mr. Speaker, to help alleviate the youth unemployment crisis we have to create a new generation of job creators. (Applause)

First, Mr. Speaker, we are determined that we are more likely to succeed as a team rather than as individuals. There are several exciting opportunities, but it requires young people to get together as productive and as a unified force. And we need to facilitate their access to capital and business development that will allow them to properly present their products or services on the world's stage. We cannot be allowed to leave this process to chance, Mr. Speaker. To succeed in today's world, being good is not enough, you have to be among the best.

You see Mr. Speaker I believe that for us to succeed in the future we will need more entrepreneurs and multi-skilled people to create the necessary jobs. Research worldwide suggests that the phenomenon of unattached youths - those who are not in school, those who are not at work or have no skills - has adverse effect for the individual, society and the economy. In Jamaica, that cohort is estimated at about 124,000 young people. Empowering our young people by creating favourable conditions for them to develop their talents and actively participate in the labour market, is essential for the economic and social development, and for achieving our vision and our goals for Vision 2030.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the traditional "job for life" has become rarer and rarer, and youth entrepreneurship has to be seen now as an additional way of allowing our youth into the labour market, while at the same time promoting job creation. It has been demonstrated that youth entrepreneurship is an option to create employment for their peers.

Mr. Speaker, young business people are quicker to see new trends and economic opportunities, young people are active in high-growth sectors, young people with entrepreneurial spirit make better employees, young people are innovative and create new forms of independent work, and young people who are self-employed, have higher life satisfaction. We cannot and we must not leave it to chance.

(Applause)

So Mr. Speaker where do we go from here? What have we been doing? Well, we have been doing our part, but it is critical for us to understand that the majority of our youth were never taught how to become an entrepreneur or a business person. That entrepreneurial experience and education will help our youth to develop new cognitive and non-cognitive skills that can be applied to other challenges that they may encounter as they develop. Opportunity, recognition, innovation, critical thinking, resilience, decision-making, and teamwork, are just a few of these that not only will redound to the best interest, but to the country as a whole, if they are exposed and mentored.

So Mr. Speaker this year our agency, the National Youth Service, will be introducing new programmes aimed at enabling the next generation of job creators.

(Applause)

As a follow-up to our entrepreneurship camps last year, the NYS will be launching our Entrepreneurship Programme, by training over 200 young people who have the desire, the drive and ideas, to form sustainable businesses that create jobs. Included in the training programme will be coaching in Business Plan Development, and how to develop and present credible and effective business financing proposals. I know that the Member from Clarendon has a young man that I met just on Friday, who has one of those proposals. These programmes will be available in selected parishes, and we will commit Twenty Million Dollars ($20M) initially, to this programme. Given our thrust to develop the next generation of business leaders, we will be moving swiftly to ensure that youth across the island will have access to this training.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time that we are doing this, we are also rolling out another new programme, Entrepreneurship 101 - a series of sensitization sessions in all parishes, and we will target over 1,500 young people. The experience from the sessions will be used to gauge the youth entrepreneurship interest for future roll out of the entrepreneurship programme in those parishes.

Mr. Speaker, the House will be particularly pleased to know that we have made a deliberate decision to reserve 10 per cent of those spaces in the programme for youth with physical and development

challenges. (Applause) We will spend Thirty-five Million Dollars ($35M) on this activity.

You will also be pleased to note Mr. Speaker that we will be introducing an Empowerment Programme specially designed for youth with disabilities. This year we will target 100 young people with intellectual disabilities, and assist them with personal and professional development skills. And some of you might be wondering what is an intellectual disability? I met a young man last year with autism, who got First Class Honours from university, and just can't get a job because nobody is prepared to hire him. We have to find a means, as a country, to create spaces for those people who are not familiar to us in the same way that we think or in the same way that we operate. (Applause)

Under this programme, we will help them to identify what they are good at, and what careers would suit them best. We will also assist our youths with disabilities to participate in voluntary, cultural and sporting activities. Elements of this six-month programme were successfully piloted in 2013/14, as Our Summer Empowerment Camp Project; and we budgeted, Prime Minister, Fifteen Million Dollars ($15M) for this programme.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, guided by our feedback from close to 4,000 young people who participated in the island-wide "Express YuhSelf" consultations, the NYS will introduce this year, "*Youth Road Map to Succeed*". The Youth Road Map to Succeed will provide a complete set of guidance materials which can be presented in a classroom environment, but will be augmented with youth-friendly online support facilities. The online resources will include resume creation and self-assessment tools, apps and links to self-development databases. This is to make sure that they receive the cutting-edge training that is now being used internationally to transition from school to work, and we are committing Forty Million Dollars ($40M) to this new project. (Applause)

Our new Enrichment Programme will engage 500 youth at-risk in activities that focus on character building, career development, volunteerism and cultural awareness. Elements of these programmes were successfully piloted last year as our Summer Enrichment Camp Project, and we will be rolling it out in full force this year with Twenty Million Dollars ($20M). (Applause)

Mr. Speaker also, for the first time, we will be introducing an Industry-Specific Skills ICT Development Programme, that will engage 40 youth in animation, graphic design and videography training. We have also built exposure and internship opportunities into the programme to ensure that our young people will develop their technical expertise and be ready to start their careers at the end of the training. And for these 40 young people in animations and ICT, we will be spending Eight Million Dollars ($8M) towards their development.

Mr. Speaker, this is the final new programme, and it is an example of the synergies that we are building across the Ministry of Youth and Culture, NYS and the

Jamaica Cultural Development Commission. The NYS and the JCDC have entered into a partnership for the training and placement of 60 young people in the areas of Events Management and Production. This year the programme was piloted with good results, and will now become a standing offering of the NYS and the JCDC.

Following the completion of the one-week residential training in basic events management, the trainees will be assigned to JCDC offices islandwide to complete six months' internship, and receive a monthly stipend from the NYS, giving them much needed hands-on training in the planning and execution of events during the Festival and Independence celebrations.

In addition to providing gainful employment for these youngsters over the six-month period, they will be better equipped for further employment within the creative and cultural industry, as Events Production Assistants. We allocated Eight Million Dollars ($8M) towards this programme which commenced in April, 2014, and will to October, 2014, following which there will be a review, with a view to making it an annual programme.

Mr. Speaker, focused, strategic and deliberate, we will continue to roll out our programmes aimed at ensuring that all participants are set on a long-term and sustainable path. This approach necessitates that the outcomes are not only related to the speed of the labour market integration, but importantly, to the quality and stability of employment as well.

Consequently, skills training will place importance on vocational skills and web/ICT-based skills that are in demand locally and internationally. Our thrust is to ensure that we pool our resources to equip them for taking advantage of the areas that we are most competitive in within the global marketplace. Areas such as Music and Culture, Sport, the BPO industry, Agriculture, Logistics and Port Facilities and Tourism. (Applause) Essentially, youth coming from the Ministry of Youth and Culture will be prepared for not only these competitive areas, but also the online world of work.

So Mr. Speaker as we aim not to overshoot the moon but to land on it, the NYS will continue with some of their existing and successful programmes.

- The Graduate Work Employment Programme which provides valuable experience to tertiary graduates up to 24 years old was introduced last year in response to the dual challenge of graduates being unable to gain jobs without experience, and who could not gain meaningful experience without jobs. Over 300 participants were placed for up to six months, during which the NYS paid them a stipend to assist with their expenses.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report to the House that this year a quarter of the participants will be young people with disabilities, thanks to the involvement of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. (Applause)

This year, we will spend $48 Million on this project so that our tertiary students will be placed in jobs.

The Summer Employment Programme which provides three weeks of work experience for school-aged youth during the months of July and August will continue. And I just want to say to all the MPs that are here, some of you have not returned your forms and the deadline has passed.

(Inaudible comments)

Miss HANNA: This year we expect 4,000 participants and we will have committed $72 Million towards this project. (Applause) We will give financial assistance to 700 post-service participants who are pursuing tertiary education. These students are eligible to receive up to 20% of their tuition paid by the NYS over a period of three years. The cost of this programme and the cost that we're putting towards helping our tertiary students is $28 Million. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we have an added benefit, to our access to higher education programme, which provides financial assistance to students especially in rural areas, including students now at the College of Agriculture, Science and Education. Our target for this period will be 100 students who will benefit to a cost of J$12 Million.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we continue to push volunteerism at the NYS and our Volunteers Programme is designed to reestablish the NYS volunteerism emphasis, by providing opportunities for young people across Jamaica to undertake community-based development projects. Youths participating in this programme will be drawn from among those currently engaged in the NYS programmes and we've committed $16 Million towards improving our volunteerism throughout the NYS, Mr. Speaker. (Applause) So, Mr. Speaker, we are doing this, as we intend to impact over 11,500 young people this year, to the tune of $322 Million towards ensuring them that we get them equipped, involved and productive.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Not leaving it to chance.

Miss HANNA: Not leaving it to chance.

Re-energizing youth governance and participation, Mr. Speaker, we actually achieved this once again, with 100% increase in the Financial Year 2013/2014, in funding to promote youth governance and leadership at the National Secondary Schools Council and the National Youth Council Movements, as they were both revitalized. Several key events were successfully hosted last year, and this pool of funds provided needed support to the NSSC and the NYCJ, the Jamaica Youth Ambassadors Programme and the Jamaica Union for Tertiary Students. Various youth leaders and groups were also enhanced and supported. Our National Centre for Youth Development successfully monitored and ensured that:

1) National elections for the NSSC were held in November last year.
2) The National Executive of the National Youth Council of Jamaica and the 13 Parish Youth Councils

across the island are all now established and are fully operational; also

3) The NYCJ - the National Youth Council Elections were successfully held in November of last year; and
4) The training in leadership and advocacy, parliamentary procedures, protocol, meeting and management tools, the treasury, financial management and responsibilities for minute taking were conducted for national and parish executive members.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke about this because I'm very pleased, that I've already received the plan which I requested for this financial year, from both the Presidents of the National Youth Council and the NSSC, and attention will be given to provide training and development and support for the new executives in an effort to ensure that the successful implementation of some of their activities at the school and community levels will be done. This will further promote effective governance and strengthen our democracy.

Furthermore, we will continue our Engagement of Youth Leaders and Groups. I'm happy to report, Mr. Speaker, that we've audited over 400 community youth-based organizations and as such, we will provide financial support to the tune of $12 Million in the form of subventions or grants to assist with the development of their various programmes once they meet the criteria. (Applause)

The Programme, that is Innovative Sports and Arts Youth Involvement Programme - I SAY I - the mission or output of this programme is to prevent and reduce the incidence of youth violence, crime and other behavioural deviances and increase prospects of employment and life skills building for our most vulnerable and our youth at-risk who are 13 to 25 years old who come in conflict with the law. Last year approximately 300 youth offenders in four correctional institutions were equipped with knowledge and skills to help them to be more successful in their re-entry to mainstream society. The project continues at Hilltop, Metcalf Street, South Camp Road and Rio Cobre. Instruments and sports equipment have also been delivered to the four institutions targeted. A Youth Empowerment Toolkit and a Creative Sports Life Skills Manual was also developed for the programme to assist with the future instruction of juveniles in these spaces. Special training geared at using the *I SAY I* methodology which was crafted, inclusive of the use of the Manual and Toolkit to teach youth engagement through the Creative Arts and Sports will commence for this financial year.

Youth Empowerment Officers, Probation Officers, Correctional Officers will be trained. The training will be done in partnership with Children's First, Manifesto and Studio 154. (Applause) This programme is supported by UNICEF to the time of $10 Million. (Applause) And I want to thank Mr. Connolly.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to Operation Phoenix. In an age where spending time in virtual spaces has become the norm for so

many of our youngsters - and I have one of them at home. The YIC spaces gives youth from a wide cross section of society, access to physical space and provides credible information and assistance relating to their personal and professional development, guidance and counselling, access to communication technology, assistance with entrepreneurial pursuits and a platform to express themselves using the Creative and Performing Arts, all in a safe, youth-friendly environment.

Mr. Speaker, the construction of our Youth Information Centres is ongoing. I just had the privilege of opening the Clarendon YIC, and we intend to have 15 Youth Information Centres opened by 2016 in May Pen. The contract has been signed for approximately $40 Million with DR Foote Construction for the establishment of the Hanover Youth Information Centre and construction has already started in Hanover for this Centre. (Applause) This activity is being conducted under the IDB/GOJ Youth Development Programme. And I want to publicly record my sincere thanks to the IDB for continuing with the programme. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear! Hear! Hear!

Miss HANNA: Mr. Speaker, I want to stress that as a part of our strategic approach we'll be incorporating the NYS into the YICs so that we can cut out our recurrent expenditure for the NYS and also provide better value-added services to our youth. By doing this they'll be able to access everything at one stop without having to go to several spaces.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Miss HANNA: Finally, Mr. Speaker, the revision of the National Youth Policy continues, and development of the mechanisms to support its implementation. Mr. Speaker, I'll be the first one to tell you that I'm not pleased that we've taken this long for the policy to be tabled, but we've had to ensure that we listened to all the voices and aspirations of our youth. As you are aware, several groups exist.

Earlier this year I took the time to meet with the youth of JFLAG, The Colour Pink and other LGBT - for those of you who are not clear that's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender groups - in consultation as well. The draft Green Paper is in the last round of modification and currently being reviewed by the Ministry. It will be going to Cabinet shortly and we're also in the process...

A MEMBER: The first meeting.

(Heckling)

Miss HANNA: Dem sey when yuh throw stone in a pigpen the one that squeal get lick, yuh nuh.

(Heckling)

Miss HANNA: The draft Green Paper is in the last round of modification and is currently being reviewed by the Ministry. It will be going to Cabinet shortly. We're also in the process of fine tuning the implementation modalities of the policy once it has been approved by Cabinet. As such, although the merger of the NYS and the NCYD has been approved, the operational guidelines for the

implementation is on hold until the policy is final.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to Culture. Jamaica's size belies the power and reach of its culture. For the iconic and widely circulated Rolling Stones Magazine to publish an entire edition on the life of our Reggae King and Icon, Bob Marley - over thirty years after his death, hailing him as the first major rock artist to come out of a third world country - demonstrates this. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear! Hear! Hear!

Miss HANNA: And the Member for South St. Andrew, I think had a hand in making this a possibility.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Miss HANNA: We are indeed, truly humbled that our culture continues to transcend language, colour, class and borders. For us, the cultural and creative industries give us a solid global competitive advantage and we're committed to utilizing it for the prosperity of our people.

Mr. Speaker, our deliberate commitment to getting this done was demonstrated recently by the establishment of the National Cultural and Creative Industries Commission led by our Most Honourable Prime Minister, Portia Simpson Miller. The Commission, which is comprised of Ministers of Government... (Applause) ...Cultural and the Creative Industry experts and practitioners have been tasked with ensuring that Jamaica positions itself to leverage the significant economic and development opportunities emerging in the global market. Jamaica will also be exploring ways to develop a framework/mechanism for streamlining the definition and classification certification and registration of all cultural practitioners and organizations. This will facilitate them in the realization of economic gain as they pursue their talents.

Our cultural acumen and talent did not happen by chance, Mr. Speaker, our history has moulded us over many, many years, and thousands of children, youth and adults have benefitted from the early 1950s with the Jamaica Festival of the Arts right through to the National Festival of the Arts training programme, a true example of culture's contribution to poverty alleviation and development. (Applause) Today, the programmes offer unlimited access to creative development and exposure through our early childhood education programmes all the way up to high school. It is the vehicle through which many Jamaicans have been propelled to global recognition in music, dance, theatre and other culinary forms. That's why most people when you go around the world know about jerk and other kinds of traditional cultural forms that we've given to them.

Culture is also a critical component of how we're approaching sustainable urban and rural development. The Jamaica Social Investment Fund has given support to the Maroon and Rastafari communities to advance programmes which observe the preservation of their natural environment along with the heritage of their communities towards economic viability. Several projects have been developed and in March if this year, a working village showcasing Rasta levity - that is the

philosophy, religion and lifestyle of Rastafarians - was opened.

Mr. McKENZIE: That is a commercial rasta.

(Laughter/Cross talks)

Miss HANNA: Dem sey Jah will never gi the power to a baldhead yuh nuh, suh...

Mr. Speaker, centuries ago, as Jamaicans were leading a cultural revolution which remains relevant to the world today, at a time when slavery was legal and women were seen as inferior to men, our national heroine Nanny led her people, the Maroons, in a fight against oppression from the heights of the Blue and John Crow Mountains. It was in this space, that she, one of Jamaica's and one of history's most important female military leaders, conquered the British 100 years before full freedom. Standing on the shoulders of our legendary heroine, we were extremely pleased that we have successfully submitted the Blue and John Crow Mountains for nomination to become a World Heritage Site. (Applause)

Undoubtedly, there's a natural mystic about our beautiful Jamaica...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Miss HANNA: ...a special dynamic force that not only exists with the creative imagination of all Jamaican people but within the land itself. My Prime Minister always says it's not in a name it's about the pride of a people. It is a force that is rooted in history - a history that connects so many peoples of the world. It is the force that is critical to any developmental plan. I would like to believe, Mr. Speaker, that it was perhaps this force that inspired and propelled Garvey to herald into existence the UNIA which proudly celebrates this year, its 100th Anniversary.

(Applause)

As we mark the significant milestone in our nation's history, I boldly affirm that Jamaica intends to honour the wise counsel of Garvey and the lyrical energy of Marley as we claim to share our share of the global creative economy.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is not enough to mesmerize the rest of the world with our talent and creativity. We must manage the process so that we continue to not only spawn the best cultural talent but to move the market and market this talent to the world with purposeful and consistent arrangements. (Applause) With this goal in mind, it was critical that we move the JCDC from only being talent developers to also being talent managers; because when we produce all of these gold medalists they need outlets to earn. So this year we will open an Artist Management Division at the JCDC which is a new component of the structure going forward. (Applause)

The Ministry of Finance has approved the J$14 Million to fund the staff whose Terms of Reference for this Division will be to identify markets for performers while acting as a central database for all talent coming through our doors. When overseas groups come looking to us for talent, they will be facilitated at the highest professional standards in keeping with the global industry. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the world continues to demand our creative talents and we are committed to meeting the needs of the creative market through increased development

programmes. Our children and youths must be given full opportunity to realize their artistic potential. (Applause) We have, therefore, taken a major policy shift. We have shifted the Festival of the Arts programme from the last term of the school year which is April to June, when schools are normally focusing on exams and we have shifted it to the first term of the school year which is September to December. Schools may now activate their arts programmes during the summer giving students adequate time to balance both their academic and their artistic development. This is a major strategic shift, Mr. Speaker, but it will be in the best interest of the creation and the promotion of our talents. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, The NYS through the GWEP, which is our Graduate Work Employment Programme will place over 30 graduates as Performance Arts Specialists in each parish to assist with talent development. This year, we intend to assign graduates from the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts and the Excelsior Community College to parish offices of the JCDC. These graduates will assist in the training and development of talent in the Visual and Performing Arts and also they will assist in communities as well as providing assistance with the Arts Development programme in schools where this specialized skill does not exist. What you will now see with these Performing and Visual Arts Specialists is a certain specialty that will provide training to also unattached youths in cultural centres to be established island-wide and we are thinking of our youth information centres for this. This is in keeping with our expressed objective to act as an incubator for local and rural talents. And this programme will commence this summer and will continue in one year cycles on an annual basis. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the modern Cultural Movement or the Modern Festival Movement was really born out of volunteerism at the community level. In an effort to recapture this legacy, we have embarked on a resuscitation of the voluntary parish committees across the island and I am pleased to report that we now have 14 parish cultural development committees up and running. These persons are energized, enthusiastic and are now busily involved in the planning of the upcoming Emancipation and Independence Celebrations in their respective parishes, in conjunction with the JCDC's field staff.

Additionally, in an effort to improve participation in the annual festival programme and to increase cultural awareness, civic pride and patriotism particularly among our youth, we strengthened our Culture Club Programme in communities and schools island-wide. In the past year, we have seen a doubling of the number in schools to 162 clubs with an aggregate membership of over 5,600 young people; which brings me, Mr. Speaker, to Independence 2014 which we will be launching in the first week of June this year.

"Jamaica Festival" is the major focus of this year's Emancipation and Independence Celebrations and we will continue our efforts to develop and promote the cultural and creative industries towards greater income generation, job creation and export earnings.

In the six days of excitement and wholesome family entertainment from August 1 - August 6, we will commemorate these two very important national anniversaries, that is, Emancipation Day and Independence Day in a series of activities. We will have Live Music Tuesdays in every parish, we will have our Independence Conversations, we will have the National Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, July 27, we will have our islandwide Emancipation Vigils or Emancipation Jubilee, Mello-go-Round, I know the Member from South St Andrew will like this, we will have a 'Heart of Ska' International Festival, we are introducing an Aunty Roachie Short Film & Literary Festival, (Applause) a Dutchie Food Festival and the big Stage: Pop and Variety Competition to culminate with the Grand Gala. (Applause) In addition to these major events, all parishes will be staging a week-long schedule of activities.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to focus on one of them which is *"The Big Stage"* which will be rolled out to showcase the talent within communities especially in rural communities. As a means of catering to the vast number of talented youngsters between the ages of 18 - 35, the JCDC like the popular '*America's Got Talent*' Show in the United States, will seek to identify, develop, and expose the varied creative talents and performing skills of these youngsters from rural and urban communities. Many of our popular entertainers had their genesis this way. The target is to reach at least 2000 young people this year and the talent search has already begun. (Applause) This will conclude in August.

This programme will provide an opportunity for training and for them to showcase their talents that are sometimes not captured in the JCDC's regular and current menu of competitions. We have a lot of talent out there, Mr. Speaker, but we have never really sent people to strategically go out and find it.

The JCDC will be transforming the Ranny Williams Entertainment Centre into a modern venue. So far the facilities have received a facelift ahead of hosting last year's Independence Village. This included the repaving of the roadways and parking lots, repainting of some of the buildings and the placement of 18 Jamaica 50 wooden shops that were used during Jamaica 50. A redevelopment committee was appointed by the JCDC Board and it is currently exploring various initiatives for the continued development of the complex. Major work will be done on the facilities for Labour Day and certainly the rental of the facility is a crucial source for additional revenue.

Mr. Speaker, some of our lasting legacies have been institutions like the Jamaica National Heritage Trust, like the IOJ, and this year the Jamaica National Heritage Trust will declare 10 sites, four new and eight (8) previously gazetted under the JNTC Act. And certainly the Prime Minister has asked that some other sites be looked at and we will seek to look at those as well, Mr. Speaker.

I want to turn to the National Library because some very exciting things are happening with this Agency under the Ministry that I lead. The National Library, in

an effort to maximize the use of its resources, will implement an alternative to the current library management system which though very low in cost, is the most effective at showcasing the National Library of Jamaica resources locally and internationally. The new system called "World Cat Local" will place the catalogue of the library's holdings into global library catalogue that is discoverable through popular search engines such as Google, Yahoo and BING. (Applause) In a real way, Mr. Speaker, this new system will truly enable Jamaica to the world.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, in recognition of the public's preferred mode of accessing information, we will launch the National Library of Jamaican Digital Collection and it will create a digitized encyclopedia of Jamaica for local and global references. (Applause) This digital encyclopedia includes materials from the library's paper and photograph Collection that have been digitized and it also includes the full text 18th and 19th Century Jamaican books already digitized by Google and NLJ digital and it can be accessed at the website that you see here.

In a further move to preserve the Nation's intellectual output in this year, we will be transferring the legacy 16 millimetre film resources to digital and the concomitant dissemination of these resources through programming and social media. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I also want to use this medium to invite our distinguished - everybody to our distinguished lecture. The 2014 distinguished lecture will be presented by novelist, Poet and Panama Historian Miss Olive Senior to mark the Centenary of the Panama Canal; I expect to see the Minister of Transport and Works (Applause) and his entire team present.

I also want to congratulate Professor Mervin Morris, our Poet Laureate. (Applause) This is the first time that Jamaica will have an official Poet Laureate; the last Poet Laureate for Jamaica was named in 1953 by an NGO. I want to thank Mrs. Hudson, the staff, and the Board of the National Library who played a major role with the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment as we worked together to achieve this very important milestone. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, last year we opened three new museums for the people of Jamaica; Seville, Roxborough and the People's Museum. (Applause) Visiting museums, like visiting libraries, is an essential part of civic education as well as community and individual empowerment. This year we will be focusing on the opening of two other major ones. For many years Prime Minister, in fact, since the days of our Independence there have been calls for a National Museum of Jamaica which would be a museum for the people; a place where all Jamaicans, from all walks of life could see, read and feel the amazing story that is our history. To witness the national narrative that is dramatic, extraordinary and often painful, but it is a story that all informed citizens need to be able to understand, access and be able to respond to.

There have been many dreams and many plans over the last couple of years for a museum but nothing has happened. Finally,

we have moved to develop a National Museum of Jamaica. (Applause) This Museum will be the centrepiece that spawns a network of community museums located across the island that will implement the plans. I have overseen the establishment of the National Museum Foundation which will be raising funds to support a National Museum in Kingston. The Council of the IOJ has designated upstairs of the 16 East Street Building as the space for this important museum. I have already engaged key stakeholders, including our Prime Minister, including past esteemed Prime Minister including the Most Honourable PJ Patterson and the Most Honourable Edward Seaga whom I have consulted with and whom have agreed to be patrons of this foundation. (Applause)

Concurrently we are moving to develop the National Museum West in Montego Bay. This museum will be located in the Montego Bay Civic Centre and will explore the national narrative but with a special focus on western Jamaica. This new centre will also incorporate elements of the National Gallery as well; and it is my particular desire that National Museum West maintain a community focus with the history and memories of our people. I am reliably informed that the National Museum Jamaica is already seeking out objects and narratives that will tell the story of our people, and I so encourage members, particularly those with a western leaning, to get involved. The Mayor of the St James Parish Council and his team are fully on board and both of these projects will commence in this financial year. (Applause)

I must also mention that we will be reopening a new and modern Natural History Museum which has been closed for several years, visitors will now see a modern gallery with high tech displays as well the preservation of diverse ecosystems, plants and animals found only in Jamaica. Funding support has been received from CHASE and TEF, and we expect this to be completed before the end of this fiscal year. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the National Gallery of Jamaica celebrates its 40th anniversary and will be having an exhibition which is entitled Retrospect, 40 years of the National Gallery and certainly we want everybody to come out because we will be showcasing what we really do best in terms of expressing ourselves in art since 1974 and I invite all Jamaicans both here and abroad to come and see that.

Mr. Speaker, we have to also strategically review how we do things with some of these legacies and the Council of the Institute of Jamaica has agreed to do a comprehensive review of the operations and governance arrangements for Institute of Jamaica. It is urgent for an organization like this to examine its relevance and they have agreed to do this, and the funds have been agreed to and are in place by CHASE.

Mr. Speaker, it was our goal to make history and for the first time Jamaica was elected to the twenty-one member World Heritage Committee of UNESCO, the lobbying efforts were extensive and difficult

and it came down to a nail-biting finish. Mr. Speaker, I had to go on the lobbying floor in Paris where over a 190 countries assembled to ensure that we were seen and we were heard.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Miss HANNA: We won and will be participating in the first meeting (Applause) of this Committee has the only Small Island Developing State to held in Doha, Qatar, in June 15 to 25 of this year. As Chairman of UNESCO, Jamaica, I want to thank UNESCO for their continued support in the many areas of culture, science...

(Inaudible comment by Mrs. Neita-Headley)

Miss HANNA: ....communication and information; (Applause) and welcome the new Director of the Caribbean office for UNESCO, Miss Christine Norton.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, the issue of reparation remains an important issue to the Government of Jamaica.

Mr. HENRY: (On his feet) Will Minister yield before she speaks.

Miss HANNA: No. For what?

Mr. HENRY: I am trying to ensure Madam Minister - with respect, Mr. Speaker.

Miss HANNA: (*Sotto voce*) On what grounds, on what grounds?

Mr. PAULWELL: Could I just ask the Member to allow the Member to finish her presentation and then...

(Cross talk)

Mr. HENRY: But before the next part I would like to ask a question.

(Cross talk/The Speaker gavels)

Because the presentation has entailed so many important things, I wouldn't want to be discordant but what I'm going to ask the Minister is, since I have read the speech, is when will we have the Report from the Commission laid on the table?

(Cross talk/The Speaker gavels)

Miss HANNA: The answer to that is shortly.

The Government's continued commitment resulted in the recovering National Reparation Commissions...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Henry) (Laughter)

Miss HANNA: ...in October 2012 and is currently chaired by Professor Verene Shepherd. The NRC has recently completed its status report which explains the establishment and work of both the former and current National Commission on Reparations. It rehearses the genealogy of the movement and prior applications and claims, documents the legal and historical basis for reparatory justice as well provides critical data on beneficiaries and Jamaica's just monetary claim. A CARICOM Reparations Commission was recently formed in July 2013 under the chairmanship of Sir Hilary Beckles. The importance of the existence of the CARICOM Reparations Commission demonstrates regional commitment to the principles of fairness, equity and its resolve to address the ills of the past. The NRC will work in tandem with the CARICOM Reparations Commission and the international Reparations Movement as a way forward.

Mr. Speaker when I began, I shared with this Honourable House the guiding principles of Garvey which inspired my team to be focused, deliberate and strategic in how we went about fulfilling our mandate and commitment to the people of Jamaica. Throughout this presentation I believe that I have demonstrated that by our approach towards identifying and implementing our priorities that we were neither accidental or coincidental. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Miss HANNA: However Mr. Speaker the portfolio responsibilities of the Ministry of Youth and Culture are as diverse as they are challenging and with stakeholders, interest groups and individuals passionate and vocal in their advocacy, sometimes the voices can be conflicting and polarizing and oftentimes sapping the energy of those of us who are on the front line.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear, hear! Babsie

(Cross talk)

Miss HANNA: For too long we have been fed a steady diet of negativity and defeat fuelled often by the destructive force of partisan politics.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's true, that's true.

Miss HANNA: Sometimes even I - sometimes Mr. Speaker even I am amazed at how cleverly this behaviour is cloaked and disguised by those who seek to constantly and consistently denigrate and derail the best efforts of us those of who worked so long and so hard. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Shame!

(Cross talk)

Miss HANNA: I am deeply saddened by the negative perception of politicians in general held by so many in the society and those who decide to give their lives to public service. Recently I cringed Mr. Speaker as I viewed the music video of a popular song called '*Fighter'* by two of our most popular and admired reggae dancehall artistes whose music I personally love and enjoy. I saw where a young man was told to go the office of the "dutty" politician for assistance. I thought how deeply troubling that these two young artistes, so creative, so talented and so highly influential should mirror, validate and deliver such a negative perception of politicians so creatively and so artistically.

Mr. Speaker, the accusations of being evil and corrupt are deeply hurtful to the innocent...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Miss HANNA: ...but I believe that those of us who choose this path should at all times be mindful of the tremendous responsibility that we bear, that each and every one of us as Ministers seated in this House today should, at all times seek to honour the oath that we took when we entered this Honourable House. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: True.

Miss HANNA: Mr. Speaker, we are only human and sometimes we will stumble and sometimes we will fall, but we need to hold the bar of scrutiny very high; and if we all agree that when we sounded the trumpet or when we rang the bell that we did so because we all have the best interest of this nation at

heart then we will not fail, (Applause) neither will we disappoint those we swore to serve because Mr. Speaker, guess what, failure for us is not an option. Mr. Speaker, I believe that when the Right Excellent Norman Manley came to the defence of the Right Excellent Alexander Bustamante as his attorney when he was incarcerated, it was more than just about being related. They put aside their personal ambitions driven by conscientious principles to act in the best interest of our young democracy for the upliftment of our people. (Applause) What a demonstration.

Mr. Speaker what will this generation, my generation, do to unite and build a Jamaica, one that we can all be proud of? Perhaps we could be guided by our actions and our conduct by pondering on the poignant lyrics of '*Fighter',* Damian Marley and Cham's song as it lays out in gritty detail the lot of Garvey's suffering people whose experience suggest that the "*system does favour the common man*". However Mr. Speaker and colleagues, we will not be able to lead or represent those who are cynical and suspicious of us as so graphically portrayed in that same music vedeo for the song where the young man was indeed told to go to the office of the dutty politician for assistance. The determination and level of defiance in the lyrics *"We shall reap the riches plentiful like the grains of sand"* reveals that these riches can be accomplished by fair means or by foul ones with or without our help as leaders, or as policymakers. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I believe that it must be our job to develop polices and create the environment for our people to get these riches fairly and to get them justly and honestly.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am of the firm view that the best way to change these perceptions and honour our heroes and our oath is to demonstrate by our own deeds and conduct that we are, in fact, the fighter in Damian Marley's portrayal. We are, indeed, the beacon on the mountain shining through like the rising morning sun; the ones who never stop until the work is done. And we are not the other juxtaposition that they make us out to be.

Mr. PRYCE: Hear, hear!

Miss HANNA: Mr. Speaker we must, each and every one of us, make a commitment as of today to be a force of motivation, a force of inspiration to the young people of Jamaica to never stop until the work is done. And with every fibre of our being to do everything in our power to remove the degrading, the dismissive and the disparaging labels ascribed to us as politicians. (Applause) Only then Mr. Speaker can we be truly confident that as leaders, boldly leading from the front, that when we pause to look behind, we see that others are following. This commitment we must never leave to chance.

(Cross talk/The Speaker gavels)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in another Sectoral Debate in this House. However, Mr. Speaker, I must protest the hour that I'm asked to speak, given the impression all along by the House Leader that there will be limitations to the length of presentations by both Ministers,

portfolio holders and others, so I have to put that on record.

This year Mr. Speaker marks my thirtieth year as a Member of this Parliament and I am grateful - most grateful to the constituents of North West St. Andrew. They have through thick and thin stuck with me for three decades. Mr. Speaker, I have with me this afternoon some family members: I have my wife, Carlene, who is here. (Applause) She has returned to the House after about twelve years absence; I have my son Jay, who is here, my second son (Applause); I have my grandson, my eighteen year-old grandson; he is on the verge of getting enumerated.

(Cross talk)

My grandson, yes. My grandson and he loves the politics, which is frightening as far as you people are concerned. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, I also have my councillors: Councillor Vernon
McLeod from the Havendale Division - three term councillor, 12 years; and I have Councillor Dwayne Smith from the Chancery Hall Division, their first time...

(Applause)

Mr. CHUCK: Related... any relation?

Mr. D. SMITH: Well, he happens to be my third son. (Laughter)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: What happen to the other one?

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, we have our Councillor/Caretaker Andrew Harris.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. D. SMITH: And Mr. Speaker we have some members of the constituency with us here this afternoon, and I am most grateful to them. They seem to have mastered the art of winning elections. They are very special - very, very special people. (Applause)

I thank the staff of Parliament, including the Clerk, the Hansard team, the Marshall, the orderlies, and the general staff, Mr. Speaker, the security and those who work in. the lounge and other areas, who have had to deal with me throughout the years, and in particular, the last year or so.

Mr. Speaker, I also like to pay tribute to you for your impartiality.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. D. SMITH: I must say that - as you know, I have said it to you; I was expecting that you wouldn't have been here now, but you are still here and I want to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SHAW: I wonder where he was supposed to be.

(Laughter)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn to the first area of responsibility I would like to address today which is that of Leader of Opposition Business in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, the Government boasts that it was able to deliver more than 40 pieces of Legislation during the 2013/2014 year. This is very commendable, of course. However, both the Leader of the House and the Leader of Government Business in the Senate, seem to conveniently ignore the fact that without the cooperation of the Opposition, the Government would not have achieved that target.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Applause)

Mr. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, it was our strong commitment to Jamaica's growth, development and prosperity...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: That is not true. We have commended you.

Mr. DALLEY: Many occasions.

Mr. SMITH: ...as well as maturity as an able Opposition which led us to take the position, which we felt, was in the best interest of the nation socially and economically.

However, the Government should recognize by now, that as the Leader of the Opposition said in the Budget Debate, while we will continue to behave as a democratic and patriotic force in this House, we will not abdicate our responsibility to protect the interest and the rights of the Jamaican people.

Mr. Speaker, as the Opposition, we expressed the view of a significant section of the electorate, and we help to ensure that the concerns of the various groups and interests not represented in government are not forgotten or trampled upon. This role, we believe Mr. Speaker, builds the confidence of the people in our democracy, and reassures them that their concern and interest are always ably expressed and protected in this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, this side is concerned about the way the Government has abused our cooperation...

A MEMBER: What!

Mr. D. SMITH: ...in terms of how it has handled the tabling and consultation on these Bills, in a manner which should be far more efficient and transparent than what we have been experiencing. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. D. SMITH: I mean, when you bring it come here one day and want it to debate the same day.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Tell us what you want. A Bill come here and wants to debate...

Mr. SHAW: No, no, don't answer him. You have to tell us where you got that suit first before you answer anything else.

(Applause)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I am appealing to the Leader of the House to see that there is improvement in the future programmes, going forward, to ensure that the House finds ways and means to facilitate important meetings.

Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, to me, one of the most disgraceful features of the Government treatment of Parliament in the Estimates of Expenditure has been the allocation made for the housekeeping expenses of the Office of the Leader of Opposition. (Applause)

The Office was not conceived by us as a shrine to our democracy. It is one of the most tangible evidence of democracy and was established as an expression of the country's strong belief in the democratic process. It is therefore, Mr. Speaker, inconceivable that even the utilities of this Office would have become the subject of media reports, in cases where they are either cut off by the utility company, or in danger of being cut off because of unpaid bills.

Mr. Speaker that was not the position that prompted us as a government to establish the Office. I think that the public agrees with us that some special consideration should be given to the office of the Leader of the Opposition because it represents a large and important element of the democratic process. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this Government has taken the decision that it will not proceed with the plan of the previous Government to expand the current premises by acquiring additional properties for an upgraded Parliament. We have a genuine strong democracy, and a Parliament building that can accommodate our work and become the nucleus of our Parliamentary process is essential for it to work properly.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: So you agree?

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I chaired a committee which did a fair amount of work, in terms of expanding and modernizing this Parliament. Unfortunately, it was brought to a halt, and we are where we are today. Mr. Speaker, you know when you travel all over the world, you appreciate the respect that some countries have for their democratic system, how they host and treat their Parliamentarians, and that is sadly lacking here.

What has happened, Mr. Speaker is, to my mind, is a fair level amongst respective parties, both Government and Opposition, about taking the steps to build a Parliament, which this country deserves. They are afraid of the backlash of the populace. But it is not going to cost any less next year, 10 years or 30 years' time, and I do hope that when we get back to office, our Prime Minister will have the guts to make final plans to build a Parliament which is truly representative of the situation here in Jamaica. (Applause)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: That is an election promise.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn to the main subject of my presentation which is the performance of the Ministry oil National Security, and its projections for the next 12 years. But before I do that Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Leader for affording me the opportunity for a second chance to deal with this particular portfolio.

Mr. DALLEY: I was waiting - a second chance yuh get, you know, don't blow it.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Don't blow it; don't blow it.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, it is a portfolio that I have grown close to. I have been overseeing the portfolio of National Security for - from the year 2004, which this year is 20 years, of course, with a break in the middle, but I love the portfolio, and I have spent some time under-studying it.

Mr. Speaker, looking at the Estimates of Expenditure for the 2014/2015 as they relate to the Ministry, I noted that the Minister said that it works out to approximately 9.7 per cent of the total Budget after debt payment for the financial year which is less than the 10.5 per cent that the Ministry received in 2013. And taking into consideration that inflation was just above the 8 per cent level since last year,

it is quite obvious that there is absolutely nothing to suggest any improvement in the capacity or the capabilities of the Ministry, its department and agencies for this financial year.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Very flawed.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the most important announcement, in terms of policy development, seems to be the merger of the Island Special Constabulary Force with the Jamaica Constabulary Force. But this is a move which had been around - had been years in making, and probably would have been completed prior to now without the personality conflicts between the two arms of the police force then.

We understand that the merger has now been completed, but we are not satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that it was done as seamlessly as it should have been. We suggest that the Government pay attention to the possibility of profiling, which could affect the relationship between the personnel, and ultimately, affect the morale of the force. Mr. Speaker, we believe that, as one newspaper said, the whole affair was very messy. We believe it wasn't properly handled. We believe it was done in great haste. We believe it was done without...

A MEMBER: Take out blue seam and put in red seam, what kind of foolishness that?

Mr. D. SMITH: ...appropriate consideration for the delicate issues that were involved. We believe that it was poorly handled. The Minister said in his presentation about a few hiccups. Well, we don't share the fact that there were just a few hiccups; we feel that the Minister should apologize. We feel the Minister should apologize to those persons who were affected by the mess that happened, in terms of the bringing together of the two forces.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. D. SMITH: Is not we alone say so; the newspaper says so. Look at the cartoon; the cartoon said so; it is a disgrace, and you should apologize. And you have a good forum to apologize later this week out in Ocho Rios, and you should not miss that opportunity.

Mr. BUNTING: You will be there; you will be there, Derrick?

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the Minister has also promised...

(Cross talk)

Mr. SHAW: Don't answer them; don't answer them.

Mr. D. SMITH: The Minister has also promised significant developments, in terms of investment in equipment, including the forces telecommunication system and the Automated Palm And Fingerprint Identification System. While we welcome the developments, and we agree that they will increase the operational efficiency of the force and enhance its investigative capacity, we recognize that there are very basic improvements which should have been done from last year. We recognized the importance of these improvements to the Ministry's programmes to contain crime and violence, but we need to see how effective these systems will be in the context of this crime fighting policy.

I am not afraid Mr. Speaker to repeat what I have said outside of Parliament before, that

crime has risen under every PNP Administration since Independence. (Applause) It is an indisputable fact that it is only under a Jamaica Labour Party Administration that the country had seen significant reduction in crime. (Applause) The country knows that the PNP is soft on crime probably because of the populace policies and no amount of intellectual gymnastics can change that fact.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the facts are - if you use 1980 as the base-year where, when we left office Mr. Speaker, moving from a figure of 880 when we left in '89, the murders fell to just 400, just about 413. It increased during the PNP's 18½ years by 400%. Let me repeat that. It increased during the PNP's Administration, right, while they were here for 18½ years by 400%, right. And when we got back to office in 1989, and when in 2007, and when we demitted office in 2011, we brought crime down again much lower than what it was when we got into office.

Mr. Speaker, last year the murder rate began to peak and the Minister cannot afford to be complacent because there are some reductions in the statistics this year. I've heard him and the other members of the Police High Command gloating about what has happened. When the Minister spoke last week he seemed to have been satisfied with what he says was the 8% this year *versus* last year year-to-date.

Mr. Speaker… and he seems to have been satisfied as he said it's going in the right direction. Well, I don't agree with you, Minister, it's going in the wrong direction, and I'll tell you why, I'll tell you why.

In January this year, any year-to-date compared to last year, we were 15% less than 2013. In March this year, we got to 13% less than last year year-to-date. In April this year it remained at 13% less. In May this year, Mr. Speaker, when the Minister spoke, it was 8% year-to-date less than last year. As we speak now or as of the 17th of May this year, it is 7% less year-to-date than last year.

So Mr. Minister and those who are listening will obviously see that it's going in the wrong direction. It's not something to laugh about; it's a very serious thing, right; it's definitely going in the wrong direction.

But speaking about statistics, Mr. Speaker, probably it's a good time to speak about an issue that has been around for many months. It's an issue that I have brought to this House already and I've asked the Minister to investigate and he promised that he would and supply the House with the findings of the investigation. And I'm talking about this strong rumour regarding bullets being made in Jamaica by some illegal machines.

Why it is significant, Mr. Speaker? Not only that it is being pushed out there, but the statistics tells me that something is not right. When we look at the ammunition recovered by the police - and I am quoting from the Police statistics, Mr. Speaker - it says that in 2011 – 2400 they recovered; 2012 - 2,104; in 2013 - 2,400 and in 2014 so far - 3,339, that seems like approximately a 40% increase this year over last year.

Mr. Speaker, I have been listening, I hold no brief for anyone but I'm concerned. I'm concerned because as we know, as I said the ammunition find is baffling - a 40% increase, and as you know the gun by itself is harmless, it has to have the ammunition to be killing and wounding and maiming Jamaicans.

So Minister, I say to you again, I have seen the Chairman of FLA who seems to have taken responsibility for finding out the origin of the bullet-making machine seemed - I don't remember his name but he's waffling on television, he cannot answer a simple question. I have seen a member of the Police High Command refusing to ….

Mr. DALLEY: That's unkind.

Mr. SHAW: Be quiet!

Mr. DALLEY: Don't mislead the House.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker I have seen a member of the Police High Command unable to answer certain straight and specific questions. I am now calling Mr. Speaker on the Minister to bring to Parliament the results of his investigation that I have asked for at least three months ago. In the absence of that, if it's not brought here in a reasonable time and I am talking about the next two weeks because they have had ample time to do the investigations, and I mean if it's not here within two weeks then I'll have to table specific questions to ensure that the Minister tries to satisfy the country that what is suspected is in fact not true.

We have concerns Mr. Speaker about all of these ranges throughout the island, how often they are audited, what levels of accountability exist for ammunitions which are sold and used or not used after they are brought at these locations, and the task is yours Minister to ensure that Jamaicans get the facts, get the facts with regard.... I know you started the investigation. I know the individual and the individuals that you spoke to, so by now you should have something to bring to this Parliament to allay the fears of many of us.

Mr. Speaker, I challenge the Government to talk fair and square to the public in the interest of saving lives and changing the perception of wanton crime and corruption of our country. I challenge the Government to focus on creating a safer society in which we can all prosper rather than performing public relations contortions to try to shift the blame for their failures.

Mr. Speaker, I move briefly to INDECOM.

I believe that the Independent Commission of Investigations has been doing a very good job in dealing with the issue of police brutality. We have to recognize that changes always come with some teething problems and it is important that we give INDECOM our full support as lawful citizens when it matters.

I have no doubt that all decent, law-abiding members of the security forces welcome the presence of INDECOM because they too want to remove perception of a corrupt, violent Force which has no regard for the human rights of our citizens.

We note the recent attempt, Mr. Speaker, to suggest that crime and violence increased suddenly in Clarendon because some

policemen had been arrested in connection with some murders and they were refused bail and this demotivated the police in that parish.

We will not accept that suggestion because we believe that the vast majority of members of the security forces are decent, law-abiding officers who welcomed the oversight and who know that they have nothing to fear as long as they operate within the confines of the law.

But you know what is interesting Mr. Speaker is that there seems to be - as I have said, Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a force who, using one of the television stations, on a regular basis, to give the impression that mayhem exists in Clarendon because some police persons have been arrested and they have not been offered bail and crime, murders out of range there.

Well I am saying nonsense, not true.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Bunting)

Mr. D. SMITH: It is not true because the police statistics which I go by not 'hear sey'. The police statistics is showing in that parish a 26% reduction in murders over last year year-to-date. So that propaganda which is being carried on a particular radio station to mislead…

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Bunting)

Mr. D. SMITH: I deal with facts that I see from the police. The Member of Parliament statistics could be different from mine, but I got mine from the police. And there is a 26% reduction this year over last year. So....

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

A Government MEMBER: No more time.

(Heckling)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended sufficient to allow him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently for him to complete his presentation?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Members of the House. I won't detain you because I recognize there's another speaker scheduled for some time this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I will now move to Science and Technology as it relates to national security.

In 2008 we made a commitment to a greater use of science and technology in our effort to solve crime, including increased use of DNA technology. We gave an undertaking to table and have legislation passed to enable the establishment of the DNA database in Jamaica, and to allow for the admission of DNA evidence in our criminal justice system.

Mr. Speaker, we did not claim to be the initiators of this effort to introduce DNA technology into the system. The DNA Bill was first promised by the current Minister of Finance and Planning from as far back as 2006 when he led the Ministry of [National] Security. The first draft of a Cabinet submission was done in mid-2007, passed and drafting instructions issued in mid-2008. We have a Member here who can attest to that, the

Member from North East St. Andrew, who can attest to that fact.

Mr. Speaker, in light of this, it surprises me that the current Minister told the nation that the first time he received a draft of the Bill was in November 2012. Quite strange. Where was the Bill for a whole year? Mr. Speaker, the Government changed in 2007, we continued the process to a stage where the Bill was ready to be tabled, however, since returning to office, the Government seems to be having second thoughts about introducing it.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister himself, in a response to our questions in the recent Standing Finance Committee meetings, admitted that there was no allocation in the Estimates to further the process, and that it will take some time. Mr. Speaker, this is important. This is urgent and we implore on the Government, in the absence of the Minister, we implore on the Government to ensure that this be given priority.

Mr. Speaker, it has taken close to 10 years already, including the period of conception, one whole decade of increased crime and violence and the Government is still showing an inability to table the Bill in Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister gave the country an assurance that last year the Bill would come to Parliament in January this year. Five months later we are being told by the Minister that it is still waiting on the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel to provide the final document. Certainly, we agree with Minister that the Bill is not a panacea, but after so many years of investing in this process and the related promises, it is time for the Bill to be tabled now.

We have had enough delays. The development of forensic science and the ability to obtain genetic matching on minute samples of blood, skin, saliva and hair has become an essential ingredient of forensic crime-fighting, and Jamaica with its record of crime and violence, cannot continue to ignore the value of important scientific input.

(Applause by Government Member)

Mr. Speaker, I am also concerned about the delays in introducing things like the ShotSpotter, and the fact that the Minister has given us no update on the introduction of body cameras. The Minister was gung-ho when he made the announcement about the introduction of body cameras for police and other personnel who engage in dangerous operations. He spoke last week, he hasn't mentioned a word about it, he has had press conferences subsequently and we haven't heard anything at all about it, and I know the police themselves are concerned if it was just something given to the media at the time of the killing just to take them off shot.

Mr. Speaker, for those Members who may not recall, the ShotSpotter is gunshot-detection system, or a gunshot-sensor system designed to detect the boom of bullets that travel faster than the speed of sound. The ShotSpotter relies on an acoustics-based GPS-equipped system that automatically locates the origin of the shot and notifies authorities. Police officials in Washington D.C., who have used it, say that it cuts the shots fired response time in half. ShotSpotter also records all

detected gunfire and corresponding locations for later forensic use. The cost of implementation for the ShotSpotter system can range from hundreds of thousands of dollars for a small area to millions of dollars to cover an entire city the size of D.C., but it has become a very essential technology in crime-fighting.

In 2012, the Commissioner of Police made a request for the police to be armed with this important device and in fact, publicly stated that discussions were ongoing with the Minister of National Security. That's 2012. We are two years after and that situation seemed to have died a natural death.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister said then, and I quote from the newspapers:

"We have looked at it in several places. It has a record of significantly reducing gun crimes and gunfire in the range of 40 to 60 per cent in some areas where it has been used. We believe that if this capacity is built out in many of our crime-prone communities, it will immediately and significantly enhance public safety."

Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner made another appeal in 2013 for its acquisition. The Minister should, at least, let us know what is the Government's position on the acquisition of the technology. The Minister did not say a single word, either about the acquisition or of that of the body cameras for the JCF.

In January this year, the Minister announced at a post Cabinet briefing plans for select police units to wear body cameras to deal with allegations of extra-judicial killings and professional misconduct by members of the force. *The Daily Gleaner* reported on the 13th of May, that the Minister promised the newspaper to be more definitive about the implementation of the equipment when he spoke in the Sectoral Debate on that day. Well, the rest is history. The quote that time from the newspaper is;

"Bunting has not said much since the announcement, but yesterday, in response to Gleaner queries, he signalled that he will be shedding light on the use of body cameras today when he makes his contribution to the Sectoral Debate in the House of Representatives."

The Minister said in January that the project would commence rollout in the second half of the year. We haven't reached the second half of the year as yet, but the fact that he hasn't even mentioned it in his Sectoral speech raises a red flag.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that like the rest of us, the Minister was excited about the fact that CCTV played a very important role in the quick capture of the 2 "Boston Bombers" in 2013. As we have seen in many other locations throughout the world, I too was impressed with the speed with which they were apprehended and this has increased my interest, as well as the interest of many people around the world who are interested in the use of Identity CCTV Networks.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the increased use of CCTV, paired with the increasing availability of smart phones, is going to play a very critical role in our crime-fighting

programme in the future. The idea of CCTV is obviously not a new one in Jamaica, and I welcomed the announcement that there will be increased financing for CCTV this year. However the Minister has not been really straightforward as to exactly what he plans to do and how it will be financed. We accept, Mr. Speaker that it's quite expensive to implement in strategic locations throughout the country, in particular these crime-infested areas but the Minister needs to level with us and keep us abreast of what is happening. He needs to take the Opposition and the public more in his confidence, consult, discuss the issues, if he expects to have the full support of the law abiding population for his policies. Yes, Mr. Minister crime, like education and health are not issues which can remain secretive.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say at this stage that we in the Opposition recognized that we have to go in the future with a lot of forensics and technological input in our crime-fighting and in our whole national security programme in the future, and we are preparing ourselves and we have already established a subcommittee within our security portfolio so as to do a lot of studies on these equipment, do costing, do scheduling of when and how they can be brought into the system when a new administration is in office. And I am proud to announce, Mr. Speaker, that the deputy spokesperson in the National Security portfolio has been tasked with that job to do that on behalf of the Opposition.

The deputy spokesperson, by the way, is one Pearnel Charles Jr. I know that's like a dagger in your heart, because you all thought when you sent the senior Pearnel to prison that that was the end of him. Well, here he is another one coming.

(Laughter)

Mr. Speaker -

(Cross talk by Government Member)

Mr. Speaker, you see, Sister P was around, Sister P is the only one who was there when he went to prison, you know, so she don't consider it a joke. You know, it's a serious matter.

Mr. Speaker, I remember in his Inauguration Speech in 2011, Prime Minister of Jamaica, at the time, albeit for a brief stint, the current Leader of the Opposition suggested to the current Prime Minister who was then Leader of Opposition, that they walk together through the garrison communities as a symbol of cooperation in removing the stigma of garrison politics. The then Leader of the Opposition and now Prime Minister refused and the then Prime Minister was even ridiculed for making the proposal. Now I am happy to see that the Minister of National Security has embraced that suggestion in his anti-crime strategy and has been leading bipartisan peace marches throughout crime hit garrison communities. Well done, Minister. You have taken the lead; you have accepted the lead from the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome the transformation, but I just need to show him how simple cooperation against crime can be if we remove the political blinkers and look at the problem and solution with open minds.

(Applause by Opposition Member)

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say something briefly on Unite for Change. The Minister had even taken the suggestion much further under the Unite for Change programme. He is engaged in a number of social events: football matches, shows, pageants, *et cetera* to attract the attention of the residents of these garrison communities. I have nothing against these efforts. Everything has to be tried, in a mix, to increase the profile of social intervention, but I want the Minister to exclude partisanship. Find people on both sides of the divide, whether it is the political divide, the religious divide or even the colour/class divide, to serve. Do not limit to a few chosen lieutenants who we are politically pleased with.

I note the contemplation to grade communities. There are questions about who will be doing the grading and how transparent and inclusive the programme will be. Effort should be made to ensure balance in how you allocate the resources, especially in choosing the communities to benefit.

My discussions with people show that very little is known about the programme amongst both civilians and the security forces. I think you need to rev up the public relations on it.

Another question that I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, is what about incentives for communities that have shown great improvement in terms of crime? One comes to mind readily, Marverly.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Government Member)

Mr. D. SMITH: Yes. Since 2010 Mr. Speaker, there are only two murders in that community, two too much - too many. But the fact is, prior to that, it was one of those communities that had been stigmatized in relation to violence and they have been doing very well. So I say, Minister, where is the incentives for those who are doing well. Because what has happened is that the incentive and the resources are those who are doing badly and you want them to do well. So those that are doing well need some incentives and I use Marverly only as an example, and I am sure there are many others.

It's a community which, perhaps I would like to put on record, which has produced young Sterling, right, who has made the England team to World Cup, Raheem Sterling from Marverly. He left there when he was about six, right, and he is a motivation to the youths in the community now when he visits and he sends resources to support the local football team, Marverly- Hughenden who are doing very well actually on the Major League. (Applause) So bear that in mind, Mr. Minister, bear that in mind.

Mr. Speaker, this leads me now to the National Security Policy which was tabled here perhaps two, three weeks ago. And also too, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I must confess that I have not fully digested the document. But there are some issues which have been highlighted that have attracted my attention. For example, I am very concerned about the suggestion that crime is benefitting from a higher level of tolerance of criminals

and their activities within the society. I am sure the Minister must be concerned himself and, in fact, every Member of both Houses of Parliament.

I would like to quote one paragraph from the tabled document, from the section dealing with threats relating to crime, which states, and I quote:

> "The level of crime has increased over the years and consequently the pattern of criminal activity reflects a greater degree of organization and coordination. This situation was worsened by what appears - and this is the rub, Mr. Speaker - by what appears to be an increased tolerance of crime and criminals within the wider society".

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a frightening situation that as a country, because we have been afflicted with this crime, disease - you have a term for it - for so long that we just accept it. We don't even resist it. It's just the norm, you know. And, Mr. Speaker, it really is frightening that a situation like this exists in our country.

Mr. Speaker, we all have to admit that it's a very, very serious indictment on us as political leaders of the nation. It is an indictment on the church as the moral leaders of our society, civil society leaders, our crime-fighting mechanism, including its personnel, our students' institutions, our family institutions and our society in general. In fact, it is so critical an issue that it should require the immediate and full recognition of our Prime Minister as a major priority in terms of government planning and policy direction. We cannot afford to ignore a culture that is becoming (increasing) to tolerance of crime and criminals. I hope that we are not just having this policy document tabled and ignored. It demands immediate attention if we have any faith whatsoever in the arguments that are raised in the document.

Mr. Speaker, we must increase our efforts to undermine criminal dons and their organizations which continue to impress the poor with their ability to achieve and distribute wealth and to use it as means of escaping the law and luring our young people into their activities. I agree with the sentiment that law enforcement activities alone cannot provide adequate response to the problem. We need to do something urgently about the court system.

But before I go to the court system, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say, Minister, Unite for Change, it sounds good, it sounds exciting, but really there is a lot of work to be done. I took the opportunity to ask 10 police personnel at different ranks if they have heard about it and if they understand it; none, not one, most haven't heard about it. One even asked me if it was the merger that I was calling Unite for Change.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You go on the bus?

Mr. D. SMITH: No, I don't go on the bus. I did that 50 years ago. You go on the bus and our Leader goes on the bus because our Leader perhaps is 50 years younger than me.

(Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, we need to do something urgently about the court system. The long

delays in trials are seriously affecting the confidence of the people and its promoting jungle justice which the criminal gangs strive on. We need to ensure that legislation that we are passing are effective and in use. We can't afford to pass legislation and then hear nothing more about them. Where are the [pieces of] legislation to improve the court environment in terms of witness protection, modern technology for video evidence? I have not heard another word about these for the past two years.

I have always advocated that sustainable reduction in crime requires deliberate and focused strategies, coordinated law enforcement, justice and social development programmes at the national, community and individual levels to address the causal factors and prevent further spread as it relates in the Ministry Paper. It is obvious that the Government alone and in particular, this Government, cannot handle the crime issue and having realized that the criminal elements are making a mockery of the Government's efforts.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister should take note of a statement recently reported in the Press from lotto scammers, who claimed that despite the legislation and renewed efforts to destroy their activities, they will continue the scammers say...

Mr. SHAW: With impunity.

Mr. D. SMITH: With impunity.

….say they are going to continue anyhow. They have all sorts of reasons for it. Some of them say that's how they interpret reparation. That's what they say. That is their problem.

We must unite, Mr. Speaker, not just for change in garrison communities but for a total change in how we approach the issue of reducing crime, penalizing criminals, protecting witnesses and giving Jamaicans renewed confidence in our ability to secure them from harm and protect them when they come forward to give information as witnesses in the courts. We must reassure the nation of our ability to secure and protect them from the criminals - from the crime, as the JDF's motto implies, if we are to remove this threat of tolerance.

Mr. Speaker, in the interest of time I won't go to extortion and praedial larceny; praedial larceny which seems - some people are of the view that it's an agricultural issue. My feeling it is a national security issue - people *tiefing* people things. They must be caught; strategies must be put in place, they must be locked up and they must go prison for a long time.

Extortion, that's another issue. Minister, you know, I was so very disappointed when I raised the issue of extortion some months ago and I heard you on "Beyond the Headlines" suggesting that I was being mischievous - you said you checked with the Commissioner- nothing like that. Then I realize the type of Minister I am dealing with, that he doesn't really understand what is going on in the field. But I think you have subsequently recognized that it is one of the main problems out there. It's the one that offers nowadays financing to the criminals to buy the weapons, to buy the ammunition, *et cetera, et cetera*.

Mr. SHAW: And deprive taxation.

Mr. D. SMITH: That's it. That's it.

Mr. Speaker, in closing let me just say that the Jamaica Labour Party stands ready to champion the cause on behalf of the people in terms of reducing crime or bringing crime to tolerable level in this country.

(Applause)

And as we have outlined before, Mr. Speaker, we are making the preparation. We recognize the route that must be taken, the forensic; the technology. We have the personnel already being trained and some already trained and experienced to take this country out of this mire of crime.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you and thank my colleagues for listening to me this evening.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

(The Speaker left the Chair at 5:57 p.m. and the Deputy Speaker presides)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Bloomfield. (Applause)

You will need to seek permission to speak from a seat other than your own.

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I now seek your permission to speak from a seat other than the one afforded me by the constituents of East Portland and the House.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Permission granted.

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise in this noble House and to speak from this place on behalf of the people of East Portland.

I must hasten to thank my sovereign God, who continues to be my refuge and indeed, my strength. I thank also my family and friends for their unfailing support. Thanks to the Prime Minister - who continues to be the first among equals in this House - for setting the sterling example of unflinching service, and for her continued confidence in me. (Applause)

On behalf of the people of East Portland, I thank the Ministers of Government, the Ministries and Agencies, for the work that they have extended and the services that they have contributed to the people of East Portland.

My great and sincere thanks to the Councillors - and here I see one of the longest serving Councillors in Jamaica, Councillor Dexter Roland, among... (Applause) ...my loyal workers and members of the constituency, who journeyed here today and who make my experience from day to day more manageable.

And, to you, Mr. Speaker, for your guidance in matters of this House.

I hasten to salute the presentation and work of the Minister of Youth and Culture who so ably presented just now, and who continues to hold in her hands the cup of our nation's youth and the portfolio, the crucible called Culture, simply the expression of the accumulated experiences of our people so greatly admired worldwide. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, someone mentioned Esther a few days ago, in reference to our beloved Prime Minister. I can also say so in reference to our Minister of Youth and Culture.

Mr. Speaker, the book of Esther not once uses the word "God", even though his sovereignty is demonstrated throughout. But it does speak specifically to an outstanding beauty queen who, in Chapter 2 verse 7, is called "lovely in form and feature", in today's language, a "knockout".

(Laughter/Applause)

Mr. HOLNESS: This is the Parliament!

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: But the book - but, Mr. Speaker, the book goes beyond the surface and describes her as "deliberate and caring, loyal and teachable, and above all things, courageous", in Esther's well-known speech, "If I perish, I perish".

Thank you for your courageous words and actions, as you go forward in delivering that which is best for our young people, as this country moves into the future. So take the words of scripture in 1st Timothy, which says, "Fight the good fight of faith".

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: And in 2nd Timothy it says: "For God did not give you the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of self discipline".

Mr. Speaker, no doubt in this House, in order to move forward we ought to consider the issues of our constituencies, and so I quickly mention a few things about our constituency. But before I do that, let me hasten, Mr. Speaker, to express on behalf of the people of East Portland, our sympathy on the loss of life of Braeden and Brandon, the nine-year-old twin in your constituency of St. James, Central.

I will speak very briefly on some constituency matters before I address the Progressive Agenda, which is, in fact, the mission set before us, which is the Economic Agenda.

Mr. Speaker, education continues to be the backbone and future of our sustainable development in this country. It was Nelson Mandela who said that education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world. So we applaud the Minister of Education for his many visits to the constituency, and for his attempts to ensure that we achieve a number of issues, for example, focusing on Early Childhood Education, in securing the safety and security of these young ones, by the erection of a number of fences around these institutions.

Our literacy and numeracy results, our GSAT results are not as we would like them to be, but we are in the process of continuing to deal with the challenges that mitigate against such development.

Developmental challenges continue in the shortage of available high school places and the paucity of skills-training centres in the constituency. In the midst of all this, a new block is to be established at the Port Antonio High School and the establishment and expansion of the Portland High. Many other changes are envisaged and we, ourselves, continue to play our part by doing our annual back-to-school free medicals, as we continue to contribute.

(Applause)

We also thank the Japanese for their involvement in the re-establishment of CASE

and Titchfield High Schools, as a result of the destruction by Sandy... (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: ...and of the Bank of Nova Scotia, for their help with the Norwich Primary School.

In terms of infrastructure, we continue to establish the Port Antonio Water, Sewage and Drainage Project, Phase 1, at the tune of One point Eight Billion Dollars ($1.8B)… (Applause) ...which the Government has established so that we can set the infrastructure in order to be able to achieve some level of sustainable development.

Nevertheless, the rugged, mountainous terrain of this very attractive parish poses many challenges. And so we continue to look towards the Minister of State in Transport, Works and Housing to continue to help us... (Applause) ...so that we can move forward.

Of course, other development challenges such as the water delivery, road development, electrical power, telecommunications and housing, continue to be serious challenges. We look forward to continued help from the relevant agencies.

Agriculture of course, continues to be challenged, and the Minister has also been working assiduously to help us.

Mr. Speaker, there are over 6,500 registered farmers with RADA, in Portland, about 1,500 are women and only 130 of the 6,500 are below 30 years old. And, so we are pleading with the Minister to ensure that we have strategies to engage these young persons, in order to ensure that agriculture continues for the future.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: As a matter of fact, production is up in many areas. Our challenge now is to find the markets that will be able to absorb the new thrust in production. (Applause) And we thank the Minister.

In Health Care, the Minister has paid a timely visit after nearly two years, and we are grateful. Now we will be having changes in terms of improvement in the operating theatre expansion, the maternity ward and of course, general upkeep of the hospital. (Applause)

Also, there was a tour by the Minister who, of course, toured all the health centres, and we will be having some development in those areas.

Mr. Speaker, Tourism continues to be the cradle that is now slowly beginning to rock again. We have had various visits by the Minister and the Minister of State. We have had four completed projects this year to the tune of Forty Seven Million Dollars ($47M). (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: And, certainly, we look forward to the development and expansion of other areas in tourism.

We thank the other Ministers who have journeyed to be with us, the Minister of Labour and Social Security, who has been of great help to us in Portland.

There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that Portland continues to languish as one of those parishes at the bottom level of the poverty indicators in this country, and we are greatly concerned. And we are looking forward to the various agencies and Ministries in the

Government, to afford us some of the opportunities for further development. In fact, the people are saying that they are just sick and tired of being sick and tired of the bad roads, of the lack of water supply, the health-care neglect and so on.

It is only as a result, Mr. Speaker; it is only as a result of the advent of this new Government that we are now afforded some hope.

(Government Members applaud)

(Cross talk/Laughter)

And I thank the Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change... (Applause) ...for his great concern and for his bold move in establishing this system which is about to complete Phase 1 in December, and we look forward to Phase 2 in the coming year.

Mr. Speaker, it is no doubt that many issues in this House are of challenge to us. But, Mr. Speaker, I would want to turn to the Growth Agenda very quickly.

It is no secret that the nation faces a crisis of sustainable development. Someone said that a crisis is a terrible thing to waste. But what is this sustainable development? It is James Gustar, an Administrator at the UNDP, who said that:

> "Development not only generates economic growth but distributes its benefits equitably, that regenerates the environment rather than destroying it. that empowers people rather than marginalizing them, that gives priority to the poor, enlarging their choices and opportunities and providing their participation in decisions that affect them, i.e., pro-poor, pro-jobs, pro-nature, pro-women and pro-children."

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Government has laid out its own plans to confront this crisis, and has laid out its plans publicly.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time, now is the hour. Now we have to seize the moment if we are going to develop. And for too long we have been in this House at odds.

Mr. Speaker, if we are going to drive this country and its development forward, we have to stop looking in the rear-view mirror. Unfortunately, what I have heard through the debates have been a constant litany of what was, what used to be, who did what better than who, and who can and who will better than who. And if we continue in this light we will not band together in the thrust for sustainable development, as I just quoted. (Applause)

It was Nehemiah in Chapter 2 verse 18 which said:

> "Then they said, let us start building.
> So they committed themselves to the common good."

It is this common good that I am appealing to our leaders, if our leaders are going to be the true leaders for the generations to come. Certainly, many of us have been part of that fifty years of underdevelopment, as a result. No wonder persons are at liberty to call us "dutty politicians".

It is up to us now to be able to lead by example, to be able to ensure that good actions are caught and not taught. It must be now that we begin to equip this generation for the new leadership that is necessary. The youth who

must now focus the epicentre of a new progressive development agenda, where economy is at its heart.

Our youth, Mr. Speaker, are innovative and creative, they are dynamic, they are prolific, they are terrific, in fact, they are swaggerific. (Laughter) We have a lot of young persons who want just an opportunity and who want to seize the moment. As Etana would indirectly suggest that we need to "'lou the youth".

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes!

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: And Mr. Speaker, if this is going to work, we are the ones who must work it. We are the ones who are leaders, and if we are leaders, it assumes that we have followers. Leadership is not whether we have influence, as politicians, true leadership is how we use that influence. (Applause) It is the capacity to translate vision into reality, for without a vision the people perish. But without a people the vision perish. So, it is up to us to guide our young people, to influence them so that the next generation will be the one desired of developing sustainably, this country.

It was Bill Gates who said that the next generation of leaders in this century are those who empower others, who influence people positively by motivating and inspiring others to perform at their highest level and their best selves; to create followers by choice and not by force, to nurture, grow, build and develop others, and to motivate and cause others to follow us.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be very quick in suggesting two things. Last year I suggested that we all select at least one thing that we can use to develop our communities. I chose to work with the disabled, and so I established STEPS and RAILS... (Applause) ...and the result has been very, very positive. Mr. Speaker, it is time for action. In here we've been very descriptive, we've been very prescriptive, it is now time to be active and to be transformative.

I suggest two things that I am prepared, and I've mentioned it to my constituents already, we've engaged the PBC and the Resort Board and of course, the Parish Council and indeed, the other stakeholders, two simple things that I think this House must start by leading, and one of them is our time management.

One aspect of this time management is punctuality, and I suspect that our inefficiency that has been alluded to so many times is as a direct result of our lack of proper time management. We tend to be at least 25 to 30 minutes late most opportunities we get to meet. I suggest that if we get here at 2:00 or if we start at 2.00 o'clock, I'm sure that we can get much more work done. I suspect discipline is encouraged by some element of coercion. Mr. Speaker, I think if we start on time regardless of who is here, even though once we get a quorum, then I think we can do much better in terms of the efficiencies. Also, if we can stay a little longer and put a little more on the agenda when we come, then we would do much, much better and productivity and national development will result.

Mr. Speaker, the second thing I'm going to talk about is what I call Operation CLEAN

- C-L-E-A-N - Consciously Lifting Environmental Awareness Now. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: Mr. Speaker, one person on social media recently - and I suspect it's not even a Jamaican - was so disgusted with how we behave and how we treat with each other says:

"Brand Jamaica always was, always will be a poverty stricken, dysfunctional third world outhouse"

Somebody who is bitter against who we are, and I suspect that our only answer is to lift our level. We need to clean up our human environment, and I suspect that Unite for Change is one such example where we can. I think joined-up government in seizing the moment, is a way to answer our detractors.

Mr. Speaker, in driving here every time I'm appalled at the state of our roads, our roadways, the level of cleanliness and orderliness that is in our country. It is unspeakable that we can hope to develop, if we cannot simply take care of our environment. It cannot be that because we're poor that we cannot be clean. It cannot be that because we're poor that we cannot be organized. It cannot be because we're poor that we cannot be much more organized in our way of life. Our roadways are dirty and contempt - and unkempt; our zinc fence environment as part of our - major part of our built environment should now be a thing of the past. It cannot cost that much money for us to begin to organize at the community level. And here I looked at the joined-up government:

- Health education through HEART;
- Agriculture through RADA;
- Local Government through SDC; and the NSWMA.
- The Ministry of Youth and Culture through NYS, through CHASE, JSIF, JEEP.
- Ministry of Land, Water Environment and Climate Change are all different aspects.

I wish the Ministry of Youth would establish a department of mobilization because our young people are willing to work, they're willing to come together to make sure that we take care of our basic environment.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: A true dat.

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: There are inner cities and ghettos even in the deep rural Jamaica; the zinc fences are cropping up everywhere. And it is up to us, as politicians, as Members of Parliament, as leaders of our communities, to form a CLEAN club initiative... (Applause ...to form CLEAN competitions through constituency development organization; to establish CLEAN fun through youth activities and to establish CLEAN funds through establishing communications with our private sector so that we can make a difference.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: Michael Manley once said in the up down escalator:

"*A society may be said to be developed to the extent it is able to define and achieve equitable, just, social purposes*".

The definition is useful because it helps us to separate myth from reality in considering

alternate path to development and in assessing their likely consequences. Michael Manley established the concept of self-reliance. And as we go into Labour Day, it is an excellent opportunity for us to initiate in our own little environment, this Operation CLEAN.

In 'The Politics of Change', Michael Manley said:

> "The political challenge is to draw it altogether so that it provides the foundation for total national effort".

So let us go out and do it. Let us stop being so descriptive of phenomenon, we describe everything under the sun. Our talk shows constantly describe everything. It is time for us to transform things. Labour Day is an excellent way to relaunch this concept of self-reliance to make it real and to make it happen.

It was Stewart White who said:

> "*Do not attempt to do a thing unless you are sure of yourself, but do not relinquish it simply because someone else is not sure of you*".

(Applause)

And finally it was Norman Washington Manley, an architect of our modern Jamaica who said:

> "*We are not lacking in ideas, what we lack is fixity of purpose*".

Are we going to seize the moment? Are we going to focus? Are we going to set targets and agendas and goals and objectives? Are we going to make them realistic and real and achievable? Are we going to make it possible for us to at least be able to suggest that sustainable development is on the way?

It was someone who said:

> *"I promise to stand up for justice, brotherhood and peace".*

It is up to us now to stand up, to seize the moment, to seize the moment as no other time before; to clean up our own constituency and to clean up Jamaica; to look up as Portlanders and to look up Jamaica; to stand up as Portlanders and to stand up Jamaica.

One of our noble sons said:

> "*Up you mighty race; you can accomplish what you will*."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Very well said. Excellent!

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we again want to wish you all that is good for your birthday and hopefully you will be able to enjoy the rest of the day.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: It is not intended to do any further business today so I move that the Parliament be adjourned until tomorrow, May 21, at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House adjourns until May 21, Wednesday, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The House was adjourned accordingly at 6:25 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, May 21, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:30 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Dr. Dayton Campbell

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Before we get down to today's business, let us welcome our special guests today: former Members of Parliament, members of the Diplomatic Corps. I hope they find today's sitting interesting.

(Applause)

(HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Water, Land Environment and Climate Change, entered and took his seat.)

PUBLIC BUSINESS

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we will continue with the Sectoral Debates. This afternoon we have three presenters: the Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, the member from St. Andrew Western followed by the Opposition Spokesperson on Industry, Energy, *et cetera*, the Member from North Central St. Andrew and the Member from North Western Manchester in that order.

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, entered and took his seat.)

The SPEAKER: Minister Hylton. (Applause) Minister Hylton, before you get going. I'd just like to remind our guests that they must not participate in any way in the proceedings. Thank you.

(MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, Jamaica has jumped fifty-four places in the Logistics Performance Index, a benchmarking tool developed by the World Bank that measures logistics efficiency worldwide.

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Like a bolt of lightning Mr. Speaker, Jamaica sprinted past many of its competitors, moving from near the bottom of the table at 124 out of 160 countries in 2012, to 70 out of 160 countries in 2014.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, if we grasp the real significance of this historic development then we all will appreciate when I say Jamaica's future is here. I'll have more on that later Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, members of the Public Service (past and present), distinguished members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, members of the local and international business community, our partners from the multilateral institutions, Jamaicans at home and abroad. It is with a deep sense of honour that I rise to address Parliament, and to give an account of the stewardship of the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce in this important sectoral debate. I am grateful to the Almighty, Mr. Speaker, for His guiding hand on the work of the Ministry, its departments and agencies to achieve important outcomes for the economy and the People of Jamaica. I would like to thank my Minister of State, the Honourable Sharon Ffolkes-Abrahams for the tremendous support she has given to the Ministry and to me over the past year.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I pay tribute to the committed public servants who lead and staff the Ministry and its agencies and who continue to make their contributions, often times under challenging circumstances. To the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Vivian Brown and the hardworking staff of the Ministry, including the staff of the Logistics Hub Secretariat, I offer my thanks for their commitment to duty and to the nation.

Mr. Speaker, today, I reflect on the life and times of my mother and father who made their transitions during the course of last year. I pay homage to their sacrificial investments in my life as well as in the lives of my siblings. I will always treasure Mr. Speaker, the legacy of their values which inspired my entry into public service.

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, the burden of public office and the sacred privilege to sit in this Honourable House should never be taken lightly by any of us. I am honoured to bear this burden with the loving support of my family: my dear wife Yodit (Applause) and the apple of my eye, my daughter Nyle. (Applause) To them, and the other members of the family, I express my heartfelt appreciation for their love and encouragement.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to pay tribute to you, for your wise and steadying hand in guiding the proceedings of this House through the turbulence that sometimes characterizes the business done here on behalf of the People.

(DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning, entered and took his seat.)

To the Most Honourable Prime Minister, for her inspired leadership of the country at such a time as this, and for her belief and support in my ability to make a meaningful contribution to her Cabinet and to our nation at this time. My colleague members of the Cabinet, the leadership, members and supporters of the People's National Party, my Councillors and constituents, members of the constituency executive and here I pause to recognize that one member of the executive isn't in his usual position as he normally would here today. Mr. Speaker, he had tradegy with the death of his daughter in a very untimely manner and I'd like to say to Comrade King that our prayers are with him today.

(Cross talk)

My personal support, Mr. Speaker, my personal staff and close technical team of advisors to them I say, your sincere belief in the productive promise and the global possibilities for Jamaica remains the glue that cements our commitment to working and delivering for the People of Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, I also acknowledge the leaders of the Jamaican business community, who remain our active partners in many initiatives to advance the reform and development of business against the background of the national growth and development agenda. To them, I express the appreciation of the entire Ministry for their partnership in the process.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce is the business focused Ministry of the Government of Jamaica, and a driver in the delivery of the growth agenda. Our mission is to catalyze growth and to facilitate the creation of jobs in the Jamaican economy in order to improve the lives and economic well-being of the People of Jamaica. Mr. Speaker, we are focused on creating a new paradigm for economic growth for Jamaica. We are creating an enabling environment, where our businesses and budding entrepreneurs are beginning to see the opportunities and the tremendous promise of the Jamaica Logistics Hub Initiative.

Mr. Speaker, we are making big strides in becoming a logistics-centred economy.

We have had the debate on the Jamaica Logistic Hub, Mr. Speaker with the wider society. We have passed the Acid test; we have proof of concepts. We have the interest and the backing of the global investment community, and today, I will bring the evidence to this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, over the past 18 months we have engaged the biggest and most experienced players in global logistics. Today, we are on the radar of major global corporations, looking for a location to increase their operational efficiencies and reduce time to market in this region of the world. This is what we mean, Mr. Speaker, when we say the Logistics Hub initiative is not simply about Jamaica, it is a global asset. Jamaica again, matters to the world trading system.

(MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, let us not forget our history. Over 500 years ago, Jamaica was one of the richest places on earth as the city of Port Royal was then the centre of international trade and commerce. The merchant ships of England and Spain laden with goods would sail our waters via the Windward Passage with the aid of the northeast trade winds. Back then, even in the face of the threat of pirates and buccaneers of the Caribbean, business thrived on Port Royal was a place synonymous with riches and wealth. Mr. Speaker, we can do it again.

(Applause)

After all, a rising tide lifts all ships. Jamaica can be rich and wealthy again, Mr. Speaker. Jamaica can reclaim its status as a global hub for business. I submit, Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is the most viable option to be the next global logistics hub. This Government, this Ministry will not let this momentous opportunity slip from our grasps. We will not fail the Jamaican people. Failure, Mr. Speaker is simply not an option.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: I say to you and to this Honourable House, Jamaica's future is here. Mr. Speaker, this mission for Jamaica's economic future goes beyond the work of the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce. This mission involves the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing and its agencies, such as the Port Authority of Jamaica, Airports Authority and the Caribbean Maritime Institute. It involves the Ministry of Finance and its agencies, like Jamaica Customs and Tax Administration. It involves the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and its relentless pursuit of affordable energy for this country. It involves the Ministry of Education and all of its academic and training institutions.

Mr. Speaker, for a logistics-centred economy - this mission for a logistics-centred economy involves the Ministry of National Security - in its efforts to build a safe and secure environment for businesses to flourish; (Applause) it involves the Ministry of Justice in the administration of social and economic justice; it involves the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and all its missions and embassies around the world; it involves, Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Prime Minister and its agencies like the UDC and the NHT.

Mr. Speaker, this is a mission for the whole of Government because through joined-up governance we are receiving high investor interest in projects to improve and expand our existing seaports, airport, industrial, commercial and ICT infrastructure. Through joined-up governance, Mr. Speaker, we have started the process to develop the large scale hub projects, such as the commodity ports, cargo airports, dry dock and special economic zones. And Mr. Speaker, we are implementing the Manpower and Training Development Programmes to prepare our people to find jobs and careers in this new logistics-centred economy.

Mr. Speaker, this is what we are doing in the move to a logistics-centred economy. We are building the national quality infrastructure to enable our firms to integrate and to compete in the global markets. We are building a highly efficient cross-border trade facilitation platform to manage the inflow and outflow of goods and services in the economy, and we are putting in place the policies, legislation and regulations to govern a logistics-centred economy that will be attractive and appealing to global and local investors alike. Mr. Speaker, we are doing this together; the evidence is clear - together, as a government; together as a country; together with our international partners. Together, Mr. Speaker, we are doing this, and I say Jamaica's future is here.

Mr. Speaker, in my presentation today, I will demonstrate to this Honourable House why the Jamaica Logistic Hub initiative is no pipe dream. I will demonstrate why local businesses are now moving to capitalize on the Hub initiative, and why more of our people are embracing this initiative as a game-changer for the economic fortunes of this nation.

(MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. Speaker, what a difference a year makes. In last year's Sectoral Debate, my presentation on the Jamaica Logistic Hub initiative was denounced by some Members of the Opposition as a *pipe dream.* I was also the subject of attacks in sections of the media. Mr. Speaker, I accept this as par for the course in a robust democracy where all ideas are allowed to contend. I have learnt from my 25-years-plus experience in public life, that big game-changing ideas require time, determination, and to be received and digested.

Mr. Speaker, in all of this, I take my cue from history. Copernicus told the world that the sun was at the centre of the universe and was branded a heretic. His theory revolutionized science and astronomy. Columbus defied the conventional wisdom of his time by asserting that the world was indeed round and not flat, and he, Mr. Speaker, changed the course of human history.

Mr. Speaker, one year later, and from the vantage point of the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, I returned to this Honourable House to say to the nation that we are quickening our pace to build this logistics-centred economy. Mr. Speaker, my message to the nation is simply this: a logistics-centred economy that delivers a more efficient business environment, characterized by the ease and speed of doing business, represents our best option to breathe new life into the Jamaican economy.

A logistics-centred economy is our best option to once and for all reverse years of little or no growth. It is our best option to deliver more wealth-creating opportunities, to create jobs and inclusive growth, to reward entrepreneurship and to spur innovation, and to give us the platform to make our industries more globally competitive. This is the message, Mr. Speaker.

A logistics-centred economy is our best option to finally implement an MSME and entrepreneurship policy that effectively includes the full participation of our micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and that gives them a real chance to grow, to become profitable, and to survive.

Mr. Speaker, for years succeeding governments have talked about developing the MSME sector. This Government, through the MIC is moving beyond lip service. Mr. Speaker, we are working.

(THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence entered and took her seat.)

Mr. Speaker, may I remind this Honourable House that we adopted the MSME and Entrepreneurship Policy. We did so in recognition of the fact that the MSME sector is the backbone of our economy which provides upwards of 80 per cent of the jobs in this country.

(Applause)

The PRIME MINISTER: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, the Ministry started to implement this policy because we are determined to unleash the entrepreneurial energies of our people as we build this logistics-centred economy. This is why, Mr. Speaker, we have passed the Security Interests in Personal Property Legislation, and while we have passed and implement it, the Business Registration Super Form to enable the easy start-up of businesses.

(Applause)

This is why, Mr. Speaker, we have established the Collateral Registry to expand the asset-based lending to the MSME Sector. (Applause) This is why, Mr. Speaker, we are pursuing Insolvency Legislation in order to give MSMEs the opportunity to organize their businesses in the face of insolvency with the protection of the courts against their creditors.

Mr. Speaker, later in this presentation I will speak more on some of the specific policy actions we are taking to better serve the needs of the MSME sector in this evolving logistics-centred economy.

Mr. Speaker, with the widening of the Panama Canal and the expected influx of trading vessels in our waters, everyone in this Honourable House accepts that Jamaica must quickly position itself to profit from the supply and value chains for the production and distribution of goods and services around the world.

Everyone in this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker recognizes that the typical motor car is no longer manufactured in any one country. There is such a thing called a global value chain that allows for the design, production and assembly of the components of that motor car in different countries, and for the delivery of that vehicle to a customer in Europe, South America, or in the United States, which is still the largest consumer market in the world.

Mr. Speaker, some of us may know that the new Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft has some 2.3 million parts. The fuselage is built by Boeing, but the other components such as the landing gear and the wings of the plane are

made in 5,400 supplier factories in dozens of countries around the world.

Mr. Speaker, some of us may know that the Asia-Pacific Region is the driver of global aviation growth in the world. One hundred million new airline passengers will pass through that region in the next two to five years, creating the need for some 12,820 new airplanes, valued at $1.9 Trillion over the next two decades, according to the Boeing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, in light of this, what if Jamaica could convince the companies which make the wing tips for the 787 Dreamliner to locate their operations here in Jamaica? What if, Mr. Speaker, we could target and convince those transnational corporations, managing all types of business value chains to locate segments of their business operations right here in Jamaica?

(HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, we are changing that *what if*, to real possibilities. We have moved from concept to action and are aggressively going after investments for the Hub. Mr. Speaker, as I have said in this House, as I have explained to hundreds of people throughout the length and breadth of this country, and as I have emphasized to prospective investors, stretching from North America, Europe, the Middle East and South East Asia, Jamaica's competitive advantage to build a Logistics Hub are second to none in this region.

We are 90 minutes away by air from the United States and lie within a 4-hour flight radius of half a billion of the world's upwardly mobile population.

In this region, we are at the center of the east-western north-south trade and air corridors. We are blessed with world-class seaports, airports, telecoms and data connectivity, interconnected highways, the real possibility of reviving cargo and passenger rail, and we are the third largest English-speaking workforce in the western hemisphere.

Mr. Speaker, it bears repeating. We are in the perfect geo-strategic location to be the major springboard for trade in this hemisphere. We can become a Logistics Hub of the likes of the giants in the global logistics business Singapore, Dubai and Rotterdam.

Mr. Speaker, I am heartened by the growing national consensus around the major opportunity for Jamaica. I welcome the growing enthusiasm and acceptance by the Opposition for the Jamaica Logistics Hub initiative as a bankable idea whose time has come.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Clarendon Central has been an early and tireless advocate of a multimodal project for Jamaica. I say to him, that there is adequate space within the ambit of the Jamaica Logistics Hub initiative to accommodate his visionary ideas, and again I thank him for his continuing support. This, Mr. Speaker, is no pipe dream.

When resources flow into any economy, opportunities are created for new

entrepreneurial activities, businesses grow, people find jobs and life gets better socially and materially. These opportunities are now emerging in the Jamaican economy. Mr. Speaker, this is testament to the visionary outlook of this Government under the inspirational leadership of the Most Honourable Prime Minister. It is testimony to our national confidence as Government and Private Sector saying to the world, that we are the next big thing in global logistics and an asset to the world trading system. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, this is no pipe dream.

As a Government, we have embarked with purpose on this journey to create a dynamic logistics-centered economy. We are seeing openings in the economy that will allow forward and backward linkages between the MSME sector and the transnational corporations that will set up their business operations in Jamaica. We are seeing, Mr. Speaker, companies seizing first mover advantage to expand their businesses for the explosion of international business to come. We are seeing entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs flocking to our Enterprise Jamaica and JBDC workshops. We are seeing an outpouring of interest and participation in our logistics courses and symposiums by people drawn from the business community and civil society.

Mr. Speaker, this is why the JBDC Expo for the MSME sector entitled: 'Positioning MSMEs for the Global Supply Chain" starting tomorrow, May 22nd in Kingston is oversubscribed. Mr. Speaker, this is no pipe dream.

This is a powerful vision of Jamaica's future unfolding now before our very eyes in what I call the 'Hub Effect'. This Hub effect demonstrates, Mr. Speaker that things are indeed happening and that, Mr. Speaker represents hope for our people. It is an early blueprint that moves us out of the realm of concept to strategic thinking and pragmatic action. It is a window through which we can look for the international partnerships and alliances to make our industries globally competitive, to quickly convert our small businesses to big businesses and to plan and mobilize the Jamaican human resources required to drive these industries.

Already, Mr. Speaker, we are seeing powerful manifestations of the 'Hub Effect' on the Jamaican Private Sector. One of the key pillars supporting the hub next to aviation, maritime and financial services is the critical area of telecommunications and global connectivity.

Telecommunications firm LIME has adopted the phrase 'Hub Ready' to describe their multi-billion dollar investment in a modern, world-class fiberoptic network to support the Jamaica Logistics Hub initiative. Mr. Speaker, LIME is investing $8.7 Billion to deploy a cutting-edge 4G mobile network in anticipation of the intense commercial demand for business solutions that will come with the Hub. We are experiencing the Hub Effect.

(Applause)

Digicel Business in support of the ICT needs of investors in the Hub has invested $6 Billion over the past year in Jamaica's 4G network, and is rolling out a sophisticated

underground fiber network. Mr. Speaker, we are experiencing the Hub Effect.

Columbus Communications, operators of FLOW and Columbus Business Solutions, has the most advanced terrestrial and subsea fiberoptic network in the Caribbean. FLOW'S latest roll-out in broadband technology, Mr. Speaker, including cloud services, will enable rich communications solutions and seamless movement of information across industries. Mr. Speaker, we are experiencing the Hub Effects.

Mr. Speaker….

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended sufficient to allow him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently to allow him to complete his presentation?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister Hylton.

(Applause)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, I thank you. I thank my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, related to the Hub Effect on our Telecoms is the important development now taking place in the creation of the Jamaica Internet Exchange Point (IXP).

Mr. Speaker, currently, all Jamaican Internet, internet traffic is routed through the United States. This comes at an extra cost to Jamaica, its people and its business. It hinders effective Local Internet development stymies content development by our creators. The Jamaica IXP Mr. Speaker will be implemented by the end of July this year, saving the country more than US$2 Million each year.

Mr. Speaker, the OUR, the MIJC working with STEM and other stakeholders such as Internet Service Providers and content developers are actively engaged in making the Jamaica IXP a reality. Mr. Speaker, we need to shift from being net consumers to becoming net producers of local content via cheaper, faster Internet services with larger bandwidth serving our various Internet Service and content providers.

Mr. Speaker, in other areas of the Private Sector we are seeing growing confidence in the Hub Initiative and more manifestations of the Hub Effect.

As part of its port infrastructure renewal programme, Mr. Speaker, Kingston Wharves Limited will, in the first phase, invest US$20 Million or J$2.2 Billion in the construction of a state-of-the art Logistics Facility in Newport West, (Applause) ...in Newport West. This will involve the acquisition and refurbishing of an existing structure and the removal of existing structures on the Port to facilitate increased container handling and storage capacity. Construction of a warehouse is expected to commence within the next three months and is estimated to be completed in 12 months. The warehouse, Mr. Speaker, will have an initial footprint of 150,000 square feet and will be of modular design, so that additional space can be added as the logistics business grows.

Mr. Speaker, in this initial construction phase of the project, 150 new jobs will be

created. (Applause) The granting of Free Zone status to Kingston Wharves, Mr. Speaker, is expected to significantly improve the company's ability to develop its logistics capability and to take advantage of the opportunities that will arise from the increased flow of cargo through the Caribbean after the completion of the expanded Panama Canal.

As the necessary approvals are obtained, other phases of the company's infrastructure renewal programme will be announced. The entire programme is expected to be completed in five years. Mr. Speaker, we are experiencing the Hub Effect.

In March this year Mr. Speaker a private education and training provider, Professional Development Unit Limited, launched a course to teach Mandarin to business professionals at the basic, intermediate and advanced levels. In an interview with the *Gleaner's* Sunday Business on April 27, the CEO of the Company, Miss Shirlene Dennis, was reported as saying:

> *"With the advent of the Jamaica Logistics Hub along with frequent talks between Jamaica and China's government, our company has taken steps to equip the Jamaican workforce with new skills that will allow local companies to take advantage of the many opportunities being presented".*

Mr. Speaker, we are experiencing the Hub Effect.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to learn of the story of First Union, a Jamaican micro-financing business that has diversified to start up a courier service, first to the United States and now between Jamaica and China. First Union's Founder and Chairman Lloyd Campbell, established Union One Express as a storefront operation in China to meet the demand for formal courier service among Jamaican businesses buying goods from China. Mr. Speaker, this is a remarkable example of Jamaican enterprise at its best. We are experiencing the Hub Effect.

Mr. Speaker, we are inspired by this example of internal logistics. Four young Jamaicans, Jamaican entrepreneurs frustrated with the traffic congestion in the Corporate Area have devised an ingenious solution to the problem called Smart Taxi. Smart Taxi, Mr. Speaker, is the brainchild of a young man by the name of Mark Byfield, who came up with the concept while studying computer science at the UWI three years ago. Mark and his fellow graduates have since set up a logistics software development company, and plan to launch their Smart Taxi app service at the end of summer, just in time for the new school year. They are making their app under a licensing model with independent taxi drivers across the Corporate Area. Mr. Speaker, the entrepreneurial spirit of our young people is alive and well in this country. We are experiencing the Hub Effect. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago I had the pleasure of announcing a US$30 Million investment in Jamaica by a New York-based Paradise Express Ferry, which is founded and run by Garry Johnson, a son of Jamaican parents. By February 2015, Mr. Speaker, Paradise Ferry is scheduled to run a ferry service connecting Ocho Rios, Montego Bay

and Negril. This, Mr. Speaker, will be a unique attraction for our tourism industry, expected to generate 170 new jobs. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Jamaican Diaspora is investing in an evolving logistic-centred economy. (Applause by Government Members) We are experiencing the hub effect.

Mr. Speaker, there are many more examples that I could cite to demonstrate the influence of the hub effect on our business landscape. In the interest of time, I will share just a few more.

I wish to highlight in this Honourable House, the remarkable partnership between the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, and the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce in the promotion of the Jamaica Logistics Hub Initiative to the business community. In January, Mr. Speaker, we jointly staged with the Chamber of Commerce a symposium on the Hub for the local business community and to the world. We are grateful to Mr. Francis Paco Kennedy, who mobilized his chamber and chambers of commerce in the parish capitals - (Applause by Government Members) - as well as other major private sector umbrella organizations, namely the PSOJ, the JEA, the JMA, the YEA, the MSME Alliance and AMCHAM, to stage the two-day event that was oversubscribed and was a huge success.

(Applause by Government Members)

Early next year, Mr. Speaker, we will take the Hub initiative to the wider global arena when we invite the world to the staging of Jamaica Investment Forum, which will present the investment opportunities that are linked to the Hub throughout the country. Mr. Speaker, the Hub effect is mobilizing our private sector to greater levels of innovation.

The remarkable example, Mr. Speaker, of ARC Systems Limited and its recently established 400 million lumber treatment plant represents a first of its kind in the Caribbean. This lumber plant, Mr. Speaker, is fully automated and has the capacity to treat about 500 board feet of lumber per 40 hour work week. ARC Systems is substituted treated lumber imports with its own treated lumber saving foreign exchange and providing jobs.

(DR. KENNETH WYKEHAM MCNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, ARC Systems is currently investing $300 Million to construct a new roofing plant to manufacture roofing materials.

(Applause by Government Members) These, Mr. Speaker, are sterling examples of value-added activities geared towards both the export and domestic markets. These are the types of businesses or business innovations Jamaica needs as we move towards building a logistic-centred economy. Mr. Speaker, I commend CEO Norman Horne and his team for bringing innovation and global best practices to his business.

Mr. Speaker, there is growing confidence by Jamaican private sector for a logistics-centred economy. This is why the nation should be confident.

The pioneering investment made by Tankweld to build its own port at Rio Bueno has turned out to be a forerunner for the Jamaica Logistics Hub initiative. Tankweld, Mr. Speaker has expanded their investment into a logistics centre equipped with a ten acre fully automated warehouse, operating its own vessel along with a fleet of over 90 trucks. This, Mr. Speaker is one of the single largest investments made by a Jamaican-owned company in a non-tourism related project on Jamaica's North Coast. Tankweld employs 300 people from the area in its logistic centre, and procures goods for distribution to the construction and hardware trade in Jamaica. Tankweld, Mr. Speaker, is equally capable of accessing goods from any part of the world and Jamaica, consolidating them at Rio Bueno and delivering the same goods to any part of the Caribbean, Central America and South America. I commend the Bicknell family for this major local investment that is helping to create this logistic-centred economy for Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, we are experiencing the hub effect. (Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker…

Mr. SHAW: We don't want the hub effect, we want the hub.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: You may get what you ask for.

Mr. Speaker, two years ago I announced to this Honourable House the start-up of ISOCON-JLB, a small ISO certified tank cleaning and maintenance facility that had set up business in the Kingston Freezone. Today, I am updating the House on the progress of this company which is an exemplary case study of what is possible in a logistic-centred economy.

Mr. Speaker, ISOCON-JLB has grown into a major player in the movement of bulk liquids in and out of Jamaica and the region, servicing ISO-tanks from Barbados, Trinidad, US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guyana and other countries.

Before the facility was established, Mr. Speaker, companies based in Jamaica and in these countries mentioned, would have had to ship their tanks back to Europe for cleaning, certification and maintenance. Mr. Speaker, we now have ISO-tanks available to facilitate our rum exports, concentrates, purees, rum cream base and edible oils destined for global markets. (Applause by Government Members) This, Mr. Speaker has saved our importers and exporters of bulk liquids, significant time and money while creating jobs right here in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, ISOCON-JLB has been approached by ISO-tank owners operating in the Dominican Republic to set up a similar facility in that country and one of its founders, Beverly Johnson, has been awarded the Compete Caribbean Grant for Diaspora innovation and vision.

Mr. Speaker, we are making progress towards a logistic-centred economy.

Mr. Speaker, having spent some time to explain the hub effect on our economy, let me

now turn to the matter of special economic zones, for which this Ministry has direct responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to focus on the Caymanas Economic Zone, a project concept which the previous administration advanced and tried to implement. We inherited plans for the Caymanas Economic Zone, Mr. Speaker, that lacked the level of concept development and due diligence, befitting a master plan to take Jamaica to the next stage of its industrial and commercial development. In the context of a logistic-centred economy, Mr. Speaker, we want to implement Caymanas as industrial development, and not simply as a real estate development. Let me explain.

The Caymanas Economic Zone, the CEZ, will now be the Caymanas Special Economic Zone, the CSEZ. This is in keeping, Mr. Speaker, with the critical decision of the World Trade Organization which requires us to phase out free zones by 2015. We have elected, Mr. Speaker, to transition from free zones to special economic zones in keeping with the direction in which the world is moving.

The Factories Corporation of Jamaica had issued a request for proposal, an RFB, to develop the Caymanas Economic Zone, which resulted in considerable investor interest. However, Mr. Speaker, given the immense importance of this project and the decision to go the route of , establishing SEZs that are in conformity with WTO and IMF requirements, the Cabinet has taken the decision to abandon the RFP process, and upon recommendation from the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, has appointed two important teams to guide the process. The first is a Policy Steering Committee to develop the policy framework to govern the development of Caymanas and other designated areas in Jamaica as special economic zones; and the second is an enterprise team to oversee the Caymanas special economic zone development.

Mr. Speaker, the Policy Steering Committee is meeting twice a month and more often if necessary, to complete its work in the next three to four months. The Policy Steering Committee comprises experts and technocrats from the public and private sectors and is being led by Mrs. Patricia Francis, former Executive Director of the International Trade Centre in Geneva, and former President of JAMPRO.

Mr. Speaker, the Caymanas Enterprise Team, which was approved by the Cabinet in January, 2014, to guide the implementation of Caymanas Special Economic Zone, the CSEZ, as a critical component of the Global Logistics Hub Initiative, commenced work in March this year. It is chaired by Dr. Vin Lawrence and comprises expert representatives from a wide cross section of technical areas within and outside of Government. Both teams, Mr. Speaker, will report to the Cabinet through the Minister. The Policy Steering Committee, Mr. Speaker, and the Enterprise Team are seized with the urgency of their important work for the nation and I commend them for their service.

The Caymanas Special Economic Zone is expected to attract large-scale investments in

specific value-added industries^ as well as to facilitate the participation of the MSME sector through a clustered approach. It is also expected, Mr. Speaker that the Caymanas Special Economic Zone will serve as a model for the development of future special economic zones across the country in keeping with the Government of Jamaica's growth and development agenda.

Mr. Speaker, the next stage in Jamaica's industrial development in a logistic-centred economy requires that we move quickly but also carefully, mindful that we operate in a global environment that requires even greater levels of transparency. Mr. Speaker, the existing industrial, commercial and residential developments on lands closest to the Kingston container terminal will put severe limitation on the scale and scope of the value-added activities that can be conducted near to the port of Kingston.

Given the scale of activities we envisage as a result of the Panama Canal expansion, it is of critical importance, Mr. Speaker that we move now to develop the Caymanas Special Economic Zone in order to grow the port's throughput by generating greater volumes of cargo.

Mr. Speaker, the special economic zones that we are facilitating are about creating new and innovative commercial ventures led by large multinational corporations. I repeat, Mr. Speaker, led by large multinational corporations.

These SEZs will be centres for commercial and industrial activities which could serve as a further basis for the rehabilitation, over time, of our now dormant railway services. These SEZs, Mr. Speaker, will create jobs. Jobs for heavy equipment operators, forklift operators; jobs for drivers and haulage contractors; jobs for technicians in repair shops for logistics operations; jobs as welders and electricians for highly trained graduates of the HEART institutions. Mr. Speaker, these SEZs will create jobs to engineers and technicians, trained at CMI or in UTech's programmes in mechanical engineering and mechatronics.

Jobs as ship chandlers for enterprising entrepreneurs who supply foodstuff, water and other necessities to the ships. Jobs in ICT support for our programmers, animators and graphic designers from institutions such as NCU, UTech, UWI, CARIMAC and Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts. (Applause by Government Members)

Jobs, Mr. Speaker for middle and senior managers, for graduates from our business schools. Jobs for accountants and lawyers, jobs for security firms, jobs in catering, hospitality and entertainment, jobs in the health care delivery services.

(Applause)

Mr. WARMINGTON: All talk! All talk! Talk without substance!

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Many more, many more, many more.

Mr. Speaker, this Government is determined to create the environment that will yield decent-paying jobs for our workers in the logistics-centered economy. (Applause)

But, Mr. Speaker, becoming the 4th node in the global value and supply chain network

is by no means an easy feat. It won't be achieved overnight. This is no 'big bang' process. This is an evolutionary process, which I have indicated has already started, and the hub effects will continue over the medium to long term.

The Government, Mr. Speaker, is establishing Jamaica's Logistics Hub in an era of globalization that is characterized by relentless innovation, creativity and competiveness. An era where increasingly, the world's products and services are bought and sold online, where there is a requirement for seamless interfaces between the placement of an order, through the phases of production and distribution, and to deliver at the customer's door anywhere and anytime around the globe.

The firms, Mr. Speaker that we are seeking to attract are facing increased expectations by their customers, who want quality products and services in a timely fashion. These firms, Mr. Speaker must move goods, components and services faster, over great distances, across borders and time zones with greater cost efficiencies, to meet the demands of their customers.

So, Mr. Speaker as we seek to build this logistics-centered economy, let me highlight some of the enabling work of the Ministry and its agencies. Let me first focus on the area of National Quality Infrastructure that is being built through the work of the Bureau of Standards Jamaica, to make sure our businesses are operating at global standards.

Mr. Speaker, a logistics-centered economy requires a highly integrated network of people, systems and organizations, involved in the research, definition, development and promotion of quality goods, services and processes. This highly integrated network utilizes four fundamental pillars in building the quality infrastructure. And these are:

- Standards development
- Conformity assessment, which involves testing, inspection and certification
- Metrology or measurements; and, Mr. Speaker,
- Accreditation

This highly integrated network, Mr. Speaker, and the four pillars constitute the National Quality Infrastructure or NQI, which is a fundamental part of the foundation on which every efficient modern and sustainable national economy is built in today's globalised world.

Mr. Speaker, the Bureau of Standards is the national agency charged with the responsibility to build the National Quality Infrastructure, and is therefore crucial to the implementation of the strategies of my Ministry in enabling of a logistics-centered economy.

In 2012, Mr. Speaker, I charged the Bureau to begin the development of international service standards. Prior to 2012, the Bureau published at the rate of 7 standards per annum. In the last financial year alone, Mr. Speaker, the Bureau published 56 standards, with another 22 to be published. (Applause) An overwhelming number of these standards are services standards, Mr. Speaker. This is the best performance of standards

development in the history of the Bureau of Standards. (Applause)

The Bureau, Mr. Speaker, for the first time in its history has secured the status of collaborative partner with the Food and Drug Administration of the United States of America. This means that all Jamaican processed food manufacturers may export to the US, and by extension, many other countries of the world, if they conform to Bureau of Standards conditions. No longer, Mr. Speaker, will Jamaican ackee be rejected at ports of entry simply because we now have an international accredited chemistry laboratory based at the Bureau of Standards. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this Ministry is in a hurry to build out the national qualify infrastructure necessary to make Jamaica globally competitive and to build a logistics-centered economy.

Mr. Speaker, as we look to the global investor community for investments in a logistics hub, I am proud to say that we continue to do well in the area of attracting direct investment. As evidence of this growing belief and confidence in a logistics-centered economy, the Kingston and Montego Bay Free Zones are now operating at full capacity, with a growing waiting list.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke earlier of the fact that the efforts towards a logistics-centered economy require partnerships across governments. To this end, JAMPRO is currently working closely with the Tourism Enhancement Fund, the UDC and NEPA, to develop a concept whereby specific projects can be developed and packaged with most planning and development approvals in place before the investor - local or foreign - even makes his decision to invest. Mr. Speaker, these development approvals will be in place even before the investor makes his decision to invest.

Mr. Speaker, we are actively putting measures in place to make the country's investment process frustration free. This is critical as we build the logistics-centered economy.

Mr. Speaker, JAMPRO is fully aligned with this drive to deliver a logistics-centered economy. Out of high-level and targeted investment missions undertaken over the last year-and-a-half to Europe, Kuwait, Dubai, Singapore, China, the USA, Canada, India and Panama, we are currently having discussions with prospective investors around large-scale manufacturing investments in a range of sectors. These include energy, the extractive industries, as well as in ICT/Knowledge Services, medical devices, distribution and logistics.

For the 2013 financial year, Mr. Speaker, JAMPRO facilitated over Eighteen Billion Dollars ($18B) in capital investments, exceeding the projected target of Twelve point Three Billion Dollars ($12.3B). (Applause) These investments, primarily in tourism, agriculture, mining and knowledge services, created over 6,000 new permanent and temporary jobs. (Applause)

On the export side, Mr. Speaker, JAMPRO continues to be a reliable business partner to the nation's exporters. The

Agency's export clients generated over US Two Hundred and Thirty-seven Million Dollars (US$237M) in export sales during the last financial year, and the value of linkages contracts amounted to over Nine Hundred and Fifteen Million Jamaican Dollars (J$915M) for creative industries projects and other export-led activities. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, as we seek to integrate the country into the global value chains, we experienced another extraordinary year in the Knowledge Services and Business Process Outsourcing sector. With increasing demand for ICT/BPO space in the Montego Bay Free Zone, the Factories Corporation of Jamaica recently spear-headed the retrofitting of a 24,000 square foot factory for use in the ICT/BPO sector. The building, Mr. Speaker, is now leased to the Elephant Group, and has created employment for approximately 600 persons in those factories. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out that the FCJ had to move expeditiously to create the space in order to save this investment from moving from Jamaica to Costa Rica.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, 2,500 new jobs were generated by the BPO sector last year. Local investors have also been stepping up to provide ICT-ready space for new and existing players in the sector.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Several of these firms, Mr. Speaker, significantly expanded their business operations last year. They include Xerox, Tele-performance, Sutherland Global, Accent marketing, Team HGS, Island Outsources, ADS Global and Global Gateways.

Mr. Speaker, the BPO sector has grown 20 per cent over the past two years and is the fastest generator of jobs in the country. (Applause) We are moving in the right direction, Mr. Speaker, with the BPO and Knowledge Services Sector. We are well on track to double the over 14,000 jobs in the sector in the next three to five years, as we will be shortly be hearing further, exciting news concerning more jobs in this sector.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend the Business Process Outsourcing Industry Association of Jamaica, the BPIAJ, for their partnership in positioning Jamaica as a blue-chip ICT investment destination, as we partner to build this logistics-centered economy.

Mr. Speaker, we give credit where credit is due, to the Opposition, for their work while in office, to start the process of establishing Jamaica as an International Financial Services Centre.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are building on this idea by positioning the International Financial Services Centre as one of the pillars of the logistics hub initiative. We are taking steps, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we establish an IFSC that will be an important source of funding, and which will provide the mechanisms for the setting up of transnational corporations in the Special Economic Zones.

Mr. Speaker, we take the International Financial Services Centre from concept to implementation. I am pleased to advise this Honourable House that seven modern pieces of legislation have been drafted to facilitate

the establishment of financial entities inside the IFSC. All seven draft Bills, Mr. Speaker, are now with the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, where priority is being given to four of the Bills, which we expect to table in this Honourable House within the first half of this financial year.

Mr. Speaker, setting up of the International Financial Services Centre requires very little physical infrastructure, if any. Private sector financial institutions stand to benefit greatly, and direct employment prospects for the long term could be as high as 15,000 local professionals. Potential estimated revenue to the Government could be as high as US Three Hundred Million Dollars (US$300M) *per annum*, according to a KPMG Study.

Mr. Speaker, when everything comes together, Jamaica will be known far and wide as having one of the best financial services centre in the world. This is our commitment and promise to the people of Jamaica.

An Opposition MEMBER: When? When? When?

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Sooner than you think.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry is also looking at developing new industries for the logistics-centred economy.

Let me deal with Industrial Hemp, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the legal cultivation of Industrial Hemp, as distinct from marijuana or cannabis/sativa, has presented a major global opportunity for a number of countries around the world where legislation facilitates farmers to grow hemp.

More than 25,000 uses can be derived from the hemp plant. And on this point, I wish to note that a draft of the proposed regulatory framework is ready and will be submitted shortly to the Cabinet for its consideration. Mr. Speaker, this will pave the way for a viable value chain to be developed around the hemp industry in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica has an opportunity to carve out its niche in the Industrial Hemp global market, which will also support related efforts to develop other industries from cannabis sativa, such as medical marijuana.

In this regard, the Ministry has been facilitating collaboration between Jamaica and a consortium of leading international researchers from the US, Canada and Israel to position Jamaica as a centre for 'best in class' research for the commercialization of industrial hemp products.

An MOU has been signed between the UWI and 'Strains of Hope', a US-based foundation in marijuana research, with respect to the development and exploitation of medicinal products. A task force led by the Ministry of Justice, has been established to examine other aspects of the marijuana industry.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of Health and Wellness Tourism, the National Health and Wellness Steering Committee, which was appointed by Cabinet, and which was tasked to facilitate the development and implementation of key activities to grow the Health and Wellness Tourism sector in Jamaica, has been meeting on a quarterly basis since September 2013.

Mr. Speaker, JAMPRO will shortly sign the US$249 Million grant agreement with Compete Caribbean for further work in this area. The grant will be used, Mr. Speaker, to develop national accreditation standards for Medical Tourism and to undertake gap analysis for local players in this sector.

Mr. Speaker, the standards of the Wellness Health Tourism component have now been completed and will shortly be promulgated.

Mr. VAZ: Now for the groundbreaking; groundbreaking.

(Heckling)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, let me move to the Business Environment and Reform Agenda and the work of the National Competitiveness Council.

Our Ministry understands the needs of the business and productive sector. Our Ministry is seized with the need to create that enabling environment for wealth creation that will make businesses thrive.

For the logistics-centred economy to take off, we will need to radically improve Jamaica's business environment. In response to this, Mr. Speaker, we have been aggressively pursuing a business reform agenda to move Jamaica's rankings up the Doing Business and Global Competitiveness Indices. This coordination work is primarily being done by the National Competitiveness Council that comprises private and public sector entities.

Cabinet has approved the expansion of the role of the NCC to identify and remove bottlenecks faced by investors in their interface with government regulators and other entities.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Chuck)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Yuh soon si, yuh soon si.

Mr. Speaker...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Chuck)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: You will see.

Mr. Speaker, as we pursue the Growth Agenda and initiatives to improve the competitiveness of our firms, the Government of Jamaica is finalizing with the World Bank, a four-year US$50 Million Growth and Competitiveness loan project.

JAMPRO, Mr. Speaker, as well as the DBJ and the PIOJ will be the lead coordinating agencies for discrete components supporting critical aspects of the Ministry's work. JAMPRO, through the NCC, will be coordinating the execution of Component One of the project. This component will place specific focus on increasing Jamaica's competitiveness through strengthening of the country's competition laws and the work of the Fair Trading Commission.

Component Two will provide for the development of the Master Plan for the Logistics Hub Initiative and the packaging of Hub investment projects. JAMPRO will also have access to funds for project origination and investment promotion.

Component Three of the project, Mr. Speaker, will support a lending facility as well as capacity building and linkages programmes for the MSMEs.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government, I would like to express

appreciation to the World Bank for this signal support of Jamaica's Growth Agenda. Mr. Speaker, I cannot overemphasize the importance of the MSME sector to the creation of this logistics-centered economy.

A broad consensus across the political divide and among stakeholders within the private sector and civil society has emerged in support of the MSME and entrepreneurship policy that was adopted in July last year by this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, we will use this policy to effectively address the needs of the MSME Sector.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Young Entrepreneurs Association of Jamaica has written to me detailing their concerns about how difficult it is to access funding and financial advisory services. We will use this policy to effectively address the needs of our young entrepreneurs and to facilitate the targeted delivery of support to them.

Mr. Speaker, there are still too many of our small businesspeople who are not accessing the capital and capacity building support services provided by the Government. There are still too many businesspeople for whom MIDA, JBDC and the Self-Start Fund don't even appear in their frame of reference for valuable services that they need to effectively participate in the logistics-centred economy.

Mr. Speaker, we want to change that. We want these agencies to be the first points of reference for our small businesspeople with good business ideas. We must, in a logistics-centred economy, give our MSMEs more than a fighting chance to become the multinationals of the future.

As a first policy action, the Ministry will be reforming and repositioning its three critical agencies that are engaged in lending and financial advisory services for the MSME sector, namely MIDA, JBDC and the Self-Start Fund.

MIDA, Mr. Speaker, will be repositioned to play a critical role in risk and debt management, and to develop and effectively manage a micro financing facility for the MSME sector.

The JBDC is no longer engaged in lending and will be focused on providing customized financial advisory services to its clients. And the Self-Start Fund will now be offering a new suite of loan products that is customized to meet the needs of the MSME sector. (Applause)

This year, Mr. Speaker, we are targeting to provide $1 Billion in loan financing for the MSME sector. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, we are closing the gap for our small businesspeople. We are making sure they participate fully in the logistics-centred economy.

Mr. Speaker, the second policy action for the MSME sector is to benchmark the JBDC with the growing Small Business Network of the Americas, the SBNA initiative. We are doing this, Mr. Speaker, to build greater capacity in the JBDC to promote and support job creation in MSMEs and to encourage greater trade among these businesses.

It is expected, Mr. Speaker, that JBDC will gain small business development centre

status by the end of the 2nd Quarter of this Financial Year. MSMEs with the JBDC's assistance will be in a stronger position to tap into export market opportunities, to better manage their client portfolios, and to leverage research capabilities of the Small Business Network of the Americas.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for North West St. Ann, in his contribution to the Sectoral Debate, highlighted the need for mobile business clinics for small businesspeople in his constituency and across the country. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce a comprehensive island-wide programme for business advisory and development services. Commencing in July, the JBDC will be rolling out across the country, a mobile unit to reach existing and prospective entrepreneurs and small businesspeople. (Applause)

This mobile unit, Mr. Speaker, will offer the full suite of JBDC services in addition to services offered by other Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies such as the Companies Office, Tax Administration, the Bureau of Standards and other public sector entities that support the MSME sector.

Mr. Speaker, in an effort to formalize more of our MSMEs and to provide them with direct, customized consultation and business advisory services, the JBDC will carry out needs assessment surveys from region to region. The outcomes we want to spring from this intervention are the following:

- More business clusters in our communities across the country;
- Training and capacity building programmes;
- Technical assistance programmes, ranging from product development and enhancement support, technical and business skills development, product branding and labeling support, design support services to marketing assistance.

Mr. Speaker, we are empowering our small businesses with technical skills, knowledge and confidence. Mr. Speaker, we are closing the gaps for our small businesspeople. We are making sure that they participate fully in the logistics-centred economy.

Mr. Speaker, the third of our initiative to implement MSME in Entrepreneurship Policy is geared at dealing with the issue of global standards and innovation for our business people. Mr. Speaker, we're doing this through the launch of Enterprise Jamaica, EJ, a key initiative of the Ministry, led by the Bureau of Standards.

EJ, Mr. Speaker, is promoting innovation and fostering entrepreneurship, especially in the nascent technology-based sector and existing businesses. EJ is immersed in potential entrepreneurs and business owners in an environment characterized by state-of-the-art practices preparing them for the logistics-centred economy. Mr. Speaker, we are closing the gaps for our small business people. We are making sure they participate fully in the logistics-centred economy.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the important subject matter of the Cultural and Creative Industries and the development plans we have for this sector. The Ministry has chartered a

critical path forward for how it intends to impact Jamaica's cultural and creative industries.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I thought you were finishing.

Mr. **Anthony HYLTON:** We are reforming the National Industrial Policy to broaden the focus from trade in goods, services and commodities, to place greater emphasis on high-tech and knowledge services, focusing on Design and Intellectual Property. Mr. Speaker, this is a critical policy shift in keeping with our move to create a logistics-centred economy. The principal thrust of this new policy will be weighted towards:

- Research and development and financing for technology platforms and networks to support the commercialization of innovative ideas and;
- Systems to protect and develop intellectual property to encourage commercialization.

To this end, Mr. Speaker, working groups will be meeting to finalize a policy framework for this reformed National Industrial Policy.

Mr. Speaker, the Government through the Ministry of Industry Investment and Commerce and the Jamaica Intellectual Property Office is committed to ensuring the highest level of intellectual property protection for the Jamaican Creative and Cultural Industries and to stimulate growth of the sector, with the easing of the process to pass benchmark legislation and the IMF programme. I expect that important legislations affecting this sector will see movement this year.

It is against this background, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to announce that plans well advanced to construct a film lot in Jamaica with multiple stages outfitting at Hollywood standards. A Hollywood studio has agreed to provide oversight on this project. This group, Real Vibes, is also in discussion with a leading music and film production school in the USA to build a campus at the lot. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, negotiations are far advanced for the lease of the twenty acre former Goodyear factory and complex near Morant Bay in St Thomas as the site for this film lot. A deal to produce five films has been signed with Steven Paul, the producer of the films 'Ghost Rider' and 'Baby Geniuses'.

Mr. Speaker, as we look towards the logistics-centered economy, the mandate of the factories cooperation is to plan and deliver industrial and commercial space solutions for new projects, one such projects is the Garmex Freezone.

Mr. Speaker, given its proximity to the Port, we are retrofitting the Garmex Freezone into a world-class industrial complex to accommodate logistics and industrial clusters. The FCJ will spend J$120 Million this year to complete its renovation works and I am looking forward to opening this new facility that will be a marquee site for the Jamaica Logistics Hub initiative. (Applause) Mr.

Speaker, we are taking steps to build out the logistics-centered economy.

Mr. Speaker, this Ministry is proud of the work it has done to restore and to regulate the Scrap Metal Industry. (Applause) The regulatory framework we introduced just over a year ago has given new life to this trade. We still have some challenges, Mr. Speaker, there have been a recent rash of reports of theft of property from homes in the Washington Gardens area and elsewhere, but, Mr. Speaker, let me point out that not all stolen metal is destined for or has entered the external trade been regulated by the Factories Corporation of Jamaica. We are aware of a still thriving trade in domestically generated product from scrap metal such as the pots and pans subsector.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, we committed to the Jamaican people that we would be vigilant and swift in enforcing the regulations governing the scrap metal trade. Mr. Speaker, four persons were incarcerated under the new regime for breaches of the regulation. Mr. Speaker, we have kept our promise. Last year, we promised to restore confidence in the scrap metal trade, we were told it could not be done.

A MEMBER: By whom?

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Pearnel and you. (Laughter) Last year - Mr. Speaker, last year the scrap metal trade exported over 67,000 metric tons of metal earning US$19.3 Million. (Applause) The trade in metal, Mr. Speaker, is beneficial to many sectors of society financial institutions, shipping lines, trucking, logistics operations and small scale operators.

It must be noted, Mr. Speaker, that the majority of export volumes going through the Kingston Container Terminal is as a result of the trade in metals. (Applause) Employment in this sector, Mr. Speaker, is about 600 jobs directly and approximately 2000 indirectly. (Applause) This trade, Mr. Speaker, comprises 123 registered carriers who transport the metal to the sites, 125 dealers, 19 general exporters and four industrial exporters. I commend the Factories Corporation and their stakeholders, Customs, the Trade Board and the Police for transforming the scrap metal export business into one that supports a logistics-centered economy.

Mr. Speaker, we have learnt valuable lessons from the Scrap Metal Trade. We have learnt that we can effectively regulate businesses in the recycling trade. We have also learnt that we can apply these lessons to create new business opportunities. One of these opportunities, Mr. Speaker, is in the trade and reconditioning of damaged vehicles as a part of the global motor vehicle value chain. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Excellent.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, we have heard the calls for a restoration of the damaged vehicle trade. We hold the position that the trade and reconditioning of damaged vehicle is a real opportunity for the expansion of the local automotive industry. (Applause) It means, Mr. Speaker, real opportunities for training and jobs for mechanics or tradesmen in auto body repairs, auto electricians and other workers in the automotive sector.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I will shortly be recommending to Cabinet the removal of the ban on the importation of damaged vehicles under strict regulatory conditions. To date we have established a multi-agency task force to review and make recommendations on the way forward. This taskforce, Mr. Speaker, is charged to make recommendations with respect to regulations, standards, training and certification. Paramount in these deliberations Mr. Speaker, is the safety and protection of consumers.

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: You banned it. You were changing it, you did not change it.

Mr. Speaker, there will be full consultations with all stakeholders. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry has also been building national dialogue and narrative around global logistics and Jamaica's move to a logistics-centered economy.

There is growing public interest in the logistics 101 course organized by the Ministry and the Caribbean Maritime Institute and delivered free of cost, to over 16,000 participants...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: ...delivered free of cost, Mr. Speaker, to over 16,000 participants so far. (Applause) The course has been streamed live on the Internet and made available on YouTube and distributed to schools and libraries. There is stronger collaboration among our academic institutions working in step with the Logistics Hub Education and Training Workgroup to get the workforce hub ready.

The Caribbean Maritime Council, Mr. Speaker has now approved a CAPE curriculum on Logistics. To prepare our teachers, CMI is also offering a post graduate diploma in Logistics and Supply Chain Management commencing this summer. Professional bodies and practitioners Mr. Speaker, including doctors and other health professionals are now taking steps to certify themselves in order to deliver cross-border services. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this is further evidence of the recognition, locally and internationally of the value of Jamaica becoming a Logistics Centered Economy.

Mr. Speaker, now we understand why Jamaican has jumped 54 places in the 2014 logistics performance index. Mr. Speaker, we are no longer at the bottom of the table, from 124 out of 160 countries in 2012, we are now at 70 out of the 160 countries in 2014. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this achievement in a single reporting period is unprecedented; this achievement validates Jamaica's ambition to become the next major global logistics hub. Mr. Speaker, we are doing much better in the area of customs clearance and efficiency at our ports of entry, Mr. Speaker, we are getting hub ready!

We are highly rated for our logistics infrastructure in the quality of our trade and transport related infrastructure such as ports, roads and information technology. Mr. Speaker, we are getting Hub ready.

We are doing better at arranging and moving our shipments around the world. Our

cargo transport operators and customs brokers are rated among the best. Mr. Speaker, we are getting Hub ready?

We are doing better at tracking and tracing consignments and we are getting better at the timeliness with which shipments from our ports reach consignees within the expected delivery time. Mr. Speaker, we are getting Hub ready.

(Applause)

Our performance in the 2014 Logistics Performance Index is a major milestone in the country, for the country in our push to become a logistics-centered economy. The world recognizes that Jamaica is serious about becoming the 4th Node in the Global Logistics Network.

The world, Mr. Speaker, is prepared to back us and not just because Jamaica is one of the most admired places on earth but because they see win, win value propositions here in Jamaica. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I said at the beginning of this presentation that I will bring the evidence of significant global investor interest in the logistics hub initiative. In response to our promotion of the initiative internationally over the past 18 months, a major consortium of US, European and Middle East investors has put forward a strong expression of interest in several components of the logistics hub initiative.

Mr. Speaker, representatives of this consortium are currently in the island for meetings with a number of key agencies of the Government ahead of submitting a formal proposal. This consortium, Mr. Speaker, is mobilizing equity financing in excess of US $4 Billion to design, finance, build and operate integrated components of the Hub. (Applause)

This investment, Mr. Speaker, will be a massive contribution to the build out of the Hub and the accelerated realization of the logistics-centered economy.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay special recognition to the presence of the representatives of the consortium in this Honourable House this afternoon.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank them for their confidence in Jamaica and in the hub initiative. The Consortium, Mr. Speaker, will complete its due diligence within six to nine months. Thereafter, a definitive proposal will be presented to the Government for its consideration. Mr. Speaker, this is not a time for doubt or interminable debate. The time for that is over, it is time for action. (Applause)

This, Mr. Speaker, is Jamaica's time to step out of the shadows of the decades of lethargic growth and dashed expectations. This is Jamaica's time to reach for the glorious promise of this new logistics-centred economy. Mr. Speaker, we are moving forward. Jamaica is making progress. This Government is taking the hard decisions, whilst making sure that we create a level playing field that allows for full and active participation by all the players in the business community. I say, Mr. Speaker, to the entire Jamaican business community, comprising

local and international players, stretching to our Diaspora business owners in cities around the world.

I say this, the efforts we now make to put our economy on a stronger footing are building a sure and sound foundation for a first-class logistics-centred economy. These efforts will make us stronger. They will give us multiple opportunities to create wealth for Jamaica, and to usher in a new era of unprecedented growth and prosperity. Mr. Speaker, in the Good Book, the readings of Ecclesiastes remind us of one of life's great lessons:

> *"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens*".

(Applause)

We remind ourselves in the words of our National Anthem: "*Give Us Vision Lest We Perish!"*. Mr. Speaker, this is Jamaica's Time; time to grow and develop business in the country; time to build a logistics-centred economy that will deliver a superior quality of life for all our people. Mr. Speaker, the future is here. Let us seize that future. Let us seize the day.

I thank you.

(Applause)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the recommittal of the items: Announcements and, Notices of Motions Given Orally.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal of item, Announcements.

Put the House and agreed to.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
(Recommitted)

The Deputy Clerk laid on the Table of the House, a copy of the following:

- Report of the Independent Commission for the Judiciary Enquiry and Recommendations on the adequacy of salaries and benefits for Judges - 2012
- The Financial Services Commission (Amendment of Fourth Schedule) Order, 2014 under the Financial Services Commissions Act

The SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal of item, Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Put the House and agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY
(Recommitted)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House ,I will move the Financial Services Commissions Act, Financial Services Commission (Amendment of Fourth Schedule) Order, Resolution, 2014:

> Whereas, by virtue of subsection (10) of section 21 of the Financial Services Commission Act (hereinafter referred to as "the Act"), the Minister may, by order, make provision for any matter incidental to the operation of section 21, and in particular any such order, as may amend the Fourth Schedule of the Act;

And Whereas on the 19th day of May, 2014, the Minister made the Financial Services Commission (Amendment of Fourth Schedule) Order, Resolution, 2014;

And Whereas, it is provided by subsection (11) of section 21 of the Act that an order made under subsection (10) (b) of that section shall be subject to affirmative resolution:

Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved by this Honourable House as follows:

a) this Resolution may be cited as the Financial Services Commission (Amendment of Fourth Schedule) Order, Resolution, 2014; and

b) the Financial Services Commission (Amendment of Fourth Schedule) Order, 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 21st day of May, 2014, is hereby affirmed.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will take the item that is listed under Public Business, the Firearm (Amendment) Act from yesterday.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, what is before this Honourable House for approval is the Firearms (Amendment of the Firearms Act) (Payment of Appropriate Duties) (Licences and Certificates and Permits) Order, 2014. Mr. Speaker, the Order was circulated in the House and it's occasioned by a number of considerations: first of all, it is an effort by the Firearms Licensing Authority to keep pace with increased costs, the last increase in duties and fees having occurred in 2009. Over that period, however, there has been a steady and significant increase in their cost.

In addition Mr. Speaker, the Firearms Licensing Authority has had to undertake special expenditures to put in place new administrative systems. For example, they recently spent some $37 Million for the acquisition of a high security card system to replace the Firearms Licensing Booklet with a durable, less conspicuous licence while retaining prescribed information in existing booklet. They have also opened new offices to facilitate the public and licensees; they opened an office in Montego Bay recently in St. James at a cost of some $23 Million, which included expenditure on building, rental, retrofitting, maintenance, acquisition of furniture, and also they have had to increase the staff complement in their offices. All told, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the current financial year or the financial year ending August 2013, the FLA had a deficit of some $38.1 Million. However, the approval of these increases would put them in a position to meet their expenses and to have even a small surplus.

The principle, Mr. Speaker, is that the agencies like these, which deliver services, need to be able to recover the cost of those services and, indeed, that is what they are seeking to do. It is an important function - an important regulatory function which is being fulfilled by this agency and I think this Order is presented for the consideration and approval of the House in order to facilitate the

important work which the Firearms Licensing Authority is already doing.

Just to give an idea, Mr. Speaker, certainly the Firearm Users Licence moves from $4,000 to $6,000; the Firearms User's (Employee's) Certificate from $400 to $500, $4000 to $5000 per additional firearm; Firearm User's (Special) Permit from $4,000 to $6,000; Firearm User's Licence, $8,000 to $12,000. The Gunsmith's Licence - you're a Smith, 20,000 to $25,000.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: But he's not a gunsmith just a regular Smith. And the Firearm Dealer's Licence from $100,000 to $200,000.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, the legislation requires the affirmative resolution of the House for the adjustment to these fees to be charged by the Firearms Licensing Authority and I so move.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, we simply want to make the observation that, you know, that when the Minister claims that no new taxes or limited additional taxes are being imposed that these range of charges by Government agencies are proliferating at quite an alarming rate.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Bunting)

Mr. SHAW: You free to speak in this matter. Don't interrupt me.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, I mean the Minister has announced increases that range from, in the main, 50 per cent to as high as a 100 per cent and these are pretty steep increases. And, unfortunately, the Act was tabled in the House yesterday and is being debated today, which has not given us a lot time, Mr. Speaker, to seek to analyze and to probe into the reasons for such a significant and steep increase: 50 to 100 per cent is a very, very increase, and I think that the Minister or the Minister of National Security who is here ought to provide this Honourable House with more details and greater justification for such a sharp increase as is being proposed in this Act today, Mr. Speaker.

While I'm on my feet, I also would like to get the clarification of the Minister and certainly the House of Parliament in relation to the statement that has been by the Honourable Minister in the House yesterday in which he made a statement on proposed changes to the tax regime. And I wanted to know - the Minister will recall -

(Cross talk)

No, is a tax matter. The Minister will recall that I was asking to clarify the extent of the changes, what it would mean in terms of the numbers and in the closing of the debate he did indicate any of those details that I requested. But beyond that, which that is still an outstanding issue, I'd like the Minister to clarify at some stage but I want to clarify, Mr. Speaker, this is a Statement by the Minister and the accompanying measure of a new revenue measure that replaces the previous one is still to be tabled and I'd like know if that is, in fact, going to be tabled?

Mr. BUNTING: If you would just allow me to remind the Member from North East Manchester that in 2009 I believe it was, when fees were last increased he spoke to a policy

for the Firearm Licensing Administration to be self- sustaining. And, in fact, if you look at the primary source of fees collected, which is for the firearms licence which moves from eight to twelve at fifty per cent increase, it is roughly equivalent to the cumulative inflation over that five-year period. So, it is not out of line in real terms with what it was.

And when you look at the Firearms Dealer's Licence, what is $100,000 increase - from $100,000 to $200,000, in terms of what it actually costs the FLA, to regulate - to properly regulate a firearms dealer and all the ammunition that they sell, it really represents a fraction of what it costs the FLA. So, I don't think it is at all unreasonable, and it is consistent with the policy you yourself introduced in 2009.

Thank you.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. D. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday when I spoke in the House...

Dr. DAVIES: You didn't finish.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: That suits you very well.

Mr. D. SMITH: …I highlighted an issue which I had asked the Minister to follow up on. But since today we are dealing with increased fees in relation to the Firearms Licensing Authority, we haven't heard a lot of complaints in terms of the service to the public in recent times, and as the Minister said a part of the reason for the increase is to facilitate removal to more convenient surroundings to offer even better service to licensed firearm holders when they have to go to their offices. I am really sorry that the Minister spoke before I got the chance to again, highlight this situation.

But I am speaking about those bullet-making machines which, the last thing I saw and I heard was that these machines are with the - are now in the possession of the Firearms Licensing Authority. But what we are not sure about, if it is one, two, three, four, or even five. It has been a very controversial issue and the clarifications seem to be creating some problems in coming forthwith out of the Authority. So, Minister, you perhaps can - in your closing, perhaps you can use the opportunity to clarify.

And what I want clarified also, Minister, is the sort of an auditing regime that is undertaken by the Firearm Licensing Authority for all these ranges throughout the island. There have been quite a few in recent times, and I am very concerned about how they are monitored, as I said the frequency of monitoring; how up- to-date is the audit. This whole matter of firearm and range, and ammunition is a very, very topical issue - very, very sensitive issue, and one in which I do hope the Minister will take this opportunity to clarify. Notwithstanding, we are still waiting on the other Minister - the Minister of National Security to bring to Parliament, a sort of a global statement in regards to that telling situation.

Dr. PHILLIPS: In fact, I want to thank the Member for his...

Dr. DAVIES: Sober and sensible.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...intervention, and I think I ought to also thank the Member from St. Andrew North Central for having

accommodated this matter at this point. But, Mr. Speaker, I would indicate that the Member's intervention - Opposition Spokesman on National Security, highlights the point about the importance of the effort. The question is that these machines that he adverts to, have been taken into the custody of the FLA. The Minister of National Security will be making a statement on the whole matter shortly which will put the matter to rest. In relation to...

I think the answers to the Opposition Spokesman on Finance have been made comprehensively and irrefutably by the Minister of National Security. I would indicate that, in fact, the two points on the overall matter of taxation - the Ministry Paper will come to the House, and as far as the revenue implications overall, the revenue estimates overall remain as they were.

The main issue surrounds the question of the smart phones, and indeed we had already made the application to COTED at the time of the Budget. And so, our estimates took account, the loss of that revenue when we presented, but the Ministry Paper will come.

Mr. Speaker, I move the affirmation of the Resolution.

The Resolution put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda, your turn.

Mr. SAMUDA: Thank you, sir.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: And I will just remind all guests that they are not to participate, in any way, in the proceedings.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, I don't think you will have any problem with the people who are here from my constituency because this is a long-standing habit of theirs.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, I rise proudly, as the Member of Parliament for North Central St. Andrew, and this marks the 34th consecutive year that I have had the occasion to stand. (Applause) As I look around, Mr. Speaker, I can count on one hand the number of persons who are here today, who came here when I first arrived.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: But before I start, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that I acknowledge on this side...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. SAMUDA: Nobody over here - no, except the Leader who came with me, or I came with her.

A MEMBER: What about Roger?

Mr. SAMUDA: No, man. In fact, I had to plead for Roger to get this seat.

Mr. CLARKE: Thank you very much.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the fine job done by the Speaker of the House. He's someone who I have always admired in the way he conducted the affairs of this House. (Applause) And I would like to welcome young Lloyd B, Deputy Speaker, who has also been doing a fine job. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

I would like to also acknowledge the tremendous work done under difficult circumstances sometimes, by the staff of the

Houses of Parliament. They don't complain, although I know that they have pressures.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: So I would just like to make sure that my acknowledgment of their contribution is recorded.

Mr. Speaker, I owe all of what I have been able to do in politics to the people of North Central St. Andrew. They have stood with me through thick and thin. They have stood with me there and they have stood with me here. And I thank them and love them, and we continue to struggle in love and unity.

But, Mr. Speaker - my wife... (Applause) if ever a man had a woman who stood with him, my wife has stood with me. (Applause) She is in the constituency, and they will tell you, she is in the constituency at least four - five days a week.

Government MEMBERS: More than you.

Mr. SAMUDA: More than me. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I tell you the truth, I have won consistently against contenders but I would never go up against my wife. (Laughter) I think she would beat me.

The fact of the matter is also, I have two councilors I am not sure if both are here but I think I saw the Councilor of the Norbrook Division, Miss Susan Senior who is in the House, and you will recall that name, I am quite sure.

A MEMBER: Yes.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: But she is in the House with us.

A MEMBER: A very faithful councilor.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, as the Member of Parliament from South St. Andrew spoke feelingly about efforts he made to improve the quality of the persons who he represents, I, today - this evening - take pleasure in inviting this Honourable House to have a look at two youngsters - two medical students - where are they - two beautiful medical students. (Applause) They are the product of North Central; they live, one, off Red Hills Road, Park Lane, and the other adjacent to Cassava Piece; (Applause) of humble background, but they worked hard. And when they approached me, I can tell you both of them had the same story. They didn't know if they would get into university, and if they managed to get through the door they didn't know how they would finance continuing it. But they have a lot of courage, right, and with love in their hearts - and they have, of course, an excellent Member of Parliament.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA. One has finished her second year and the other is going into her second year, and they are both doing very well.

(Applause) (*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, in addition, I took the opportunity - and I wore this tie deliberately because we also have here with us today, Calabar Head Boy and Calabar Head Girl - no, Calabar Head Boy. (Laughter) I am sorry. I apologize for all the Calabar Old Boys here.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the tie was for Calabar that was so successful in Champs and

they are in my constituency and I am very proud to be the Member of Parliament of that great institution. (Applause) But what I have here is - I have here representing St. Richards, arguably the best Primary School in the country and competing in the region, I have the Head boy here, he is Paul Hall and Head girl...

(Inaudible comment/Laughter)

Mr. SAMUDA: ....is Ariel Bell, they are both here representing St. Richards. And so too - my wife told me, she sent me a little message to say that we said we would invite a few of the students to come to be here with us. And I expected ….

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. SAMUDA: ....and I expected that what I was going - I was expecting 25 or 20 or 25. Well, over 40 of them turned up, and that reflects their curious minds wanting to know how the Parliament operates and of course, they want to be closer to their Member of Parliament.

(Laughter)

I would like to thank through the Minister here, he has an agency, the Citizens Security and Justice Programme, and they made a wonderful contribution to the fees for those ladies, one of the two, and we are pursuing it to get a little more contribution. (Applause) So too the Minister of Education has been very helpful and considerate in this matter, so we really appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, I have the task of being the spokesman for a number of Ministries. You know, there was one time when I - well, we won't go there. So what I had chosen today to do is to select a few of the points, the topics that I thought would be of interest to the House, because - and I commend this to the Members especially in the back bench. Don't just come and read text that becomes boring and tedious, think of something that is a little different and a bit of entertainment with it, because after all, when you are not speaking, you really are spending more time just languishing in the back doing nothing.

Mr. McKENZIE: Like Sesame Street.

Mr. SAMUDA: So you need to come with a little.... And I know that the Member who follows me, the Member who follows me, the improvement on the ..... is going to make a fine presentation.

(Laughter)

But, Mr. Speaker, having heard the Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, someone who I had an excellent working relationship with, someone who is a very decent and good man, but I heard him focus his entire presentation on the concept of the Logistics Hub. The truth is, Mr. Speaker, I just would like to take the opportunity as in classical debating style, and that's why I speak immediately after the person who I relate to. On this occasion I had to wait awhile for the Minister of Mining and Energy between the two, so I will take the opportunity of speaking on some of the subjects in mining and energy and, of course, primarily in industry and commerce. I'd just like to rebut a couple of them, if I may, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister started off by suggesting that we had done a remarkable job in the Logistics Index, measurement of logistics preparedness

index. It's a fairly recent measurement, it's not probably well known and it is a specialized set of criteria that is used, it's more focused on logistics rather than the global development of the economy of a country. So 70th is good and anything that is an improvement have our full support because it's good for the country, it's good for our image. Fine, no problems there.

However, Mr. Speaker, we find that the most well known and recognized survey of performance of an economy is to be seen in primarily two surveys; the Doing Business Report and the Competitiveness Report by the World Trade Forum.

The fact is that in the area of the Doing Business Report, we came 94th out of 189 coming, Mr. Speaker. I remember the day when, sitting right there, former Minister of Industry and Investment, Dr. Paul Robertson made mention that we were...

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. SAMUDA: No, we were in - about 40 something. And now we have dropped from that enviable position at that stage to now 94th out of 189, which means in effect, Mr. Speaker, that 50% of the country's survey are better than we are, 50.

In the Competitiveness Report, the 2013 Report, we are 88th in competitiveness, 88th and that makes us fall in the percentile where 61% - 61% are more competitive than we are. That's not an enviable position to find ourselves in.

So, Minister, what I am trying to do here is send a message and the message I am trying to send is, if you know that information is available to enquiring minds, don't bring part of the story, don't bring the 'feel good' part, lay it out openly and straightforward because you know this is coming.

Now, the Minister speaks eloquently about our level of preparedness and what we have to do. This is not really industry and commerce, but it impacts on trade. Minister, I'll make you understand that in terms of preparing for the Logistics Hub and the economy and whatever you call it, special economic zones, which is part of the concept of creating Hubs, the real truth of the matter is that we are challenged. And now I speak directly to the Minister of Transport and Works, because Minister, since we have been talking about preparing the way to accept the large ships coming through the Panama Canal in 2016 or so, the rest of the world have not been standing still. The rest of the world is busy about building ships that are twice the size that cannot be accommodated in the Panama Canal. So what they are doing is they are competing on the basis of price. Because what they - some of them are planning right now as we speak, is to build ships that are larger than 18,000 TEUs. The Panama Canal can only accommodate 12,500 TEUs ships. So, already the Panama Canal in the view of many is becoming redundant in the world of tomorrow, because there is a limit of the size of the ship that can be accommodated.

So what are they going to do? You know what is going to happen, and they have already started doing it. They go north, through the Suez canal, go north, come down through Canada and land in Virginia and offload.

(Mr. Bartlett applauded)

Mr. SAMUDA: So what the United States is busy doing is building their infrastructure to accommodate the offloading which carries them back into the west coast.

Mr. Speaker, while we languish... (*Sotto voce* comment) ...whilst we languish in the concept that we are doing so well, we must understand that the rest of the world is moving far away from us and that is why, Minister, you look at the Business Report and you ask the question, how come we drop off the cliff? You know why? We have not done anything that we haven't been doing. And indeed, through the Ministry of Finance, you have done a number of things that have improved and also under normal circumstances, improve our rating.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: You will see the next Report.

Mr. SAMUDA: No, no, I didn't interrupt you, you know. I did not interrupt you.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Hylton)

Mr. SAMUDA: No, don't get agitated, I don't start yet! (Laughter)

A just getting warmed up. You 'tink' this is my start.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SAMUDA: You know me better than that.

Prime Minister, Prime Minister, I promise the Leader of Government Business I was going to be 1 hour. He has kind of led me in a direction that may take a few minutes more, so I plea for that from the start.

Dr. DAVIES: We were hoping less.

Mr. SAMUDA: Well, we will see what we will do.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. SHAW: Take your time. Whatever you need take it.

Mr. SAMUDA: Now, Mr. Speaker, they are simply engaging in reforms that are more effective, taking less time, are more concentrated and getting better results and that's why they are going ahead. I'll give you an example; I'll give you an example of Columbia. I came here to this House sometime ago and I mentioned that in Columbia - when the President came here, I had the opportunity of sitting at dinner with the newly appointed Minister of State with responsibility for reporting to the President on the study and implementation of Reforms, in order to improve their ratings. And they have moved from a position below us to, I think, about 40 now out of doing business. Because they have established a team, they focused on it, they did the reforms, they were engaged in a collaborative approach within their Ministry, but it was focused and it was action-oriented not talk and pipe dreams.

Now, the collateral register that the Member spoke about, the question we must ask ourselves....

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Hylton:

Mr. SAMUDA: Don't get agitated, Tony! Why you getting agitated?

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: You, why I'm getting agitated!

Mr. SAMUDA: I wasn't speaking when you spoke.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Members, we cannot tolerate this type of to-ing and fro-ing. Mr. Samuda, continue.

(Inaudible comments by Members)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister Hylton, I ask that you....

A MEMBER: Cool it!

The Deputy SPEAKER: ...cool it! Okay. Mr. Samuda, continue, please.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, he spoke about the collateral register, and the collateral register is something that we all supported and we'll continue to support because it's good.

However, there are reservations that some of us expressed in whether or not a banking institution is going to take it up. And my information, I could be wrong, the Minister of Finance could tell me or the Minister of Industry, that the response to it has been sluggish, and that's anticipated. It was anticipated that a bank was not - ask the Member from Central Manchester. A bank is not going to go and willingly accept the Member from Central Westmoreland's cows to support his need for money to buy feed. They are not going to do that willingly. So it is going to be a struggle, but in the step in the right direction and we supported that.

Now Mr. Minister, you speak about this logistics hub and you create the impression that there are certain businesses now operating, that are doing what they are doing because they have bought into your idea of a hub, and you believe that. You believe that so much that I am going to ask the Minister of Finance to tell me if he has an idea of what this brochure cost. This is a magazine. This is not a speech, this is a magazine. Now I don't tell you no lie, Minister, at no time - and me boasty, everybody know that - at no time would I have the nerve -

Opposition MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. CHUCK: To put a speech like that.

Mr. SAMUDA: - a nerve -

Government MEMBER: Audacity.

Mr. SAMUDA: - to promote myself in this vulgar fashion, at this expense, at a time when the taxpayers have no money and we as Members of Parliament can't even get a raise of pay, and you are here.

(Heckling)

And the Minister of Finance, in fairness. I have some things that -

(Heckling)

Calm down, calm down. Calm down, calm down.

(Heckling)

Every one of you, every one of you I saw you whispering amongst oonuselves so don't bother with the hypocrisy.

Mr. DALLEY: We were commenting on the quality. It's good quality.

(Laughter) (Heckling)

Mr. SAMUDA: Don't bother with the hypocrisy, mi si oonu a whisper and a show, an a laugh and now unu a aaaaah!

Mr. DALLEY: Nobody was laughing, we were commending the quality. It's good quality.

(Heckling)

Mr. SAMUDA: Minister, Prime Minister, when I was in a certain place, that you sit in

every week, I regularly commented on the elaborate presentations of these annual reports that come to Parliament. Right! They must be more modest and they must stop wasting money no matter how it small.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: What you mean by "more modest"?

Mr. SAMUDA: Like what the reports -

Mr. SHAW: Cheaper, cheaper. You always in the wrong no matter what you do.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: How much money you…?

Mr. SHAW: Cheaper.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: How much money you get to build your…?

Mr. SHAW: Lower cost production. Low cost.

(Heckling/The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, I don't want to quarrel with my friend, because I know him so long and I know that when it comes to maintaining a lifestyle you can't fault him. He has never changed from day one, so I not going to quarrel with him, but all I am saying is, don't come back with something so elaborate.

(Heckling)

Mr. DALLEY: Give me substantive. I am tired of your kind of speech. Give me something substantive.

(Heckling)

Mr. SAMUDA: Your private staff without your permission? Without your permission?

(Heckling) (The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. SHAW: Tell us the cost you did them. Publish the cost of producing it.

(Heckling)

Mr. SAMUDA: I was a Minister in your Ministry.

Mr. SHAW: Publish the cost.

(Heckling)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. SAMUDA: If you keep quarrelling you won't move on.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda, Mr. Samuda - Members -

Mr. SAMUDA: I am going to sit down while you talk them out.

The Deputy SPEAKER: I do not think that we are going to achieve much by belabouring this point.

Mr. DALLEY: Right, he is saying you should move on.

(Heckling)

The Deputy SPEAKER: I am asking -

(Heckling)

Mr. Samuda, Mr. Samuda, I think you have sufficiently dealt with that matter, could you please move on.

(Heckling)

I have asked the Minister not to interrupt.

(Heckling)

Mrs. SIMPSON MILLER: May I?

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes. Mr. Samuda please sit.

Mrs. SIMPSON MILLER: You are appealing though to both sides. We have children here.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes.

Mrs. SIMPSON MILLER: They are the future leaders of this country.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Prime Minister.

Mrs. SIMPSON MILLER: We should set the example and the place and the stage.

The Deputy SPEAKER: And in that context I will not -

Mr. SHAW: You hear, Minister, that means you must shut up and listen to the speech.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda, please, I am not going to tolerate any further unnecessary bantering.

Mr. Samuda, please move on.

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes. Mr. Speaker, I am going to appeal to everybody, just stop the tracing, just let me finish this thing here.

All right? Okay.

Now, Minister, what makes me a little concerned is when you really say to me, and you seem to believe it, that what LIME did was because of what you presented to them about a hub. You said the same thing about Tank-weld. Minister, I have been around a long time, I know these people; that's out of vested self-interest, it's called competition. It don't have nothing to do with the hub, it has to do with competition and they have had to do it because if they don't do it they are going to get hurt, and their market share will fall. So don't let us overplay this thing about hub, and so on.

Now, I turn to the one issue that is a very personal and vexed issue with me, the Caymanas Enterprise Zone.

One of the things that I would have preferred you to share your thoughts prior to making the kind of statement you did when you said, it lacked, the plan we left with you lacked concept development. Mr. Speaker, we had a concept and we still have a concept that - and he will find out because he has over the last two years found already the hard way. People don't have money put down to come here and invest in Caymanas.

Not even the Chinese. We have been to Beijing, we have addressed the Chamber of Commerce, we have been to all corners of the world. The Minister of Finance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the previous administration and myself went to London several times to talk about investment, and the focal point -

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. SAMUDA: No, don't – just let's finish.

(Heckling by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. CHARLES: You can't mek those men upset you man, go ahead, man. Continue. Just ignore him.

Mr. SAMUDA: No, I am really serious, I want get through the speech.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Go ahead.

Mr. SAMUDA: Now, Mr. Speaker, what he calls a lack of concept, development concept. You know, the strategy was - first of all he never mentioned once the word "ICT",. Not once. He talk about big industrial development.

Mr. SHAW: Yes, man.

Mr. SAMUDA: Where it going come from?

Mr. SHAW: The hub cometh.

Mr. SAMUDA: Who going bring it there and put down?

Mr. SHAW: Cometh the hub.

Mr. SAMUDA: Big industrial development. Sound good and you have big names there to back you, but what is -

(Cross talk by Government Member)

Mr. DALLEY: You are distracted too easily.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda, I would advise that you ignore the distractions. Okay?

(Heckling by Government Members)

Mr. SHAW: Yes, but we might have to evict the Minister.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: So, Mr. Speaker, let's…

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Ah, Members. Just a moment, Mr. Samuda. Members, I think we are beginning to trivialize this debate. We need to remember that…

Mr. WARMINGTON: We have another speaker too.

The Deputy SPEAKER: We have another speaker…

Mr. SAMUDA: There is one coming up, you know.

The Deputy SPEAKER: …and a lot of time is being wasted by these constant…

Mr. SAMUDA: Not only time wasted, we have mouth too.

The Deputy SPEAKER: And, Mr. Samuda, you can help by not responding to every… (Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Yes, yes.

Mr. SAMUDA: No, but, Mr. Speaker. (Applause by Government Members) Mr. Speaker, let me make something clear to you. I have been here so long that I believe that I have earned the right to speak without unnecessary interruption.

Mr. SHAW: Hear! Hear!

(Applause by Opposition Members)

(Heckling)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Members, Members, Members.

(Heckling)

Mr. SAMUDA: Carry that to your group meeting.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda.

Mr. McKENZIE: (Inaudible comment) - go back a Cuba with it.

(Heckling)

The Deputy SPEAKER: I'm going to ask - Members, let's have a little respect for seniority. Okay. Please, a little respect for seniority. All right. Mr. Samuda, rise above the bantering and continue, please.

Mr. SAMUDA: No, I wouldn't mind rising above it but it's the annoying echo that comes from there. You know it's like water dripping at night and you can't sleep. That's what they are. I wouldn't rise for anything else but just water dripping.

(Heckling)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda, continue, continue.

(Heckling)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, you ever been in a room and you have a fly that is making a lot of noise, whining all over the place? That's what I am picking up over here. Like a fly, a big fly running around and distracting people.

All right, Mr. Speaker.

This strategy that he says had no concept was developed by highly trained and intelligent people and the idea was, that having tried exhaustively to get large investors to come in and utilize the land, I would have to say that I came up with the idea, it was my idea and it didn't materialize as it should have but blame me if it don't materialize. It's my idea.

Everywhere I travelled people wanted a manifestation of our self-confidence. In other words, how confident are you in your own country? So I went and I spoke with all the businesses that had started humbly but added on little rooms here and there as their business expanded, and I said to them, what about reestablishing your organization as a showcase to display the confidence you have in your country, what you have done and the best place to do that is Caymanas? So much so that we selected 200 acres and put it at a point where as you are leaving Highway 2000 you can't miss it, it's right in front of you. So anyone coming to ask us, why are you coming to encourage us to invest in Jamaica? What are you doing in Jamaica? You can showcase it and say, see it deh.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

The Deputy SPEAKER: The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended sufficiently to allow him to complete his presentation?

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time for speaking be extended so as to allow him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda.

Mr. SAMUDA: Thank you very much and I thank the Members of the House for their courtesies.

So the point is Mr. Speaker we came up with this idea, what we will do is subdivide the land but we would be selective in who we chose, and we chose some of the most successful companies and they all bought into the idea. So much so that we advertised and they came in and one large contributor was willing to stand the cost of the infrastructure, he just wanted to get in, he was a consolidator of food. Others, names you all know, but in it was 40 acres reserved and it was reserved for an Informatics Park. Forty acres. And why was that chosen? It was chosen, because as is said, the ICT sector is the sector of the future. It is the sector that offers the greatest opportunity for our young people leaving school, and where do we have more young people bright, unemployed residing? In Southern St. Catherine adjacent to the Caymanas lands.

A MEMBER: South St. Andrew.

Mr. SAMUDA: South St. Andrew, West Kingston, Western St. Andrew, the whole of the St. Andrew area, in fact, when we made our presentation we encircled the area to show the scope of the project. So we reserved this 40 acres, and we said, well, how are we going to build the 40 acres because we don't have the fiscal space, we can't go out and borrow

the money, let's see what we can do. And so we negotiated the purchase of 200 acres at $900 Million. Incidentally, I saw on the website congratulatory language that said that the present chairman of Factories Corporation was successful in his negotiation of the purchase of 200 acres of Caymanas lands. That's just a by the way.

But the fact is we bought this land and we used the land - we didn't use the land as collateral, we used the concept as collateral, and we used factories, because instead of buying it in any other agencies, we chose Factories Corporation because it's a business entity. So we said, okay, Factories Corporation has a revenue base and it has land and value, so let us use it as collateral and we floated a $1.2 Billion bond with Scotia. Scotia Bank. See it yah. This is the copy of the bond. It was off the budget, it would cost the Jamaican Government nothing. It did not require sovereign guarantee. It was entirely private sector in its concept and scope.

Dr. DAVIES: New agreement.

Mr. SAMUDA: New agreement but then you see we weren't under that agreement, because that agreement - well, we won't go there.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Government Members)

Mr. SAMUDA: No, but in terms of what you have been able to do, but anyway. The point is that this project was a stand-alone financing project, and it would have been funded from the sales of the lots, and the excess would go into the construction of the Informatics Park.

Had this project gone through, Mr. Speaker, thousands of youngsters in Southern St. Catherine would today be going to work every day, every day. That's an opportunity lost! That's an opportunity lost! Talk about concept, the concept was as sound then as it is today, and will be in the future. If we don't begin to showcase what we can do locally, what our businessmen and women represent, instead of depending on multilateral international...

Mr. SHAW: Consortiums!

Mr. SAMUDA: ...consortiums to come and bail us out - there is enough wealth among the business community of this country, all they need is the motivation to move. (Applause) All they need is the motivation.

Mr. CHUCK: And untie their hands!

Mr. SAMUDA: That's right. If you free them and you give them a path to follow fearlessly, they will help. And that is what they were willing to do for the Caymanas Enterprise Zone. And what was this? Mr. Minister, this was not the end, this was the beginning.

Prime Minister, you know what this was designed to do? This was designed to serve as a seeding of the land. When you buy land, the best way to sell your lots is to build a few houses on the land.

Mr. SHAW: Yes.

Mr. SAMUDA: This was the exact business model that we adopted to seed the land of 200 acres, because we knew we had over 1,000 acres owned by the UDC. So this was just the beginning whilst we explored what you are now going to explore - the

possibility of bringing in all these high-rollers.

Mr. SHAW: Consortium people.

Mr. SAMUDA: That's right. So to talk of it as a finished product is not to understand the concept. So any concept deficiency is not mine, it's yours. It's not that we were short on our concept; you have not understood the concept. And I don't hear you say one word about facilitating local business development, nowhere in your presentation.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Anthony Hylton)

Mr. SHAW: Keep quiet!

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, coupled with this - coupled with this, Mr. Speaker, was the Naggo Head project. Because we recognized - and let me tell you, I hear you talking about - I hear talk about all these ICT firms, these large companies, and they have committed - there is no ICT firm on the face of this planet - and if you can find one, you bring it here and I will apologize - there is not one that will give you a firm undertaking unless they at least see cement start to pour. They will not. They are dismissive because they have options, Minister, they have options. They don't work in theories. These are highly sophisticated businessmen and women who make decisions on the basis of something concrete. And, until they know that you have identified the land, you have the plans and you are going to build, and the timeframe is within a certain limit, then they negotiate. Anything less than that is just theory. Theory. Remember that word, theory, or you may replace it with the word 'pipedream'. Take your pick. But that comes back to the same thing. We can't afford pipe-dreams and hairy-fairy schemes, right.

When we looked at Naggo Head as a sister project within the Factories Corporation, we realized immediately that the demand for the BOPs were so powerful, and the people wouldn't budge without something concrete. We went ahead and we advertised for tenders. We got three, they were assessed. One winner emerged; it went to the stage of the Contracts Commission. All the plans, everything, laid out, a sophisticated programme of development was laid out by this firm - a going call the name, Stresscon, headed by Eric Comrie and his family; a family of qualified engineers; a family who has built some of the most outstanding structures in this country. And it took months to even get a reply after the interview. Eventually they were rejected.

But hear this, the remarkable thing - that's why I applaud what I saw you bring to the House. The remarkable thing was that within a couple of months after being rejected, a company that had been in operation, with qualified engineers and extraordinary concepts and build outs, for forty years, was moved from grade one to grade four in all the categories that they were registered in, they sunk from one to four. Stresscon. That is what was the result of this effort.

Had that been built, Prime Minister, let us just look at it and say what you would feel like today if you had 200,000 square feet of ICT facility at Portmore to employ young people from the area. How would everybody feel? That could have been in operation for two years, for two years!

Mr. SHAW: Them going twitter yu!

Mr. SAMUDA: Another opportunity lost. You talk about concept! You talk about business concept!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: Let me tell you, what we need to do Mr. Speaker is we need to be bold, we need to be bold and deliberate. And we need to make sure that we don't squander money on things that are not going to materialize. I tell you something, you have done the most incredible - with the assistance of your colleagues - you have done the most incredible PR on this logistics hub. I have a document here I can read to you, when the use of the very word logistics and hub were spoken by me in 2011 and many of my colleagues. Because it is a concept that has been around, Madam Prime Minister, for decades, decades. From the days of Bob Lightbourne, P.J. Patterson, Danny Williams.

(Inaudible comment from Mr. Shaw)

Mr. SAMUDA: No, he was a little earlier. (Laughter) Right. Blake, all those men who were Industry and Commerce.

Mr. VAZ: Lightbourne.

Mr. SAMUDA: Lightbourne, I said that first.

Mr. VAZ: Dougie Vaz.

Mr. SAMUDA: Dougie Vaz, I worked with him. Now, Dougie Vaz was a dynamic Minister of Industry and Commerce. And I can tell you that its been around for so long. So, now to suggest that this is a new idea, a new concept, and that everything now must revolve around the logistics hub -1 think the PR has been good, but I give him credit for even much more. Because, Mr. Minister, when he can get you in your state of financial stress, to set aside six hundred and eighty million dollars ($680M) to engage in mapping for the logistics hub...

Mr. SHAW: What!

Mr. SAMUDA: …I think you are the most generous Minister of Finance on earth, or you have been highly, highly PR.

Mr. SHAW: What! You better audit that!

Mr. SAMUDA: Six Hundred and Eighty Million Dollars ($680M) was allocated for mapping.

Mr. SHAW: I can audit it! I will audit it!

Mr. SAMUDA: And all of the things that I hear the Minister talking about, all of the theory, is coming out of this high-flown committee business, research business, writing-paper business.

Prime Minister, you and I are practical people, we are practical, right. I once said in here that when I heard some finance matters spoken at the highest level in this - I had a lady on Red Hills Road called Miss Icy, and I would challenge anybody, she has more financial sense that the one them were talking in Parliament. Commonsense!

Dr. DAVIES: Audley, is you him talking?

Mr. SHAW: I don't think so. Is either you or...

Mr. SAMUDA: And it doesn't make sense ounoo spending money when the people in our communities can't mek ends meet, dying for a little money. You talk about the MSME? You talk about facilities for small business? Let me tell you about facilities for

small business. All this business about you provide a Billion Dollars ($1B) for small business, let me tell you where that going. You know where it's going? It's going into the formal - the official financial sector - approved financial institutions, AFIs.

And what do the AFIs do, Minister? Take out the commercial banks - you know what they do, by and large? They lend money at 40-odd per cent *per annum*, annualized, and 50-odd per cent. There is no small business person - unless they are buying and selling, which is another thing now, you are catering to consumerism and not production - none a dem can produce anything at 40-odd per cent interest. There is no future in that. You have to buy and sell and you have to turnover every week, and that loan is for six weeks. So a man walk 'round and check you out and yu gi' dem a little money, but when you annualize it, 50-odd per cent interest. That has mushroomed, every Tom, Dick and Harry now is in that business, same-day loan. And you talk 'bout helping the MSME, help them with what? With same-day loan at 50-odd per cent?

What you need to do is go to the commercial banks and negotiate a rate for the small people, and say to them, give them an extended period, a protracted period. But here is what they will have to do in order to do it; they will have to establish a monetary mechanism to ensure that they collect the money.

There is only one company dealing in micro-lending that has put the money into the development of a monetary mechanism, only one, the largest, only one. In fact, if you gave them a licence to be a commercial bank they would give the commercial banks the greatest run for their money. They are the ones who would give the commercial banks a run for their money, because they have spent the time, they have spent the money to establish infrastructure to cope with that.

So, when you talk to me about you lend man money, and a man come to you and you gi' him a One Million ($1M) or a Two Million ($2M) Dollar and him have fe run go pay it every six months or every three months, that is not the way you build an economy. That is not the way you build a sustainable economy.

(The students in the gallery on their way out)

My students, thank you very much for coming, students. And please go down stairs, there are refreshments down there for you.

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda...

Mr. SAMUDA: That is what it is - let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that is what it is all about. (Applause) That is why I am here.

The Deputy SPEAKER: And that is why you will now...

(Inaudible) (Laughter)

Mr. SAMUDA: Prime Minister, you need to insist that you develop like a one national development strategy. What you have now is a harum-scarum *ad hoc* thing, you know, and it is parading as joined-up government. You can't have an agency charged with responsibility of promoting investment, and every day you wake up another Minister is making an announcement about a big, enormous project, and the people who are in

charge don't know anything about the project.

(Inaudible comment from Mr. Shaw)

Mr. SAMUDA: That's right. It's not coordinated, it's not tight.

Prime Minister, I don't think you have had a Development Council Meeting for the longest time, perhaps over a year. That's the committee that you chair. That's the way you can keep them in check. That's the way you can inform yourself. That's the way you can impose your will on the process and make sure it gets done. That's your tool.

That's the instrument you use to make sure that they stay in line because when you say, what happen to this, you make a date that it must be done and they come back and report to the Development Council. It started when the former Prime Minister Patterson insisted that he had to have that as his means of keeping in touch and making sure that projects are expedited efficiently. This is what - the way it's running now is like what doctor say to you - as we've had an experience in our family, where doctor say to you, you're suffering from irritable bowel syndrome.

Dr. DAVIES: That's what you're suffering from?

Mr. SAMUDA: What they really mean is they don't know what wrong with you soh dem gi yuh Alka-Seltzer or Milk a Magnesia.

My friend over here is a doctor and he knows exactly what I'm talking about, right. And I tell you a little secret, the irritable bowel syndrome nearly kill mi wife and him know it, nearly kill mi wife. So when I say irritable bowel syndrome, if the policy going on now continues, it gwine kill the country.

(Laughter/Heckling)

Mr. SAMUDA: You know, Mr. Speaker, do you know I went - where all this economic zone thing come from - and I'm so proud to have had the opportunity to visit China in 1994, I was on that side, and I travelled with former Minister of Foreign Affairs Paul Robertson and a team of us went to China, and I had the great pleasure and privilege of being exposed to one of the world's greatest transformational activities that has led to the growth and development of China, something formed by a great man, a Chinese man called Dong Tai-Ping.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: Deng Jai-Ping, Dung Jai-Ping, whatever, right, sometimes they spell it D,0,N,G sometimes it spell D,E,N,G. The point is, he was never President of China, he was never President, he was the...

A MEMBER: Vice President.

Mr. SAMUDA: ...Chairman of the Central Advisory Committee of the Communist Party of China, but you know what, he took advice from the Council of eight elders. I say no more.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: Now, that man revolutionized China and perhaps the world, by taking a 30,000 populated fishing village in Guangdong Province called Shenzhen, fenced it off from outside - well I said ring fenced it but not physically - where he brought in young graduates to be supervisors and the concept was to form a special enterprise zone. I had the pleasure of being there on the ground floor.

I came back to this Honourable House and I said what I visited in China, while they're busy building factories that look like hotels, we are busy building edifices to consumerism, insurance and banking. Our buildings in New Kingston were edifices to the financial sector, while they were busy building factories.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll never forget when I came here first with the concept of the Caymanas Enterprise when my good friend from Central Westmoreland was very hostile and said I was trying to destroy good agricultural land. Now I see him calm when his Minister is talking and promoting large industrial development on the same land. Time have a spanner to fit every nut. Your nut has just come in.

(Laughter/Heckling)

Mr. SAMUDA: I'm fearful of the extent...

Mr. SHAW: That's why they call it the hub effect?

(Laughter)

Mr. SAMUDA: Well, the hub.

So you see when the Minister talks about hub, Jamaica is the hub; Jamaica is the hub and everything...

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. SAMUDA: No, no. ...but everything that has been done by every Minister to contribute to the hard and soft infrastructure of the country; Highway 2000, North South Highway, Telecommunications, Transportation, Shipping, Airline, divestment of the airline - the Norman Manley and soon to come divestment of Norman Manley, and all these things, these are the things that comprise a logistic hub; these are the things that make us attractive, nobody comes to a country that has no development of hard and soft infrastructure. But where are we lacking? We're lacking in training.

The Opposition Leader spoke feelingly about a knowledge-based economy; he's dead-on, he has hit the nail right on the head. Why? Because without knowledge, without training, without education, your ability to absorb new technology and to apply it and therefore reduce or make yourselves more competitive is impossible, impossible.

Education, over 70% of our entire workforce receives no vocational training whatsoever. Any investor who looks at that figure will say, but Jamaica don't have no future, the people dem down there have no training. So they'll have to spend a fortune to establish courses to give certification so that they're sure of what they have. Education can make a tremendous difference in the process of development.

And, Mr. Speaker, I lament the fact that not once in his presentation of nearly three hours did I hear the Minister make reference, with any degree of passion, for the expansion of education in this process.

Dr. DAVIES: I spoke about it, it's a joined up government.

Mr. SAMUDA: But it's a joined up - but that's you, you see.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, the Factories Corporation that he spoke about - let me just cut to the chase - it should be divested. It is the largest landlord of industrial space in

the country. What in hell does the Government of Jamaica have to be a landlord of 1.8 square feet of factory? That's not our role; divest it to the people who know how to handle it; divest it – you talk about people afraid of fire sale, fraid a fire sale! If you have to cut your losses so that you can make it up on the backend, then you do. What do you think; we have 204,000 square feet of empty factory space right now.

Mr. CHARLES: What?

Mr. SAMUDA: Empty! The only thing in there is rat and cockroach. Empty!

Mr. CHARLES: And chi chi.

Mr. SAMUDA: But the worst thing is, Mr. Speaker, it's not just empty, it has been empty for a long time and in some instance it's for years! And we hang on sey we nah gi it wey, we a hug it up, we a Government, we know wey we a duh. We a keep di ole factory out a Good Year caa we nah gi it wey.

(Laughter)

Mr. CHUCK: What you're doing for the Good Year Factory?

Mr. SAMUDA: So we equipped it for ICT, dem teef out half a it, soon deh gwine tek off di roof, but we nah gi it up.

Dr. DAVIES: It is production train time now yuh nuh.

Mr. CHARLES: The train is coming baby, choo choo.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, in KSAC, in KSAC alone we have 56,000 square feet of empty space, no rent. When I came to office, where the JBDC is now it was empty for about two years. The Minister stood right over there, former Minister stood right over there and sey, if a gi it wey dem don't want it so I converted it into the office of the JBDC. It's serving a very good purpose now, but those are the things that attention must be paid to.

So, Minister of Finance, you're asking what I said about you grazing a couple million dollars? Sell Factories Corporation and expedite the sale. And it's easy to sell because its construction - you have land to make a selection as to which ones you want to get people to partner with you to build out, but the ones you have the old buildings on, the ones that you're spending money refurbish -1 see you go and refurbish something down Vere, I don't hear the Minister say a word about Vere yet you know. Last time I hear Vere is it gwine open any day; him find a investor, mi nuh hear nutten bout dat. Vere!

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Chuck)

Mr. SAMUDA: Vere, yes.

Mr. CHUCK: They used to use it to store cement.

Mr. SAMUDA: Down Clarendon. That's right.

Not a word has been spoken about Vere, that gone to bed. Yuh know what's going to happen, Madam Prime Minister? That is going to become another Good Year, because business people don't go on emotion, they go on business instincts and what makes sense. Vere never did make sense, it was used for everything; store cement, anything you want, but it ain't the right place at this time to encourage ICT or Factories.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes, they don't make sense.

So the point is, what you need now is to sit down and make a plan of divestment for the Factories Corporation, and don't get caught up in all this mystifying dreaming of all kinds a wonderful and glorious things to come when nutten is on the ground.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. SAMUDA: We've lost - we've made a lot of errors; we've made a lot of errors in this country and we must make sure we don't make anymore. You know, one of the errors we made - and I heard a Minister, I won't tell you who, make a very constructive comment the other day, he said if only we had been more diligent in the utilization of the Bauxite Levy instead of going for the relief programme at the time, what a place it would be today.

Mr. SHAW: The former Head of the... (Inaudible)

Mr. SAMUDA: So we must avoid - we must look at the priorities and make choices; we must make choices that are beneficial in the long run, for there's nothing you can come here and tell me that you're going to do in a year because economies don't turn in a year, it takes time. If you had built out Caymanas now it would start to turn, long term planning. The Chinese plan for 1,000 years. Don't make snap decisions that you'll end up regretting.

The Minister of Finance is under so much stress a sorry for him, because the IMF have us like this. I don't agree with the IMF, and I will say that without apology to anybody, I don't agree with the IMF. The IMF has one thing in mind, whether you can meet on paper the requirements at the end of the quarter. They don't even go behind the scenes and say what they're doing to you because I will tell you what has happened recently.

The Minister of Finance was forced - I don't think he did it willingly, if he had a choice he would not do it, I'm sure he wouldn't, I don't think he would, but he has been forced into a position because if he failed di whole a we gone into trouble. When I said that to him one day he didn't understand what I mean, that he was forced to make bad choices with the IMF. They may tell us the ideas, the same old 40 year strategy devalue your currency; devalue your currency. They've been saying that for 40 years.

Mr. SHAW: Forty years and it don't work.

Mr. CHUCK: It's not because of the devaluation.

Mr. SAMUDA: Minister of Finance because he's forced. You know what he has to do? He has to cook the books, and quite frankly, nobody can scientifically on any accounting basis, contradict me when I say that the books, the national books of the country of Jamaica was cooked in order to pass the test.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SAMUDA: A gwine tell yuh. Yuh got a double whammy that catch you. Him can't meet the primary surplus unless him hide expenses that is due and payable.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. SAMUDA: No wait, hold on. Due and payable, employees deductions are made and the Ministry of Finance have challenges, several things that are coming forward. Now, I

don't say all of them are his fault, some of them were there as a carryover, but minimally compared to where him is now. And all of this, him don't have the revenue, so guess what him has to do now. My friend, the Minister of Telecommunications, I am sure the day that he came up with the idea - I was told about the possibility everybody was in a sense of euphoria must have overcome you, when him say I know where we can get - was it Sixteen or Eighteen Billion? From the...

Mr. SHAW: Twelve Billion.

Mr. SAMUDA: Twelve Billion, I know where you can get Twelve Billion; all you have to do is to ask them to pay us the money first that is due next year. Not this year is due, you know, next year. Right....

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Shaw)

A MEMBER: Right, two years time.

Mr. SAMUDA: Right, two years times and here is what - and with all you want to say about the Minister - make no mistake about it, if he was instrumental in engineering that he is worthy of a raise, because that is what they do in the private sector, if you do something good, you get a raise. Because without it him in trouble, without it him cannot pass him IMF test.

Now, why I say it is a double whammy, Mr. Speaker, is because on the one hand, you are containing your expenditure by hiding your bills and not paying them, that are due and payable, and on the other hand, you are drawing down on next year's revenue. You know what the IMF has caused you to do? It has caused you to compromise the future, because you now have to go find that money for next year to meet those tests. So, when you have to pay these bills, plus find that revenue you use up already, God help us. Unless you know where there is another source of money coming. But as you said, it is no use holding up a shop that has no cash. So, that is why I say that they have got you in strictures; that is why I hate the programme because they exercise no tolerance for a country like ours and they want us devalue.

Devalue and do what. Devalue and make what more competitive? What do we have to sell to earn foreign exchange? The only people who benefit when you - who suffer when you devalue most of all is the poor consumers who have to pay more for their goods, more for them rent, more for everything because as soon as they hear devaluation they put up the price. And the distributors not going to put up the price as it occurs, them going to project the price as to what dem have fi pay fi the dollar when dem have fi buy it back or else they are out of business. So you are in a bind, the chances are, you are going to fail the next test or the one after because you won't have the money and you can't borrow it, and you cannot - it is trade. I used to come here and talk about the balance of payment, and I got nicknamed Mr. Balance of Payments because I know the impact of the balance of payment current account deficit, I know where it is coming from. The problem is nothing wrong with Jamaica; the problem with Jamaica is we don't have any foreign exchange Minister.

We are not an export, outward driven economy. We were spawned on the concept of distribution, we love it like cook food. When

your people come to you in your constituency, can I help you, I say what you would like to do? A little buy and sell. Them never say I want to make two shoes, I want to make furniture, I want sew, I want to do a little buy and sell that is our culture. The trade agents are not that way, the trade agents are outward looking they are export oriented and that is why they are more competitive. We have gotten into export because many of those who are in export today went into export in order to earn the foreign exchange to go in and expand their distribution. You can quote me. How you think Grace Kennedy got into foreign exchange. How you think Grace Kennedy started to export? You think they started to export because it is easier? They started to export because we could not find the dollar to satisfy their purchasing power for the distributing trade.

Now, this thing needs an overall. I don't know, Minister, I am sorry for you, you are in big trouble. There is only one thing that is hopeful on the horizon and that is the fact that there is one sector that can maximize our possibilities for foreign exchange and it is right sitting in front of me here.

A MEMBER: Agriculture.

Mr. SAMUDA: Agro industry forget, not agriculture, agro industry and by extension agriculture must do well for agro culture - agro industry. (Applause) Agro industry, so Prime Minister, the person to embrace, the person to do everything to help, is the Minister of Agriculture. The future of Jamaica rests in his hands, to grow out enough that we can convert the raw material and process it.

Mr. CLARKE: Working on it, we are working, working. (Laughter)

Mr. SAMUDA: Well, I know. Minister, I am coming down now, and I now speak of energy. In the area of energy, Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SAMUDA: When it comes to energy, you know, you have to look on your notes. The three eight one (381) megawatt plant, is a phenomenal project. It is a must project. It would satisfy half of our existing total generating capacity and reduce the cost if the price holds by somewhere approaching near 30 percent....

Dr. DAVIES: Thirty?

Mr. SAMUDA: Thirty. Without that, I am not saying that the manufacturing sector cannot survive. I am saying without that the consuming sector can't survive, the people can't survive. The people in the little corner shop, the man who is selling and had to put on his light, him is thieving because him can't make ends meet if him pay the electricity bill. The electricity bill in many of the instances is more than the sales for the day. So he has to do something to survive. That is the man I am worried about. I am not worried about the big player who can create mechanisms within his organization to reduce and become more competitive, more efficient; because the degree to which electricity forms a part of the total expenses of an organization is really quite minimal, is much less than has been publicized. Much less than has been publicized, listen to me carefully. So the manufacturers are going to have to step up to the plate with improving their competitiveness

by improving their management structure and by applying appropriate technology. You have to spend money to earn money in this day and age. There is no such thing as cheap labour again, that is finished. It is now technology driven. And so they have to look at that aspect of it, but in terms of the energy cost this project is a vitally important project.

We unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, ended up in a situation where two major agencies are in conflict with each other, major. The Office of the Contractor General in its report said:

> "*the OUR's receipt of the unsolicited proposal and expressions of interests have attendant details and processes and guidelines which are embodied in the Government of Jamaica, handbook of public procurement procedures. An exception was allowed after the expiration of the evaluation had already concluded. In this regard, the playing field was not level the playing field was not level as preference was given to facilitating the receipt of one other proposal from EWI"*

Those are damaging comments and formed the basis of the IDB posture towards EWI and the country. The OUR on the 27th of September 2013, and I quote:

> *"The Contractor General erred when he arrived at the findings because the Contractor General failed to properly apply the provisions of the procurement regulations and procurement handbook. The OUR maintains that the Contractor General's conclusion in this regard is completely erroneous...*

remember those words:

> *...completely erroneous and is predicated on the unlawful application of a procurement procedure applicable to consulting services".*

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me try to explain something. No bother with that.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SAMUDA: That is the New York - Boardroom of the New York Stock Exchange.

Mr. SHAW: Show them how modest your preparations are.

Mr. SAMUDA: Very modest. Now the flag is I am the manifestation of the flag.

So, Mr. Speaker, those two conclusions cannot stand separately, cannot stand and must not be allowed to stand separately. And the Opposition takes the position that a judicial review should be undertaken in order to have this matter, properly settled.

This whole episode has exposed the country to a level of doubt, in the minds of multilaterals. Not only the ones we have dealt with, but the ones that we have observed what has taken place.

Our international partners have become skeptical about our capacity to properly handle this type of negotiation. We cannot have that. We are a sophisticated country and we cannot have our good name banded about in this fashion. Some may find it amusing, some might even find it entertaining, I find it distressing and depressing at the stage of our development and it cannot enhance the Minister of Finance effort to get us out of this mess.

In this regard, and due to the level of controversy that has attended this entire

process, special care should be taken to ensure that no member of the announced enterprise team brings to the table any level of bias or history of contention in respect of any past involvement in their association with any public enterprise with which they had been previously involved.

I crafted those words deliberately, that was in ordinary parlance a shot across the bow. You heed it or there are consequences, it is as simple as that. If you don't understand it, then you are not a student of history.

Mr. DALLEY: Repeat it again.

Mr. SAMUDA: I am going to repeat it. In this regard...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SAMUDA: My intonation will tell you. In this regard and due to the level of controversy that has attended this entire process, special care should be taken to ensure that no member of the announced enterprise team brings to the table any level of bias, or history of contention in respect of any past involvement, in their association, with any public enterprise with which they have been previously involved.

If you don't understand that, then we can have a talk in the corridors.

(Laughter) (Cross talk)

I crafted it - I can say this occasionally I will ask an opinion. In this case, I did this one myself.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Pryce)

Mr. SAMUDA: In this matter I do, because I suffered the consequences. You recalled that I was - my goodly young friend's father censured me for a statement I made in respect of a report that should have been delivered to the former Prime Minister and I maintained he had gotten the report and he maintained he had not, and D-Buc promptly censured me. Of course, the Speaker of the House, in his wisdom, did not pursue it, but he could have. But I feel about this strongly. I won't go into any of those details. I don't want to go into those details. I'm just simply - this is just a shot across the bow.

The Opposition will be watching these developments very carefully. We demand nothing less than absolute transparency at all levels in this matter. The Opposition expects that whichever firm eventually provides this facility, the price should not exceed the benchmark level of US$0.13 per Kilowatt hour.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SAMUDA: That is not ambiguous.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SAMUDA: We have set the benchmark based on what we know one supplier can deliver it *fah.* When you find one that can deliver it - the one that is well known, and has bid and have a licence now. The one who has a licence right now.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, we are disappointed that after several days have elapsed since the announcement of the enterprise team to oversee the finalization of this project by 2016, the country has received no updates nor the terms of reference that will guide the team. We are very disappointed at that.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies

Mr. SAMUDA: As far as North - I learnt

that lesson from the Prime Minister, and I am learning it every day as the Minister of Finance speaks. He gives you only so much and then he talk to you afterwards on a one to one basis.

Dr. DAVIES: This is what you're doing?

Mr. SAMUDA: This is a one to one basis.

Dr. DAVIES: Okay.

Mr. SAMUDA: It's not in the text, all right. As far as EWI is concerned, we feel that they have had enough time to finalize their financial arrangements. They should either seek to comply fully with all the provisions under the licence or signal their intention to withdraw from the process consistent with all legal considerations.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SAMUDA: I wrote that one myself too.

Dr. DAVIES: Yeah man, say it.

Mr. SAMUDA: Because I mean it.

Dr. DAVIES: No, but there is a easy way there, you know.

Mr. SAMUDA: We believe that the time has come to review the decision whereby the OUR has the sole authority to conduct the procurement process relating to the purchase of power equipment whilst also having the authority to preside over the regulatory mechanism of the industry. There has to be review of that. It's a conflict.

A Government MEMBER: We agree with that.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, on energy, I just want to point out that in our quest for expanded use of renewable energy through the use of solar and wind, we should not be unmindful of the additional generating capacity which will be required to ensure the stability of the current flows during the inevitable periods of peak and troughs throughout the process. You have to generate more to get up there to the speed and it will comprise the savings that you anticipate. So it will cost more. So it's a consideration. There is no silver bullet, Mr. Speaker, and only thing that we must now do is diversify our source of fuel.

(Cross talk)

And finally, as I conclude, Mr. Speaker, I say to everyone especially to my constituents, this little country; is in a lot of economic, social and moral difficulties, but I believe in the courage, ingenuity and good sense of our people. I am convinced that there is a no generation of Jamaicans preparing themselves for the day when they will take our places and move our country forward. Our job is to guide, nurture and protect them through this process. Give them the tools we never had. Teach them the values of work, loyalty to country and commitment to duty. Let us hasten in this task of giving them a sound base on which to build a just and caring society. I am satisfied that if we do these things our future will be secure and safe.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Member from North West Manchester will now conclude the presentations this evening.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Phillips.

(Applause)

Mr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I seek your permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Permission granted.

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, let me at this hour, let me just first...

Mr. CLARKE: Declare. (Laughter)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: ...thank my constituents for bearing with us.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

It shows their commitment to me as their Member of Parliament. Mr. Speaker, the Lord has been my strength and my provider. It is through Him that I have managed to accomplish all that I have and from Him that we seek his guidance, courage and strength. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to express my gratitude to my councillors: Samson, Deputy Mayor Facey, Maxwell and Collins; (Applause) again to my constituents of North West Manchester for their continued support, my staff, my assistant Jackie; members of the constituency executive, all the workers as we unite in the continued task of building a better constituency and by extension a better Jamaica. Last but not least, Mr. Speaker, my mother who's in the Gallery (Applause), my better half and my daughter, Gabriella, who is here giving me support. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the Prime Minister for her continued guidance and support. There are some out there who only speak about their commitment to young people; the Most Honourable Prime Minister has shown her commitment, belief and guidance in us as young Jamaicans. (Applause) You have made that commitment in serving our country. Prime Minister, you have shown us that you have a steady pair of hands and I would like to say thank you for believing in us. (Applause)

A promise made by the Honourable Prime Minister, the Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce and the Minister of STEM, when we first came to power in 201l, about making Manchester the third hub of ICT/BPO sector. It just shows that the Minister is working, working, working. (Applause) But I am pleased to say that this was a promise made and will be a promise kept. (Applause) As we speak, we have two investors from the parish of Manchester who are now constructing approximately 90,000 square feet of factory space for the ICT/BPO sector. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, my father keeps saying that I am foolhardy in following in his footsteps. My response to him today is that I have recognized that to serve the people of Jamaica is the greatest gift that God can and have bestowed upon us as servants of the people, (Applause) and I know that I not that fool after all. What better way than to walk in the footsteps of my father. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: After two and half years I still consider it a privilege and not a right to serve the people of North Manchester. Together, we have focused on education as the main plank as a means of building a solid and sustainable foundation for our people. We have achieved much with the united support of

our schools: schools' PTA, teachers, Principals, private sector partners and all well-thinking constituents.

One area of focus, Mr. Speaker, is to improve the learning environment of our students. In so doing, we're able to pave the driveway and the parking area of the New Green Primary School, construction and pavement of a new roadway of Evan Grant Basic School in New Green; construction of bathrooms, kitchen and lunch room at Lyndhurst Basic School. Currently, the refurbishing of the Wards Park School is underway. We will be completing the staff room, Principal's office and computer lab at the Nazareth Primary School. We will be also working in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in addressing the roofing problem at the Comfortable Hall Primary School. We also have another successful year at the North West Manchester Principal's Association Annual Quiz Competition.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, with the joint partnership of Digicel Foundation, Kimala Foundation and Mr. Christopher James and his company, DOS Limited 2009, we were able to supply sixty computers and five large printers to twelve primary and basic schools in the constituency. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, education cannot, and should not be the business of the Government alone. Where we are now, we need everyone on board: the parents, the JTA, the private sector, our international partners, our families, every single Jamaican.

(Applause)

With this, Mr. Speaker, I am making an appeal to those scoundrels out there who think it is okay for them to break in and destroy our school properties as they see fit; I say to them, think before you act. When a criminal is found guilty of destroying a school property, the penalty should be so great that he would never contemplate to commit that crime again. Every single Jamaican should make it their duty to protect our schools. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I recognize, as in my own part to do, and all well-thinking Jamaicans, that the only way that we can sustainably develop Jamaica is through a foundation of proper education for our children. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Pickersgill/Laughter)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, in the Gallery, we have Members of Northwest Manchester Principal's Association, but also in the Gallery we have seven students presently attending Northern Caribbean University. (Applause) At one point or another, they would have visited the constituency office either in person, or their parents, looking for a job because the thought of furthering their tertiary education seemed farfetched. Also in the Gallery, is the National Youth Service Parish Manager for Manchester, Mr. Johnson. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, for Jamaica 50, he and the NYS team approached Northern Caribbean University in awarding scholarships to 50 students from the parish of Manchester: NYS, NCU, JAM VAT, and contributions from the MP's CDF had been combined to pay the tuition for these students. (Applause)

From this programme we have recommended, we were able to assist these seven students. I am proud to say, Mr. Speaker, we led the way in this initiative in the parish of Manchester. Each student was successful in attaining over six 'ones' in CSEC. They also had to meet requirement for admission to the Northern Caribbean University. These students are currently studying accounting, nursing, actuarial science and business management. Mr. Speaker, we will be supporting them for the entire four-year period of their study. (Applause)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear, hear!

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: I am happy to say that they have all successfully completed their first year of study where they have attained an average 3.6 GPA, and I just want to say how proud we are of them. (Applause)

We need to recognize the sacrifices that some parents make in ensuring that even one child in the household attain a tertiary education. For many families, it means borrowing the money, not being able to eat a decent meal for months, sacrificing sometimes, everything. We also have to applaud those children who understand the sacrifices that have been made on their behalf and who have stayed the course in achieving academic excellence.

Mr. Speaker, it is not easy for a young man or woman to resist the peer pressure of today. So when we find the few that makes the effort to stand out and accomplish something for themselves, we need to encourage them and protect them from all the ills in our society.

Mr. Speaker, additionally, we officially opened the Huntley Library. We were able to achieve this from funds provided by the CDF and JEEP. This enabled the Jamaica Library Service to move from their small, crammed space to a larger and more modern facility. They are now able to display many more books, also 10 computers and Internet service was provided by the Universal Access Fund. We will be breaking ground for the construction of another library in the community of Comfort Hall this financial year. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, there is more that I can speak about in relation to Northwest Manchester. We are a team. The Ministry of Education Regional Office, the Principal's Association, Parish Councils, the SDC, teachers, volunteers, parents, guardians, the private sector, all working together to ensure that we lift the standard of education for our children, and we are seeing the results. We are moving in the right direction. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we have completed and open the Huntley Community Centre and is about to open another next month in the community of George Reid. (Applause) We will be breaking ground for the Comfort Hall Community Centre, Health Centre and Library in a few months.

Thanks to the Ministry of Tourism and the TEF, the Noisy River attraction will become a reality this year. Mr. Speaker, Noisy River is one of few surface water, or few rivers running above ground in Manchester in the community of Oxford. During the hot months - and the Member from Central Manchester

knows it quite well - Westmoreland, knows it quite well, as he lives up the road from there and visits there at nights.

Mr. CLARKE: And day too. (Laughter)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: And day... Okay, just checking if the day was included too. During the hot months, residents from Manchester and St. Elizabeth converge on this river - on this small body of water for recreation. So, what we are doing with funds from the TEF, Mr. Speaker, is, we are putting in changing rooms, bath rooms, a few shops, picnic benches that the residents can use it.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Clarke)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: (Laughs) I see the Member likes wheeling the bag... so that residents can use it in good order, and it is...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Clarke)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: Yes... yes, sir. I move on, Mr. Speaker, to technical and vocational education. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to see the Ministry of Education moving in the direction of technical and vocational education. We have seen the positive results that technical high schools have had on our society. We often make mention of the high level of unemployment within the ages of 18 to 35. Let us not fool ourselves. We all know the reason why this category is high is because many are unemployable due to the lack of not having a marketable skill.

The introduction of TVET in our secondary schools will help in tackling this issue ‑ tackling the issue of persons leaving school without the basic requirement for further advancement.

Mr. Speaker, the approach being embarked on is now more critical as data is showing that in 2013, there was a marginal decline of 3.1 per cent of persons accessing training through HEART Trust/NTA. Areas of major decline include: Agriculture, 13.5 per cent; creative industries, 40.8 per cent, and ICT 6.4 per cent. Mr. Speaker, these are three critical areas that can drive the entrepreneurial skill and spirit of our young people. What needs to be achieved is for it to be made compulsory that , before students leaving the secondary system, that in these skill areas, and others, students should be able to attain level I and/or a level II certification from the HEART NTA, or any equivalent certification given by the Ministry of Education.

(Applause)

Additionally, we also need to seriously consider the process by which we will be able to have students make the transition from Level I and Level II, to level III and IV, as data is showing that a small number of students enroll to advance to level III and IV certification, it is only 6.6 per cent and 0.7 per cent respectively of the total number of students enroll that make that transition. If it is that we are going to compete globally, we need to ensure that persons attain the highest skill certification.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we need to find the solution in how we capture the unattached youth in our training programmes. All of us in this House would have been asked to find a job for a youth and when we ask what it is that he can do, the answer is *anything*. I am not sure if

HEART/NTA gives a certification for that skill.

(Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, Minister Hanna spent some time in her Sectoral presentation on programmes that the National Youth Service will be offering with a focus on *Youth at Risk*. This, I am happy to see and I laud the Minister and the National Youth Service team to be putting more resources in this area. It is true that more and more students are leaving the educational system without a secondary certificate, or at the tertiary level, in our rural parishes. Currently, many of the programmes offered by the NYS lend itself mostly to students with these qualifications. Mr. Speaker, it is my view that we have to find a way for the National Youth Service to engage and use more resources for the at-risk youth.

We need to define who is a youth at risk. My definition is a youth who may not have completed his primary education or secondary education; neither has a skill or even thinking of attaining any of the above, who may one day, in his quest to find a way out becomes a huge cost to the Government to provide social services.

With this, Mr. Speaker, I am proposing the introduction of the once reputable and character-building National Youth Service camps, such as Cobbler and Chester Vale, because, Mr. Speaker, it would be interesting to find out what the actual cost is of not engaging the youth at risk, and what the actual cost to the State is in trying to deal with crime and health care.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: (Inaudible) ...the opportunity costs.

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: But where - the opportunity costs - what it actually cost the Government if we do not engage.

But these Camps where young men and women from all walks of life would have gone and spent some time and left more focused and determine on being a better person also leaving with a marketable skill.

Mr. Speaker, it is my feeling that on leaving a secondary institution without any CSEC subjects or the proposed TVET certification, it should be made mandatory for them to be sent to a NYS Camp.

Just recently I had dinner with a family in Manchester and was introduced to their three sons. Their father telling me of the day when he took his three sons to Cobbler Camp and left them at the office of Mr. Lawrence, the then Principal, begging him to enroll his sons as they were unmanageable. They spent two years at Cobbler; one is an engineer and two are medical doctors today.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. D. Smith)

(Applause)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: Yes, is Vin Lawrence father. (Applause)

I am sure we all have heard positive stories from individuals who would have experienced the NYS Camps. Mr. Speaker, we need to treat the situation as it is now with our young people as a crisis, if we do not, history will be unkind to us as we would have failed in our responsibilities to secure a positive future for them.

Mr. Speaker, we in this House have a responsibility, the Churches, civil society groups and all well-thinking Jamaicans need to come together and assess this situation that we are now faced with as a country. The breakdown of order, morals and values in our society.

Mr. Speaker, as we work hard to correct the weaknesses in our economy and to bring growth, we need to spend the same amount of time and effort in bringing back order in the social fabric of our society.

(Applause)

It is my humble belief that if we allow the continued slide in our values, the growth that we are now seeing in our economy, and sacrifice so much for, will be in vain. The 'Don' has become the role model; the Government has been seen as the wicked Government for trying to bring order to the Transport Sector. The gun has become the preferred tool for work, to get a youth, seems what most youths strive for, that a man does not consider himself a man if he doesn't have 'nuff baby mother all over the place.

Jamaicans spend approximately $1 Billion *per annum* on weaves, but wants their children to go to school free of cost.

Mr. Speaker, the absentee father has become the norm, children becoming parents is slowly becoming a culture in our society. Mr. Speaker, most of this breakdown in our morals and values start in the home. (Applause) The absence of the fathers from the homes have a negative impact on our youth. This is why most of our youth sometimes end up in crime, which impacts the stability of their outlook on life. Formal education alone cannot change a young man or a woman's values. Yes, it can help, but stability in the home has a greater impact.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am making an urgent appeal to our Jamaican men, check yourself, look at what your selfish actions are doing to our society and our economy. Start building back our family life.

A Noted Sociologist, Dr. David Pepenoe is one of the pioneers of the relatively young field of research into fathers and fatherhood. According to him, "*fathers are far more than just second adults in the home*". Involved fathers bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is likely to bring.

Mr. Speaker, development cannot happen without the adherence to the rules of law and order, justice and the respect of the rights of every citizen. This is what a successful modern society is built on. Without these as the base of our development, we cannot consider ourselves a modern society.

Mr. Speaker, as this Government and the people of Jamaica work together for growth, development and a more gentle society, we have shown the resolve to do what is right. We have done it in the past; let us work together in achieving a better Jamaica for the future. (Applause)

I leave you with the words from the national Pledge:

"I promise to stand up for justice, brotherhood and peace, to work diligently and creatively, to think generously and honestly, so that Jamaica may, under God, increase in beauty, fellowship and prosperity in advancing the welfare of the whole human race."

Mr. Speaker, this is our duty. May God bless Jamaica and its people.

(Applause) (Standing Ovation)

(The Speaker Gavels)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, it is not proposed to do any further business today, and I ask that the House be adjourned until next Tuesday, the 27th of May.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do adjourn to next Tuesday, 27th of May at 2:00 p.m. House stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m.

TUESDAY, May 27, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:30 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Dr. Winston Green

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL

(See Listing)

The Deputy Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 100**
  Amendments to Tax Regime to Allow for Retention of Benefits and/or Reduction of Taxes
- The National Library of Jamaica Annual Reports and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year 2008/2009 and 2009/2010

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will deal with Item Withdrawal of the Capital Development Fund and also The Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment) Act, 2014.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to seek the leave of the House to withdraw the motion standing in my name at Item No. 4 under Government Business on the Order of Business related to the Capital Development Fund Withdrawal (No. 2) Order, 2014. The fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that the matter on that particular Withdrawal Order is in fact to be - has been overtaken by other

events, it still needs to be done but there are other withdrawals to come. So we will be bringing subsequently Withdrawal Order No. 3, which will include the matter on Withdrawal Order No. 2 plus some additional matters. So rather than having - it would be a tidier way to conduct the matter, Mr. Speaker, so I am seeking to have this Order withdrawn.

The SPEAKER: Is it the wish of the House that the Order be withdrawn?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Motion withdrawn.

(MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM MCNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. LYNDALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central, entered and took his seat)

(HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, the question of the Ministry Paper 100/14 that was just tabled, I wonder if I could ask the Minister a question.

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. SHAW: Minister, this Paper that was promised by you which sets out the details of the changes to the tax package, I just - the normal expectation on specific changes is that there is a direct indication as to the revenue loss, revenue gained and then that is usually summarized at the end of the measure. Now with the exception of page 5 where the additional stamp duty in relation to alcoholic beverages for the tourism industry, in which it has been mentioned that there is an estimated revenue loss of $200 Million, there is no other reference to revenue gains or loss. And, Mr. Speaker, the context is that I think the Parliament would want to get an explanation as to why, first of all, we don't have the traditional Statement in the first instance. And it becomes even more necessary because in his Statement to Parliament the Honourable Minister had said, "*A more rigorous calculation of the revenue to be garnered from the alcohol measure which revealed that significantly more revenue would be received*". So my question in regard to that specific issue on alcohol is, while I recognize that you are expecting a revenue loss of $200 Million, what is the net revenue - your original estimated figure was $844 Million - in view of your more rigorous analysis would the Minister be kind enough to tell us, having regard to the loss of the $200 Million and the original estimate of $844 Million and a more rigorous analysis, what is the new estimated revenue take from that particular line item?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, to answer his question specifically it will be revenue

neutral. What - the calculations were that there was a measure that had been passed in relation to beer previously but which had not been implemented from 2010 I believe it was and which had not been taken into account in the calculation, so that in effect our estimate of what the actual impact would have been was two, as it turns out we would have been receiving more than $840 Million to the tune of about $200 Million?

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Opposition Member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes, so we have reduced by $200 Million, so it remains neutral in terms of the impact. In terms of all the other areas the overall impact of this is neutral, but I will get the specific revenue impact on all of these, on each item and have it here.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the matter before us is the Bill entitled AN ACT to Amend The Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act 2014, which seeks to strengthen and improve the regulatory oversight of The Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission, BGLC and which seeks also to rectify gaps in the Act which arose from the 2010 amendments and correct anomalies and other typographical errors in the Act. And we expect also, Mr. Speaker, most importantly, that this will improve the ability of the BGLC to collect and manage its revenues. The Bill also seeks to make permanent the measures introduced in the Provisional Collection of Tax, Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Orders 2013 and 2014, which made provision for the introduction of sports betting for the specific treatment of unclaimed winnings and the reallocation of the gross profit tax contribution in respect of local and overseas horse racing from the bookmakers levy scheme, in order to maintain the viability of the Jamaica Racing Commission while contributing to persons breeding activities. The objective of the amendment is to provide the regulatory framework to ensure the integrity and probity of the games and key stakeholders within the betting, gaming and lotteries industry and to, as we said, to strengthen the regulatory oversight.

There is, Mr. Speaker, an increase, as I said, of revenue streams, which has already been undertaken through the provisional orders, but which we now seek to embed in legislation, which by virtue of the expansion of sports betting and lottery industries through the licensing of a variety of new outlets including provision for the licensing of mobile outlets; the introduction of fees for activities undertaken by the Commission in the gaming machine invigilation activities that they undertake and providing for specific licensing fees for certain persons operating in the industry.

Mr. Speaker, essentially this is tidying up legislation for what already is. The various - in the Act, provision is made in Clause 1, which sets out the Short Title and the construct and commencement date.

The Principal Act is amended in Clause 2 in the manner specified in the First Schedule. Section 8 of the Principal Act is amended by

inserting - including the payment of fees whether periodically or otherwise during the term of such licence permit approval or authority. This will legitimize the charging of licensing fees for activities for which there are now no provisions in existence in the Legislation, which include the charging of fees for licenses where none currently exist.

(HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General, entered and took his seat.)

This, Mr. Speaker, includes premises licenses and agents' licenses. The BGLA, Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act does not provide for the Commission to charge fees to issue these licences, the processing of which uses valuable resources and is intended to allow the Commission to prescribe fees for these provisions.

Section 44(4) of the Principal Act is amended to increase the levy on prescribed premises from 1,000 to 2,500 to the commission of taxes and 500 to $1,000 to the BGLC.

Section 44(g) enables the Commission to charge a prescribed fee for its involvement in decommissioning or recommissioning or facilitating the repairs of gaming machines.

Section 59(a) has been amended to increase the lottery tax, in the case of a declared lottery, from 23% to 25% of the gross weekly revenue from sales of tickets; in the case of the daily numbers games or instant lottery, from 17% to 20% of the gross weekly revenue derived.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, this formalizes arrangements which are already in effect.

(THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, entered and took her seat.)

Section 8 also provides for the licensing of lottery agents Betting, Gaming and Lottery Act provides such agents should be licensed, but there is no fee structure in place for application for such license fee, the amendment allows that such a fee should be prescribed by regulations.

(MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Section 49(b) provides for the licensing of lottery sales outlets. Although the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act was amended to provide for the licensing of agents, there's no requirement in the legislations for these premises to be licensed by the Commission. The Bill provides that these premises should be subject to license in the same manner as gaming machine premises are.

Section 46(5) provides for - the Act provides only for the court process of forfeiture of abandoned gaming machines as per section 46(a), 6(b) of the Betting, Gaming

and Lotteries Act. In such cases the Commission can recover the cost up to a maximum of 1½ time the value of the gaming machine.

In reviewing the legislation, a gap was noted that there's no specific provision in the legislation which speaks to these charges being recovered outside of the procedure outlined in the section mentioned previously. Therefore, the amendment provides for the Commission to recover the cost of seizure operations.

Section 20(a) provides for the licensing of bookmakers, bet writers; and section 24(b) provides for the licensing of racing promoter terminal operators. Section 24(c) provides for the licensing of off-track betting parlour terminal operations.

Section 44(a) provides for the licensing of workers in gaming lounges. There's currently no requirement in the legislation for these persons to be licensed or to be determined fit and proper by the Commission. In accordance with international best practices, it is recommended that such persons should be licensed by the Commission, and the amendments provide for that.

Section 20(e) provides for the expansion of sports betting outlets. Sports betting sales in Jamaica are estimated to be in the order of $7 Billion. The Commissioner has previously advised that amendments to the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act would facilitate the expansion of outlets, which could sell sports bets and therefore tap into that market which would provide additional revenues and more so provide for the regulation of this significant set of activities.

Section 49(c) facilitates the mobile sale of lottery tickets. Illegal lottery operators are estimated to conduct transactions in the sum of approximately $1.5 Billion per year. These amendments facilitate the licensed lottery operator in implementing mobile gaming strategies to compete against the illegal operators, which would again, facilitate regularization of this section of the industry.

Section 46(b) implements a decision taken by Cabinet - as noted earlier - to amend the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act to allow grandfather gaming lounge licenses to increase the numbers of seats to 225. The required amendment is reflected in this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Section 30(a) enables the Commission – Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission - to collect unclaimed bet winnings.

Section 44(a) provides for licensing fees paid on gaming machines which are set out in 44(a) to be increased, having regard to information on comparable country rates. All slot machines currently charged under the flat rate levy are to be moved to the gross profits tax regime applied to gaming lounges since these machines are capable of being audited. The amendments remove the specific amounts to be paid in licensing fees, allowing them to be prescribed by regulations. It is submitted that this approach would facilitate any future increases to levies and fees without the need to amend the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act, which is more involved - which is a more

complicated process than the simple amendment of regulations.

Section 44(4) provides for an annual levy of $1,000 to be paid to the Collector of Taxes for gaming machines premises and a contribution of $500 to be paid to the Commission. The Bill provides for increases in the levy and contribution to $2,500 and $1,000 respectively.

Section 59(a) increases the lottery tax, as I've mentioned earlier, from 17% to 23% and 20% to 25% respectively.

Section 43(c) helps strengthens and improves the regulatory oversight of the Commission. The amendments provide for the licensing of technical service providers to cover the entire support services, ancillary to any betting, gaming and lottery activity. The gambling industry leverage, technology to a great extent and it is essential that the persons who provide service be of assured integrity and propriety.

There are some anomalies which are also corrected in this Act, Mr. Speaker, in these amendments:

- Section 21 provides a consequential amendment required to facilitate the licenses of bookmakers, bet writers.
- There's an amendment in 16(2) and 17(4) to facilitate the expansion of sports betting and lottery sales outlets.
- And section 46(b) regularizes the issuing of licenses in excess of 150 machines, thereby legitimizing the current grandfathering practice of the Commission.
- Consequential section 60 is the consequential amendment required to capture all the new offences captured under the Act.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, this Act regularizes the situation contained in previous orders of 2013 and 2014, and make some consequential amendments to enhance the regulatory powers of the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission for the more efficient ordering of the industry and I hereby move second reading of the Bill, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister has correctly noted that this is a rationalization and tidying up process from certain initiatives that we'd started in 2010. And there are some important features to that extent - in that event Mr. Speaker, there's not controversial in the sense that some of the initiatives that are being promulgated in this formal amendment will allow for a greater penetration of the formal business at the grassroot level. Because, I don't know if the Minister is aware that the level of illegal activities that attract, that are therefore beyond the tax net, those illegal activities, last time I was informed, runs - is estimated as high as between 30% and 40% .

A MEMBER: Yearly or quarterly?

Mr. SHAW: Closer perhaps to 40%. And that in fact, the value of that business is about $10 Billion; that's the value of the illegal operation.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. SHAW: Ten Billion Dollars yes, yes, absolutely.

Thirty to forty percent of the gaming industry today in Jamaica represents in volume, in money, sales of about $10 Billion. And whatever is the percentage of that, that would normally be for the government coffers, whether in by way of direct taxation, contribution to the CHASE Fund and other critical areas that are so vital for social services, this is revenue that is lost.

(MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

And so, it was part of the original intention of seeking to find ways to allow the formal system to be able to compete more effectively and become more mobile to be able to compete at the grass route level so that, examples of this will now happen - sports betting the Minister has mentioned sports betting that sport betting can now involve going to an outlet to purchase a normal lotto ticket or a cash, whatever you call it, but at the same time with World Cup Football coming up for instance .you can bet on. Unfortunately, you cannot bet for the Reggae Boys, but you can bet on your favourite football team in a formal setting. And in this formal setting the revenue will be there to come to the Government.

Now I think that what we have to focus on, Mr. Speaker is that beyond this legislation, the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission will have to significantly sharpen its ability to encourage the formal process, and that even those who are now involved in illegal activities that they would be encouraged to come become part of the formal process. Legislation can only take us so far, it in the implementation that is where we are falling down in a lot of areas; we are falling down in the implementation in terms BGLC. In similar fashion we are falling down in implementation in other areas of taxation.

One newspaper report recently bawled, 'extortion is back Downtown', and if extortion is back Downtown it means that less taxes are being paid by way of GCT to the Government and more taxes are being paid to the underworld. More taxes are being paid to the underworld Honourable Minister and require more than divine intervention to deal with this problem.

So, Mr. Speaker I think that - I think that it is to our mutual concern that these levels of revenue leakages, whether it is in the form of gaming in whatever shape or form and 30 to 40 per cent is a horrendous figure because with that kind of - with that kind of velocity, if the BGLC does not step up its game then we could come here next year and be talking about 50 per cent of the industry been underground.

So I think that passing the legislation Minister is one thing, sitting down with the BGLC giving them the requisite resources, human technical and otherwise, to do the necessary work that will be critical and if that is not done, this kind of velocity 30 to 50 per cent is going to go to 50 per cent and 60 per cent and that will rob the Government of vital revenue that is needed in critical area of the economy.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to ask the Minister as I take my seat, if he would embrace the opportunity to bring this Honourable House up to date on precisely what is happening with the Casino Gaming Sector because we all know that a decision was made to grant casino licences on a limited basis. I had made certain changes as Minister where we made the ability to establish gaming lounges that was somewhat, freed up and as a result I think a number of additional gaming lounges has been established within a formal system so that revenue would be earned.

But what is the status of the granting licences of casino within the context of the grant integrated resort development programme. And that would include the much talked about Harmony Cove, you have heard about celebration, there are other names that would have been called. I think that we have been talking about casino between two Governments for quite a long time and we, during my administration as finance Minister, we actually promulgated the law, and now it is a question of the operation and the granting of the licence and the investment in the actual facilities in terms of implemental rooms for the industry. So perhaps you could bring us up to date as to what is happening there.

Thank you very much Mr. Speaker.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, let me thank the Opposition Spokesman on Finance; I think that we all recognize the urgency of bringing this tremendous scale of transactions which exists outside of the formal legitimate sector within the ambit of the regulator namely, the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission is important. Because to the extent that you have billions of dollars - Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten Billion Dollars existing in this grey area, then there is the risk that it goes into, shall we say illegal parts and weaken the fabric of law and order in the society as well as deny the revenues resources that should be in the revenue.

I should point out that this Bill itself strengthen the regulatory capacity by making it, by making a wide range of activities which now take place without any regulation falls within the regulatory provisions of the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission which will assist oversight by ensuring that there are fit and proper persons operating in the sector. But beyond that, it also provides some revenues to the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission, which will be used to do the very things that the Opposition Spokesman is talking about, that is to say, strengthen their oversight, strengthen their technological resources, strengthen their legal department and their administrative capabilities generally, so that is provided for here.

Specifically, in relation to the Casino Bill, where we are now is that there have been a number of applications received. They are being reviewed by a consultant which was appointed on the basis of a competitive tender which will report back to the public enterprise division of the Ministry of Finance at which point some decisions will have to be taken by the Cabinet on the recommendation of the Minister of Finance. As soon as - that consultant report has not yet been received -

when it is received and the requisite, the attendant legal advice from the Attorney General's Chambers regarding validity of the applications that have been received then decisions will be taken and a Report made to the House at that point in time. But suffice it to say that we are actively pursuing the whole integrated resort development as an important part of the overall tourism product of the country, and an important means of securing additional investment to strengthen our growth momentum and indeed to broaden the product appeal of the tourism industry as a whole. And I am sure as soon as I sit down and the Minister of Tourism and entertainment speaks, you will get even a fuller sense of how that industry is evolving and the exciting things that are happening there.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of the Bill.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be read a second time.

Motion put to the House and agreed to.

AN Act to Amend the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act

read a second time.

The SPEAKER: The House will now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider the Bill clause by clause.

COMMITTEE STAGE

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Chairman, at the appropriate point I will, in this First Schedule I have some amendments to propose Mr. Speaker, to correct some typographical.

The CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Clauses 1, 2, 3 and 4 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the First Schedule...

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Chairman, at Section 43(a) page 11 where it has Section 43(a) and it reads 'delete the section', it should read instead 'delete subsections 27(7) and (8) - delete subsections (1) (2) (7) and (8)'

The CHAIRMAN: That is the first amendment.

Dr. PHILLIPS: First amendment. And, on Page 12, oh and secondly. Renumber subsections (3), (4) and (6) as subsections (1), (2), (3) and (4)

The CHAIRMAN: Okay, 43(c).

Dr. PHILLIPS: 43(c). In subsection (5) delete the numerals 43(a) (3), (4) and (5) and (6) and substitute therefore the numeral 43 (a) (1), (2), (3) and (4).

The CHAIRMAN: Okay, for the First Schedule.

The amendments as outlined in 43 (a) and 43(c) put to the Committee and agreed to.

The First Schedule as amended put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Second Schedule put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Title and the Enacting Clause put to the Committee and agreed to.

The question is that I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage with two (2) amendments.

Motion put to the Committee and agreed to.

RESUMPTION

The SPEAKER: The question is I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage with two (2) amendments.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I move for the third reading of the Bill.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be read a third time.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Bill entitled:

"AN ACT to Amend the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act",

read a third time and passed.

Thank you, Minister.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the recommittal of item, Notices of Motions Given Orally.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal of item, Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY
(Recommitted)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Tourism and Entertainment I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House, I will move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled, "The Timeshare Vacation Act, 2014"

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we're back at Public Business and this afternoon we have two Members who will be contributing to the Sectoral Debates: the Minister of Tourism and Entertainment will be the first followed by the Member of Parliament, the Member from North East St. Andrew in that order.

The SPEAKER: Minister McNeill.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

SECTORAL DEBATE

Dr. McNEILL: Mr. Speaker, it's a great privilege to be elected as a representative of the people. I therefore begin by thanking God for blessing me with the health and strength to fulfill the role.

(Applause)

The PRIME MINISTER: Hear, hear!

Dr. McNEILL: It is an additional privilege to serve in the capacity of Minister of Tourism and Entertainment and I would like to place on record my thanks to the Most Honourable Prime Minister for placing her confidence in me as a Minister of her Government. (Applause)

I also thank you, Mr. Speaker, the Clerk and the committed staff of this Honourable House for the valuable role that you play in so ably steering our nation's parliamentary affairs.

I also want to thank my immediate family who are here with me today, (Applause) my dear wife, Sheila, who tolerates the hours that politics gives; (Applause) our children, Jordan is here with me today. Ashley is away in China; my mother who has been at every presentation over the last seventeen years (Applause) and my two sisters: Fiona is not here today, but my sister [Anthea] is here, so.

(Applause) Mr. Speaker, I want to thank them for being the wind beneath my wings over the years. I also to thank my personal staff: Janice Allen, Pollyanna Brown, my driver, the security and the staff of the office for the tremendous job that they're doing. Also want to thank my colleague Ministers, especially those whose work immediately impact on tourism. I notice Tony looking at me. Permit me also to say thanks to my colleague MPs. We all work together in the best interest of Jamaica, even if we view things from different perspectives. And I pay respect to the Member opposite with responsibility for tourism, Mrs. Shahine Robinson, and thank her for her conscientious engagement with the task that has been assigned her.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the sector has been experiencing success, this is due in no small part to the diligent work of our tourism industry partners and the industrious efforts of the team I have the pleasure of leading. In this regard I want to extend my thanks and sincere appreciation to my Minister of State, Damion Crawford, who has approached - (Applause) Damion has approached his responsibilities as a former Member of Parliament said, with vim, vigour and vitality.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Jennifer Griffith (Applause) and to the entire team at the Ministry of Tourism, including the chairpersons of the respective agencies, their Board members and the executive directors.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, you may be aware that the Director of Tourism, Mr. John Lynch, will demit office at the end of May after five and a half years in that capacity. On behalf of the Ministry, its agencies and the industry as a whole I take this opportunity to extend; our appreciation to him for his exceptional service throughout the years at the helm of the Jamaica Tourist Board. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, he has served the organization well and has made a sterling contribution to the development of the tourism sector and brand Jamaica overall. We wish him success in his future endeavours. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I want to specially thank the President of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, Mrs. Evelyn Smith who is here with us today and her hard working executive for the cooperation and support that they have provided over the years, and I see a number of them here in the [audience].

I also want to thank and I see present the President of the Jamaica Manufacturers' Association who has also been working assiduously with us on our programmes. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, finally and dear to my heart a special thank you to my constituency, Western Westmoreland, Mayor Bertel Moore, the Councillors, my management team. I am most grateful for their loyal support over the years. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, before I go into my responsibilities I want to just mention a couple things about the constituency. I'd just like to say, Mr. Speaker, like everyone in here that works in each and every one of our constituencies and this year there are a number

of projects that we're going to be continuing work on. And I just want to make mention of the mini stadium in Negril - sports stadium, the fishing village, the Grange Hill Library, which we opened last month, and the contribution of a son of Grange Hill, Dennis Hawthorne, who contributed to that as well for the assistance he gave. I also want to thank the Minister with Responsibility for Water. We have a water project going on in Orange Hill, which is really going to benefit that community. (Applause)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear, hear!

Dr. McNEILL: Oh, I see he has come. I also want to thank, Mr. Speaker, the Sugar Transformation Unit for the $26 Million that will be put into the water supply in Bath Mountain, work to commence this year. And although the Minister from Central Westmoreland is not here; the contract for the Grange Hill to Sav-la-Mar road has now been completed and that will be of great benefit to us.

Mr. Speaker, like most of the MPs here, a main part of the work in the constituency has to do with education and that goes on well and it has shown great results. As a matter of fact, this Friday is the Literacy Finals at the Negril Golf Club. The last thing I want to mention, Mr. Speaker, is an interesting initiative. Some time ago I was walking in Sheffield and a group of about six women walked up to me and said they were the Sheffield farmers and it was a group of mostly women - a group of women farmers. We have gone into partnership with them looking at the linkages and we made a contribution to them last year and they went into Sahara lettuce, cherry tomatoes and squash and they're now supplying the hotel sector with those and have been very successful, so much so that this year they'll be entering in Denbigh where they're taking their things and I think it's a good example for all MPs to look how they can do their linkages with the tourism sector. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I'm now going to move on to the portfolio responsibilities of which I lead. Mr. Speaker, Jamaica has been blessed with spectacular beauty, hospitable people, and a vibrant culture. These together have combined to help us create a successful tourism industry. Today the industry plays a crucial role in our economic and social development providing employment to some 33,000 persons in the accommodation sector and thousands more indirectly. Jamaica has long been recognized as a leader regionally and worldwide. Once again, our international stature has been acknowledged with our election to the chair of the prestigious Executive Council of the United Nations World Tourism Organization. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, I will assume the Chair effective September of this year. (Applause)

The Executive Council is comprised of ministers of tourism from thirty-two member states from all the continents in the world. This is a significant development for Jamaica and represents a first for the Caribbean, another example, Mr. Speaker, of Jamaica punching above our weight in a highly competitive arena. (Applause) We will, therefore, be influencing the strategic

activities of the UN WTO and helping to shape policies that will impact the world's tourism industry.

Mr. Speaker, tourism has consistently been the largest earner of foreign exchange in our economy. Its contribution to the combined value of all the goods and services produced in our country each year is significant. The most recent tourism economic impact study completed last year concluded that, taken together, the direct, indirect and induced contributions of tourism to Jamaica's GDP in 2010, was 11.7 per cent. All of this paints a picture of a robust Tourism .Industry in Jamaica, one that delivers significant economic value for us. So I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker that the sector continues to perform well for us. (Applause)

(HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, last year was a landmark as we welcomed a record 2 million stopover visitors. (Applause) As a performer in this highly competitive industry, we have continued to attract both substantial local and foreign investment. Mr. Speaker, we have remained aggressive in developing new markets, from which we have attracted greater airlifts to Jamaica. We have also re-invigorated our marketing efforts in our traditional markets, and prospects for the year ahead are good.

(DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. KENNETH O'NEILL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. Speaker, in terms of performance, we have just ended the winter tourist season in a growth position. Preliminary figures show an increase of about 10,000 new visitors over the same period last year. In addition, and more importantly, Mr. Speaker, we are seeing a number of positive industry trends occurring now in the industry. First, over the last year, our occupancy rates have increased significantly, in all categories of properties. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Dr. McNEILL: Mr. Speaker, over 2013 over 2012 (sic) the occupancy rates in all categories went up by 9.1 per cent. This is influenced by a number of factors, including:

- we are getting longer stays from the stopover visitors, in particular the European market;
- more Jamaicans are vacationing at home as the industry is more

aggressively courting the domestic market.

Mr. Speaker, this increase in our occupancy rate answers the question of why it is so difficult at times to get rooms in Jamaica. A lot of times persons go and want to get rooms - there is a difficulty in getting rooms. As a matter of fact, just the other day, there was a reality show that wanted to do something in Jamaica and wanted to move between two of our resorts and they were having difficulty accessing the rooms necessary to be able to do it.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, the second trend, Mr. Speaker, is another very encouraging development, in that concurrent with these increased occupancies, room rates are up. As a matter of fact, our largest tour operator in Jamaica has confirmed that our average daily rate is up somewhere between 13 and 15 per cent. (Applause)

The third trend, Mr. Speaker, is something that has been happening over a number of years and it's very positive trend for us. Mr. Speaker, last year, we had very strong growth in the summer season. The growth about 3.6 per cent and it has continued into this winter where we have had growth of 2 per cent over the winter season. Mr. Speaker, part of this strong growth in summer is leading us to become a year down destination and, Mr. Speaker, we are poised for continued growth again this summer. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, while we still depend on the winter season, the truth of the matter is that the summers are getting stronger. The truth of the matter is last year's winter was down a bit. We had a decline in the winter and it was the strong growth out of the summer that allowed us to end the year with positive growth. Now, Mr. Speaker, what I want to emphasize is that while the winter remains the period of highest occupancies and the best rates, it is the growth in summer arrivals that is ensuring we have a stronger year-round performance.

We are not having those wild swings. The figures illustrate what I mean. For the winter of 2013, visitors' arrivals averaged 178,000 visitors per month, while for the summer they averaged 162,000 arrivals for the month, a far cry from the extremes of peaks and valleys of the past.

Mr. Speaker, historically, back when the industry first started, what used to happen was that a hotel would open for the winter season; it opens in December and it would close in March, April, May going into the summer season. What has happened is that we went into a situation where we went from having the summer - they would open in the summer but we had rotations. What we are looking to do now, is to drive the summer so that it can come on par with the winters.

Jamaica has been transformed into a year-round destination, taking the place of what was traditionally a very seasonal industry. This transformation will create increased job opportunities and greater job security for our workers. Mr. Speaker, we will continue our push to build a year-round sector through strategic marketing efforts and diversification.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to turn to our source markets and the airlift. Mr. Speaker,

the US, Canada and the UK - Europe, continue to be our main source markets. Over 80 per cent of our stopover arrivals come from continental North America. We get 12 per cent of our stopover arrivals from UK/ Europe. This is why we continue to aggressively diversify into new markets. Those two markets alone contribute 92 per cent of the markets that we have. So, Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent on us to ensure that we are successful in these three markets because, as Tessanne Chin would say, those are our bread and butter markets.

Mr. Speaker, an important part of that is our airlift. Mr. Speaker, this year we have been very successful in increasing airlift to Jamaica, and had enough seats to ensure growth. During the summer of this year, we have approximately two million seats out of our main markets: 1.4 Million out of the US, an increase of 11 per cent; 260,000 out of Canada, a 21.6 per cent increase; and, 165,000 out of the UK/Europe, up about 10 per cent. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in terms of our source markets, the US still remains our main market, and over the past few years, although we have had growths out of the US, we believe that we can do better, and we will be paying particular attention to this market. The good news, Mr. Speaker, is that South West Airlines, the largest domestic US carrier, with connections to most cities in America, will be operating flights into Sangster International Airport on July 1st, replacing its subsidiary, Air Tran. This will bring exiting new opportunities for penetrating the US markets even further. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important just to point out something with this. South West is the - Air Tran is a subsidiary of South West, but Air Tran has the largest domestic airline, goes into every nook and cranny of the United States - into every town. So now, moving from Air Tran to Southwest, it puts us into all those small cities across the United States and allows us to come in, and allows us to now go and widen the markets to which we go. Most people think American Airlines is the biggest, but they have the international, but in terms of domestic carriers, it is South West. Interestingly, what happened was that one of the routes that we have been working with them on is out of Houston. And interestingly, South West had spoken to us, and I wrote a letter to the Mayor of Houston, trying to push for them to be able to fly the international flights out of the airport in the Houston. And part of this is the relationships that have been developing. And this is going to be a very important step, and one that puts Jamaica in a good position, moving forward in the United States.

In terms of Canada, Mr. Speaker, this is our second largest source market and we are again poised for growth out of this market.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Important word - growth.

Mr. McNEILL: Mr. Speaker, last year in the winter season, the failure of Thomas Cooke, a major tour operator, precipitated a decline in Canadian arrivals for the entire

region. We, in Jamaica, lost over 40,000 seats and our winter arrivals out of Canada were down 12.3 per cent. However, in the summer of last year, we were able to recoup and received additional airlift from our partners at Air Canada who were transiting to Rouge, the new vacation airline, Sun Wing and West Jet. And with the assistance of them, we had an excellent summer which wiped out the decline. We were, therefore, able to end the year, a mere one per cent down over 2012. For the early part of this year, Mr. Speaker, we are up nearly five per cent over last year, and are once again showing growth out of the Canadian market. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say something. Again, partnerships are so important. Air Canada (Rouge), the relationship that has developed is very important, and the first flight that Rouge took... international ...their inaugural flight, was to Jamaica on Canada Day. It is a significant move on their part, and shows a vote of confidence in Jamaica.

The second thing that's interesting is that Sun Wing, another important partner out of Canada, is now a major investor in our hotel sector and as part of Jamaica, so, therefore, they have a vested interest in ensuring that the Jamaican market grows. So, Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased with how we are moving in the Canadian market. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the last main market is the UK - UK/Europe.

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern, arrived and took her seat.)

Mr. Speaker, we began to experience resurgence out of the UK last year, after four years of decline. Increased demand to Jamaica has driven a 70 per cent increase in airlift out of this market in the last two years. Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to say that with a more equitable method, of calculating the UK's air passenger duty, the APD, we are confident that this will give more momentum to the market. As Members of the House know, there were four Bands, and we were in the Band C. The third Band, our main competitors, like the US, were in Band B. So, what happens is that the Caribbean paid a higher rate than, say, North America. What has happened now in putting us all in the second Band, it will decrease the amount that is in the Band, but also makes us more competitive along with the United States. So, it was an important move.

But, Mr. Speaker, there were a lot of discussions before about whether or not – what we were doing and how the promotions went in the UK during the Olympics two years ago. Mr. Speaker, after the Olympics in 2012, we came back and I spoke about the fact that Virgin Airways had indicated to us that they fell out of it - a thing they called the boat bounce. Mr. Speaker, after four years of decline out of the UK market, last year we had growth of 4.7 per cent. (Applause) And, Mr. Speaker, for the first two months of this year where we have our final figures, we are up 9.2 per cent which shows that we are returning to growth in this market.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Bartlett)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Ed, you a let down the team, you *nuh.*

Dr. McNEILL: Again, Mr. Speaker - I would say to the Member, your deputy is... (Laughs) I would say to you... Mr. Speaker, one of the important things is the relationship that I spoke about, that we are now developing. Mr. Speaker, the largest tour operator in Europe is TUI - TUI travel, and they have moved their flights from two to three, to four, five... next year they are going to move it to six. They are showing confidence. They are investing in Jamaica.

And not only are they investing in Jamaica, but when the Sensatori Hotel was opened last month, they brought down the Chairman and the entire Board of Directors of TUI, to the opening here in Jamaica. And we were told by the Managing Director that this was almost an unprecedented move. And again, Mr. Speaker, I think all of us in this House, we will quarrel about some of positives and negatives because everyone would like to claim different things, but I will say this: as Jamaicans, we must be proud of what we are achieving, and the confidence that the people in the world are having with us currently.

Mr. Speaker, Europe is also performing well, having faced the worst economic challenges in recent years. Countries like Spain and others, have had real trouble, we have been fighting back in those markets. Munich became the latest German gateway to Jamaica, beginning in November 2013, and will be important gateways for potential visitors from the south of Germany, German-speaking Europe and eastern Europe.

One of the things that we were feeling very good about, Mr. Speaker, was the Russian market, Mr. Speaker, the Russian market was a major breakthrough for Jamaica. Since it started in January of 2013, January last year, it has delivered nearly 14,500 visitors with over 12,000 last year alone, a more than 600 per cent increase over previous years. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, so successful was the new service that the tour operator had applied to provide schedule service. However, current events in the Ukraine have given pause to those plans. We have continued to have dialogue with the operators and are hopeful that the situation can be resolved, and that we will see a return to service from this important source market.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended sufficient to allow him to complete his presentation?

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

(Applause)

Dr. McNEILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker an initiative that we are very pleased with in the Ministry is the Scandinavian Initiative.

Mr. Speaker, direct flights to Montego Bay out of Stockholm, Sweden began in winter of 2013. That's last year. We started getting two flights, one from Thomas Cook, and one from TUI. So we had two separate companies coming in, they both started at the same time. This has been of particular significance because, Mr. Speaker, it's a 14 day rotation, therefore, persons who come on those flights come and spend two weeks in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, this year we will see the addition in November of two gateways, Helsinki and Copenhagen and due to this, we confidently expect growth from this important Scandinavian market.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated before, in pulling it all together, the outlook from our main markets, Latin American, continues to produce. We are confident that with the projections in all of our markets, that tourism is in good stead and this year we are going to have a productive year going forward for tourism. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, I now turn to cruise tourism.

Mr. Speaker, cruise passenger arrivals to Jamaica is projected to increase to a record 1.4 million passengers for this calendar year. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the first four months of this year have shown an increase of 3.6 per cent representing an impressive recovery from a decline of 4.2 per cent last year.

Mr. Speaker, we expect cruise arrivals to continue to escalate with the arrival of the largest of Disney's ship, the Fantasy. This, in addition to the MSC Divina, will be calling throughout the summer.

Mr. Speaker, there is something else that is very interesting that's going to happen also at the end of this year. Mr. Speaker, we are going to have three cruise ships which will be home porting in Montego Bay. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, they are the Louis Crystal, the Aida Bella and the Thomson Dream. Mr. Speaker, while home porting there, the Thomson Dream will also call on the port of Falmouth on the final night of each cruise ship. I know the Member from North Trelawny will be happy with that, allowing Jamaica to get two calls from this cruise ship.

Mr. Speaker, home porting will create more opportunities for local businesses as these ships will require produce as well as goods and services which can be provided locally. Also, Mr. Speaker, the visitors will need to fly into the airport at Montego Bay and this will generate more airlift and it will also need them passing through the airport A which provides economies of them passing through the airport.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the airlift in the case of the Thomson Dream, TUI and Thomson are going to be adding an additional four flights out of the UK to service this ship alone. So we are going to get four flights a week to service the ship. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to mention also the other great possibility is the opportunity for sale and stay, as historically, passengers coming this distance for a cruise, up to 30 per cent of them stay for a stopover vacation in the home port country. So, Mr.

Speaker, this year will be a very good year for cruise arrivals.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to the visitor experience and mention a few things with it. The first thing I would mention, Mr. Speaker, has to do with our airports.

Mr. Speaker, our airports are an enduring impression of Jamaica, and we must ensure that the experience is as pleasant and positive as possible. This applies equally to our own people. We have to use the airport; we want the best airport possible.

Mr. Speaker, on assuming office, one of the first things that we did as a Government, along with the Minister of National Security, and I want to place on record my Ministry's thanks to the Minister of National Security for the work he has done with us both in the airports and the visa programme, and other - (Applause) I really want to put it on record.

Mr. Speaker, we established a committee charged with developing strategies to improve efficiency, reducing waiting time and ensure that the experience is as memorable as possible, from all the relevant agencies to improve efficiency and the visitor experience at our airports.

Mr. Speaker, the Members of this committee come from PICA the Passport and Immigration, JHTA, Civil Aviation and from our Ministry, and they have done a lot of work. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased with the success that they have had to date. We have been able to do away with the outgoing immigration checks which has been an important part, and that has decreased the time that it takes for all to go through. (Applause)

I am pleased to advise that the improvements have received international recognition, and I think the Minister who has responsibility for it should be commended.

Recently Montego Bay Sangster International Airport was recognized for improvements at the facility and received the first place award in passenger processing from the Airports Council International. (Applause)

Sangster International Airport was also placed among the top five airports in airport service quality, for the last five years. This achievement earned it a place on the Director General's roll of Excellence of the Airport Council International for 2014. (Applause)

But, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there is far more work to be done. We want our airport to be the best in the world, and the issue that we have to deal with now, Mr. Speaker is how we are going to decrease the processing time for incoming immigration, especially because we expect a lot of visitors and Jamaicans to be travelling through our ports. Hence, Mr. Speaker, the Tourist Enhancement Fund has committed an additional $200 Million over the next five years to facilitate the introduction of new technology and to reengineer the operations at immigrations?

Work is also ongoing to simplify the customs and immigration forms. The Minister is dealing with that personally, and this process will soon be completed.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is among the countries which are leading the charge in enhancing visitor experience and efficiency at the airports. Just last week we saw the

announcement that the United States will be taking similar steps in setting up a similar committee. So we are very proud of where we are going, but Mr. Speaker, an important part of the work we are doing, a lot of the work that we do in the airport has to be dealt with through technology, we have to get in place things like kiosk and automatic things, and we are going to be working over the next few years to put those things in place to ensure that the time spent in the airport is as little as possible and as pleasant as possible.

Mr. Speaker, the second issue I want to just mention quickly is visa facilitation. Mr. Speaker, it's not really seen often as a big thing but it's very important. Mr. Speaker, it improves your competitiveness. If somebody is travelling to a country on a vacation and they have to get a visa, it is one of the issues that hampers it.

So over the years, our experience has demonstrated that, in order to increase our visitor arrivals, and improve our competitiveness, we must ensure easier access to our country. To date, Mr. Speaker, visa requirements have been relaxed from nationals from some 30 countries.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, we have seen increased arrivals from a number of Latin American markets. A good example out of Europe was the strong response we saw with Russia.

Mr. Speaker, we anticipate that having adjusted the visa requirements for China, which have now been gazetted so that Chinese coming to Jamaica for under 30 days for purposes of vacation do not need a visa, we believe that this is the first step in us going into this very important market. I just want to say though, Mr. Speaker, that China is very far, it's going to be difficult for us to go into that market, there is a lot of work to be done with JTB, JAMVAC, the private sector but I think that we are all committed to moving together to deal and to ensure that we have a place in this market, which is the world's leading source of outbound travellers for recreational purposes. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I want to now touch on something which is not usually dealt with often but it's something that we really have to look at.

Mr. Speaker, probably the most important, I think, policy that we would like to see in tourism - the Ministry of Tourism, is for us to create an inclusive industry where persons can really benefit from tourism.

Mr. Speaker, countries compete aggressively to attract visitors, as it is anticipated that with the arrival of visitors there should be significant economic benefit for the local economy.

However, there is still an outcry by the communities surrounding resort areas, that they are not seeing the benefits. Mr. Speaker, we have to ask why. There are a number of reasons, but I believe that two are critical.

First, there is the physical environment, and the second has to do with the experience that the visitor has while he is here. Product development improvements across the island aim at enhancing the physical environment. And a lot of the work that we are doing now is to make our infrastructure that much better.

But, Mr. Speaker, the feedback from our visitors and partners is that there is too much harassment. If our visitors don't feel free to move around unharassed, to enjoy the Jamaican ambiance freely, as they want, then very soon there will be a decline in business and arrivals at our ports.

However, all evidence indicates that control of harassment will lead to an increase in arrivals and business. Often when we speak of tackling harassment it is sold as a fight against the average man, but, Mr. Speaker, it is actually a fight for the small man. There will be more business, and it will spread much further, as people feel more comfortable moving around freely, to venture into the various communities.

Complaints about harassment are widespread, from both the cruise ship and stopover visitors. Hoteliers and business people at all levels throughout the resort communities have complained about the problem.

Mr. Speaker, interestingly, myself and Minister of State, went to Ocho Rios to tour the Craft Market. And when we got there, interestingly, in sitting down with the Executive of the Craft Market, we thought they were going to speak about the marketing or the infrastructure work. The first thing that they spoke to us about was what could be done to decrease harassment on the streets of Ocho Rios. Mr. Speaker, it is something that we have to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, the question must be asked again, why do more of our visitors not venture out of hotels or off the ships? Mr. Speaker, we have to control harassment in Jamaica if we are to realize the true potential of tourism, in terms of consistently increasing our visitor arrivals and the benefits to Jamaicans. We want the visitors to not only come on the ships, but to come off the ships and walk around and experience Jamaica. We want the visitors who come to our hotels to come out of the hotels and visit our restaurants and attractions and walk around and go into the communities.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Government will lead a collaborative effort drawing on past experiences and best practices. This will entail government ministries and agencies, law enforcement, the Judiciary, community organizations, tourism stakeholders, private and public sector interests. This effort will introduce and enforce measures to curtail and ultimately eradicate this problem.

Mr. Speaker, an important part of the programme will be a public relations campaign and training. Mr. Speaker, again, we want our visitors to come and really enjoy Jamaica. We have found that when we do our surveys, those visitors that get out and go into the communities and meet with Jamaicans, when they come back that they really have a good experience, they are the ones that give you the best ratings.

And, Mr. Speaker, I remember I was told one of the writers that came to Calabash a few years ago at one of the symposia said that when they come, he realizes what they mean that visitors come to Jamaica for the beach, but they return for the warmth. We need to get

people to get a chance to feel the warmth of the Jamaican people. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I now want to turn to a very topical issue. Mr. Speaker, an equally important issue is the matter of ensuring the safety of locals and visitors who seek to enjoy our beautiful beaches. The Ministry has been actively engaged in the oversight of the water sports activities in Jamaica. The Ministry intends to table the Water Sports Policy as a Green Paper, shortly. It will address and provide the framework for the management of all water sports in Jamaica.

However, Mr. Speaker, a major part of that policy concerns motorized water sports, and within that, personal water sports, also known as "jet skis".

Mr. Speaker, the management of personal water craft has received very deliberate attention in recent times, and the policy will treat with these and other concerns.

Mr. Speaker, measures to address safety concerns regarding the use of these jet skis have been put in place. They include the total suspension of all PWC operations islandwide, and also, a ban has been placed on the importation of any jet skis into the island.

Mr. Speaker, these measures were applied as a result of three accidents involving PWCs, between August of last year and January of this year. Consequently, a Personal Water Craft, a Jet Ski Task Force was established, and it has been actively engaged in determining the parameters on which these PWCs will be able to operate. The Task Force is being guided by the Maritime Authority of Jamaica and TPDCo. with enforcement by the Maritime Police Division.

Mr. Speaker, clear rules and regulations have been recommended and established for the operations of PWCs, both commercially and privately. These include but are not limited to the following:

1) Personal water craft must have the appropriate decals affixed or be liable for seizure by authorities.

All water craft that are on the water are now going to have to first be licensed and will have a decal. If it is not licensed - just like a motor vehicle, you have your licence and registration, if you do not have that, the jet ski will be seized.

2) All operators of commercial water craft must receive training in the operation of the vessel.
3) Personal water craft should enter and leave the shore using a designated launch area at a slow speed of 3 knots.

They talk about what they call "no wake" zone; in other words, you are moving slow enough that you don't create a wake behind you. And you have to do that entering and leaving the areas.

Mr. CHARLES: You going have Mr. Lewis in the sea? Superintendent Lewis going police them?

Dr. McNEILL:

4) The occupants of the PWCs must operate at least 200 meters from the shore. And
5) Commercial operators must meet all requirements for licensing, including

insurance, in order to be eligible for a JTB Water Sports Licence.

Mr. Speaker, advertisements were recently placed in the media to advise all owners of personal water craft, who are desirous of becoming eligible for a licence to operate their water craft commercially, that they would have to have those water craft registered with the Maritime Authority by May 21, 2014. Ads were put in the paper, because we wanted to ensure that all jet skis were licensed. And anyone who licensed after the 21st, it means that they can still licensed but they will not be eligible for consideration as a commercial operation. We did this because we wanted to be sure what we were dealing with.

And, I would just say to you, Mr. Speaker that I have gotten the report as of this morning, that up to that point less than 100 jet skis are registered in Jamaica. So all those numbers we were hearing about were probably - were greatly exaggerated. We have less than 100 jet skis registered in Jamaica.

While it must be emphasized, Mr. Speaker, that registration does not guarantee that a licence will be granted, owners must have registered by that date.

Mr. Speaker, with these procedures now in place, the Task Force has recommended that the operators at the UDC beach in Ocho Rios Bay are ready for reopening for commercial PWC activity. And we are going to do it as a test. We have met with them, sat and talked to them - I think it is a total of 13 jet skis - the Member of Parliament and Opposition Spokesperson were there. And one of the reasons why, was that we made all these regulations, they have to license, they have to do the training, they have to get insurance, they have to work as a Co-op, they have to have rescue boats. And what happened is that Ocho Rios did all the things that were required, so now the Task Force has decided to let them go - I think it's 13 jet skis. And as such, they will be able to resume operations on Monday, June 2. Just to point out that they are the only ones that have satisfied all the requirements to this point, and the rest - everywhere else remains suspended.

Mr. Speaker, the Marine Police has indicated that they are sufficiently resourced with vessels and personnel to ably enforce regulations in the Bay, upon resumption of commercial activities. If the Ocho Rios Bay commercial PWC operations are successful, they will provide a template for guiding commercial operations in other resort areas. The Task Force is now looking at the other areas and the operation of jet skis, including personal jet skis that are not commercial; they are looking at those now.

Mr. Speaker, the ban on the importation of jet skis will remain in place until further notice.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of jet skis has now been brought under control, and we are now moving to try and put it out in a regulated manner. And I will just make the point that we are not going to return to where we were before, with this sort of unregulated, unacceptable practices that we had before. We are going to ensure that this is a disciplined industry.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I now want to turn to something I spoke about last year, which has to do with linkages. And, Mr. Speaker, when we took office, we indicated that one of our priority policies was to broaden and deepen the linkages between tourism and the other sectors.

Arising from this and the recognition of the potential of the sector to generate more business locally, the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, established a Tourism Linkages Hub.

And, Mr. Speaker, the objective of that Hub is to strengthen commercial operations between the owners and operators of facilities within the hospitality industry and those within the productive sectors, especially in the areas of agriculture, manufacturing and entertainment.

Mr. Speaker, buyer-seller meetings, expos and other events are among the strategies used by the Linkages Hub to stimulate the distribution of manufactured goods and agricultural produce. So far, several agro-tourism farmers' markets have been staged in Negril and Montego Bay, in close collaboration with the Rural Agricultural Development Agency (RADA), and the JHTA, and other key stakeholders.

And I really want to commend the Minister of Agriculture, Roger Clarke, for the support, and his entire team at the Ministry of Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, while this initiative is still in its embryonic stages, I am pleased to inform that there have been several positive outcomes, including new contractual arrangements between farmers and hotels to supply produce on a weekly basis.

Another indication of the benefit of the strengthened relationships is the participation of members of the JMA in the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association Marketplace in January of this year. Mr. Speaker, this provided them with the opportunity to network with local and regional players in the hospitality industry, resulting in several benefits to the local manufacturers.

I am happy to inform this House that arising from these initiatives, local suppliers have secured contracts for providing furnishings for a number of properties. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, beyond these initial successes, the hub is actively engaging hotels' purchasing managers to identify specific needs and seeking to create direct buyer/supplier linkages in partnership with the JHTA; the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry of Industry.

Mr. Speaker, to satisfy local suppliers and buyers they need to have accurate market information. (Applause) One of the areas where we have had challenges going along is an absence of formal information, so even your farmers know exactly what they can plant, when they can plant it or our manufacturers know what is needed at what specific time.

Mr. Speaker, a detailed study is being commissioned to determine the potential demand for local goods and services within the tourism sector. Funding for this six months project has been received from the Jamaica

Social Investment Fund. The total cost of the project will be J$8.7 Million Dollars.

Mr. Speaker, the findings of the study and other helpful information to buyers and suppliers will be made available on-line through a web portal that is maintained within the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment's website.

Mr. Speaker, this to me is one of the most important projects that we have, one of the most, it is going to allow us with the visitors that come, the same number to be able to earn more for Jamaica and keep those earnings in Jamaica. (Applause)

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to specifically thank the JHTA, through its President who have been working assiduously on the Linkages Committee. I see Mr. Bryan Pengelley here who has been an important part and an energetic worker in the linkages. (Applause) The Minister, you know, it is interesting how far we have gone with this Linkages Committee. The Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce spoke about the linkages in his presentation because it is so important to both of us. The Minister of Agriculture this year spent at least ten minutes in his presentation speaking about the linkages, and Mr. Speaker, I think that we have come a long way; an important part of it is the relationship that is developing between tourism or getting stronger between tourism and all the other industries.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, just to make one example of it, I mentioned earlier that at the Caribbean Marketplace in January, the manufacturers - a number of manufacturers had their booths so that they were at the marketplace with all the industry partners from the entire Caribbean showing what they had to offer. And even more importantly for us at the expo held a month ago, two months ago of the manufacturers did - the Experience Jamaica Campaign which deals with the sort of domestic tourism where the hotels come and set up their booths, that was held at the expo which shows a new relationship that has developed between the Manufcaturers and the Hotels Association. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend them for the work they have done to make this happen. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, tourism is well established as a leading source of investment in the Jamaican economy. Historically, activity in the industry has been concentrated in hotels and other forms of accommodation. But now significant investment activity has expanded into other areas such as attractions, transportation and other sub-sectors. As a result, Mr. Speaker, we have developed world-class attractions and modern transportation to serve the industry. This has contributed to the broadening of the industry's economic impact.

Mr. Speaker, even as we continue to promote investments in new resorts, we are placing equal emphasis on the modernization and expansion of existing properties. This is crucial if our industry is to raise the quality of its product and sustain its competitive advantage.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the volume of investment dollars currently being spent by new operators who are undertaking

modernization projects, is on par and in some cases exceeds new developments.

Three such cases are the Royalton White Sands in Trelawny, the Azul Sensatori in Negirl and Hyatt Ziva in Montego Bay. In the case of Hyatt Ziva, Mr. Speaker, over J$9 Billion is being spent on a major upgrading and expansion of over 200 rooms in that resort. (Applause) And, Mr. Speaker, on the other two properties it exceeds J$4 Billion.

Mr. Speaker, the Royalton White Sands began operations in December. The Azul Sensatori was formally opened a few weeks ago with its expansion expected to be completed by the end of this year. Work is proceeding rapidly to allow for the opening of the Hyatt for the coming winter season and importantly with additional new rooms. Meanwhile, Braco, which will be operated by Melia Hotels & Resorts, is slated to be in operation by early 2015. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the recently passed Omnibus Incentive Legislation for the first time, provides a standardized framework for the transportation and attraction sub-sectors. Unlike the accommodation sub-sector, which was covered by law, these subsectors were entirely at the discretion of the Minister of Finance with all the uncertainty that such an arrangement involved.

This more settled environment will encourage investment in attractions and in transportation services to meet international standards.

Mr. Speaker, in closing this section, I want to mention something that the Minister of Investment alluded to. One of the things that happened was that at the last two major trade shows we went to both ITD and to World Travel Market; we have been approached by a number of persons, serious persons who would like to invest in Jamaica and one of the things we are looking at is to promote and ensure that we have some shovel ready projects. We are working in collaboration with my colleague, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, with JAMPRO, NEPA, TEF, UDC and the Commissioner of Lands and what we afe going to do is look at some property, look at the planning approval and the different things so that these investors, when they come and understand we are targetting both international and local investors because we are very pleased, we are very proud about those persons who are investing in tourism Jamaica now and what we want to do is to expedite the process of allowing them to have investment in Jamaica. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in speaking of investment, there is yet another facet of the industry with potential to attract as steps are being taken to tap into this area. Mr. Speaker, we are moving to broaden the variety of accommodation and investment opportunities in our tourism sector.

Mr. Speaker, the term timeshare was coined in the United Kingdom in the early 1960s, expanding on a vacation system that became popular after World War II in Europe. Vacation home sharing involved four European families that would purchase a vacation cottage jointly, each having exclusive use of the property for one of the four seasons. They rotated seasons each year, so each

family enjoyed the prime seasons equally. However, few families vacation for an entire season at a time, so the vacation home sharing properties were often vacant for long periods.

Enterprising minds decided to go one step further and divide a resort room into 1/50th ownership, with two weeks each year for repairs and upgrades, and charge a maintenance fee to each owner for the other 50 years.

Mr. Speaker, the Timeshare Vacation Bill has now been tabled in Parliament. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, it has taken a while on its journey here, but I am pleased that it has now arrived.

The Bill is designed to formally introduce the option of Timeshare Vacation Schemes into Jamaica's product offering. Timeshare is well established internationally as a driver for tourism destinations that have embraced it. We are confident of being able to attract the world's most experienced timeshare operating brands to our tourism industry and by doing so broadening our country's international appeal.

Mr. Speaker, timeshare has been shown to have many positive economic impacts in areas where it has been developed. Owners of timeshare in a residential unit tend to vacation for a week or more at a time in groups of two or more, they buy them as families and travel together. Timeshare owners become constant repeat visitors and behave more like members of the local community, in that they shop for groceries, dine out often and use local services more directly than hotel guests.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that at last timeshare vacations stand to become a part of our tourism product mix. (Applause) This has very positive implications for generating new economic opportunities for Jamaicans in many areas of enterprise. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am now going to move to Product Development. Mr. Speaker, may I remind this Honourable House that the Tourism Enhancement Fund was mandated by the Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development to ensure that all areas with major tourism potential are assisted in realizing same.

In doing so, we have sought to ensure that Jamaica's citizens enjoy the benefits that tourism can bring to their communities.

Last year, I announced a transformational project, a resort project in Ocho Rios, this project is now underway and Phase One has now been completed. And I'll give the details later in this presentation.

Mr. Speaker, this year, it is the turn of Negril and Falmouth.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Not Blue Mountain.

Dr. McNEILL: Mr. Speaker, we will be embarking on a major upgrading of the resort town of Negril. This upgrading will include: The main road that links Sheffield to Negril on the South Coast and goes all the way into the town centre. It will include landscaping and sidewalk upgrading including the town centre, the Craft Market, the Fishing Village, the Community centre and the Norman Manley Beach Park

Mr. Speaker, this investment will produce a town residents can be proud of, one that presents an improved experience for their

visitors, providing opportunities for enjoyment by both groups. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this project will complement the dual-purpose pathway now under construction on the Norman Manley Boulevard. The first phase of this project will include both the road and the beach park, and will be done this year at a cost of $J400 Million. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in Falmouth, we are sensitive to the cries from members of the community about their inability to attract business from the cruise ships. To the extent that the contrast between the appearance of the town and that of the cruise ship pier is a factor, a transformative solution is required. To achieve this, the Tourism Enhancement Fund has signed MOUs with the UDC and the Port Authority of Jamaica to undertake development works in Falmouth.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Falmouth project has two components: the Hampden Wharf Development and a Streetscape Improvement Project.

Mr. Speaker, the Hampden Wharf Development will create an entirely open experience that will accommodate craft vendors and other business people from the town. It will feature restaurants, and entertainment centres and shops in an inviting environment that harmonizes with the development of the pier. It will be completely open to visitors and locals. Improvements to heritage assets like the wharf building, the Dome and the Foundry and the Tharpe House will be included in the development. The projected cost for this portion of the project is $585 Million. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, elsewhere in the town, the Falmouth Streetscape Project entails aesthetics and structural improvement to roads and lanes in the vicinity of Water Square. These improvements will enhance the ambiance in Falmouth town, 330 million has been budgeted for this project, additional. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, for years we have been talking about the fact that the Tourism Enhancement Fund must be a transformational body, Mr. Speaker, nearly a billion dollars will be spent over the next three years to get Falmouth to where we want it go. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we have made certain, as in all our developments to date, that consultation with stakeholders has been central to the development of these projects. This is done to ensure that there is buy-in from the broader community into all the work that is undertaken.

The team from the PAJ, led by Dr. Paul Robertson is to be commended for the efficiency and speed with which they are approaching the project. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this is the team that has also been working on the Ocho Rios Enhancement Project. And they must be complimented for already having brought Phase One of that project to completion. Mr. Speaker, last year in the budget debate, I came to this Parliament and announced that we were going to do a project on the Turtle River Road and we were going to transform it. Many of you in here know the Turtle River Road that leads from the pier in Ocho Rios to Main Street. Mr.

Speaker, the first phase of that has now been completed and this is an actual picture of Turtle River Road as it now exist one year after.... (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Dr. McNEILL: The Member was asking me what was Turtle River Road. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, this phase One - this is Ocho Rios now, this is Ocho Rios now.

Mr. CHUCK: Grants Pen next.

Dr McNEILL: Mr. Speaker...

A MEMBER: You too bad mind.

Dr. McNEILL: Mr. Speaker, having completed Phase One, work will now begin on phase two, work has now started on phase two which is the upgrading of the terminal building and the pier, we will then move to Phase Three which will be the promenade and boardwalk and then Phase Four which will be the area coming around on Main Street.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a point on all of this. All these projects that we are doing are being done in a way that Jamacians can enjoy them. When we do the boardwalk, it will have choax, it will be on the waterfront, you will be able to go there and have a drink and eat icecream cone and what happens is both Jamaicans and visitors alike and we are going to enjoy the things of Jamaica and our visitors will come and enjoy it too.

Mr. Speaker, while we recognize the need for major resort development initiatives, there is also the need for other projects across the island.

Mr. Speaker, the TEF is involved in a number of projects across almost every parish across the length and breadth of the island, we have projects such as the Montego Bay Civic Centre, we have projects like the Falmouth Post Office, the Montego Bay Craft Market, the Neville Antonio Park, in Port Antonio we are doing work at Roaring River, Milk River Bath and Spa, Bath, St. Thomas, Devon House, the Trench Town Project. But, Mr. Speaker, there is another programme that we are working on, that I am very pleased with.

Mr. Speaker, the Tourism Enhancement Fund has funded $328 Million in projects which are being implemented through the JEEP secretariat. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, when we were doing this project, we went to the Members of Parliament and said, assist us in submitting proposals for the projects which were tourism related and at a community level. Mr. Speaker, the response to this programme has been tremendous just to mention a few of the projects that are underway and I cannot go through all of them although many of you know them. But Mr. Speaker, I will start with you and your project in Alligator Pond and Little Ochi. I know... (Applause) The Member Babsy Grange has one, Harbur View Round-about, there is one that I am very pleased with Mr. Speaker, Lover's Leap. The Member from St Elizabeth has been pushing on that project and in doing the work they are doing^ they have been able to go and find a trail down from Lover's Leap down to the seaside which are now having authenticated by the Heritage Trust to show that it was a trail used back in the times of slavery. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Mike Henry has a craft centre - let me tell you, Mr. Warmington - the

Member from South West St. Catherine, the Marine Terminal Public Beach, now the Minister of State went and visited the project that seems to have done very well and was able to get some good roast fish and some lobster on the beach he was well taken care of and we are looking forward to all being hosted at the project.

Mr. Speaker, the project in East Westmoreland with the Member...

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. McNEILL: Alright the Bethel Town Travels Hall...

Mr. Luther BUCHANAN: Yes you tell them about that.

Mr. McNEILL: The Berrydale Road, the Member from East Portland… (Applause) …There is one that is very interesting, Mr. Speaker, the Member, the Minister of State has a road that leads up to New Castle and the Minister from West Portland has the one that goes down from Section and they have both fixed the road with the funds because of the tourism that goes through that area. But apparently in fixing the road they have left a little section in the middle so they are now both lobbying to try and join them up. But, Mr. Speaker...

A MEMBER: Joint up Opposition.

Mr. McNEILL: Mr Speaker, the point I am making with this is that one of the moves we want is tourism must be felt across the length and breadth of Jamaica and if we as the elected representatives do not feel it, it is important for us to all have projects that we feel proud of… (Applause) …and we are going to continue this programme in this year.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just place on record our thanks to the JEEP Secretariat for the efficiency that they have had in implementing these projects. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I want to just mention a couple initiatives that are taking place. The first has to do with the Centre of Excellence School initiatives which are in the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Speaker, as we continue to aggressively develop new markets, improve airlift and encourage hotel construction, it will be necessary to ensure the availability of suitably skilled workforce for the industry to draw on. Consistent with this, a number of schools will be identified, in which the Tourism Enhancement Fund will make an investment towards developing appropriate areas of the curricula.

After consultation, the Tourism Enhancemnt Fund has committed a total of $20 Million to initiate this programme in schools which will target improvement in the following areas: Food and nutrition, food preparation, creative arts including music, languages and agriculture. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the schools to be identified will be from the feeder institutions for the tourism areas. Our Ministry and the Tourism Enhancement Fund will be working very closely with the Ministry of Education, that will be the implementing ministry for this initiative. And I want to thank the Ministry of Education. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this programme will complement a separate programme being implemented by our Ministry to upgrade

performing arts venues in selected schools. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, $16 Million has been identified for that programme and the Minister of State will give further detail in his presentation.

Mr. Speaker, the Tourism Enhancement Fund receives its funds from fees levied on incoming passengers, by air and sea, to Jamaica. It operates with a slogan: "Tourism dollars working for you". In these real and tangible ways, tourism's contribution to the national life is being demonstrated.

As citizens, we have every right to expect benefits from our investment in the promotion of tourism. These benefits extend beyond jobs and monetary income and include access to beaches, the preservation of important heritage sites, the upgrading of the communities in which we live, better infrastructure, improved landscaping and, all-in-all, a better way of life.

Mr. Speaker, you will see that we have invested heavily in ensuring these deliverables for the Jamaican people. In the instances that I have just outlined, all Jamaicans, particularly those who live in these communities, will be the primary beneficiaries of these improvements and to this end, Mr. Speaker I want to mention two very specific initiatives. The first has to do with beach access, Mr. Speaker. There is an exciting initiative being undertaken by the Ministry in collaboration with the Tourism Enhancement Fund, the UDC and then NEPA. This is to ensure that the Jamaican people are able to enjoy their patrimony through access to our beaches. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is an imperative that suitable quality space for recreation must be made available for Jamaicans. (Applause) Madam Prime Minister you remembered when we first came into office we went to a church service and the Reverend in the midst of the sermon started to talk about beaches, this is something that affect every single Jamaican.

Mr. Speaker, we are now implementing a programme where at least one beach in every parish and multiple in some, will be transformed to make quality recreational spaces available to the public.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, these beaches will operate at the best international standards. Typically they will provide the following facilities: children's play areas, seating with tables, picnic areas and gazebos, restrooms and changing room facilities, adequate parking, lifeguard towers and utilities, running water, electricity, *et cetera*. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, work has actually startled on this programme. Right now work is underway at the Burwood Beach in Trelawny which is the most advanced. The Providence Beach Park in Montego Bay is at the tendering stage and design work is being completed at Norman Manley (Beach Park) in Negril, Great Bay at Treasure Beach, St. Elizabeth, Salem in St. Ann (Applause) Boston in Portland. And, Mr. Speaker, we are way ahead in discussions with Orchid in Hanover.

Mr. McKENZIE: What about hot and cold?

Mr. CRAWFORD: Next year, next year, next year *mi* and *yuh* gone a lead.

Dr. McNEILL: Mr. Speaker, projected outlay on improvement of these first six for the financial year 2014/2015 year is approximately $252 Million. However, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry, working along with NEPA and TPDCo will be identifying and securing leases for additional beaches as this is intended to be an ongoing programme. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the next programme is the Rest Stop Programme. Mr. Speaker, as our road network continues to expand, it allows Jamaicans to enjoy the blessings of our country. It is for the comfort of all travellers the Ministry, through its agencies will be resuscitating the programme for rest stops and this is one of those programmes that was previously underway, I think it was started when the current Prime Minister was Minister of Tourism back in that time.

Mr. Speaker, this programme pushes particularly into our domestic tourism push. In addition, we want to encourage our visitors to share in the Jamaican experience of travelling throughout the countryside to get an appreciation of our natural beauty, heritage and way of life. The programme will include upgrading some existing facilities to acceptable standards and it will also be building and selecting new ones.

Mr. Speaker, the plan is to have driving across the country these rest stops where persons can stop and ensure that you can get the proper facilities. Central to that is having proper bathroom facilities with all the services required. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, the details of the numbers and locations will be publicized subsequently.

Mr. Speaker, the contribution of our tourism sector to the economy is significant. Its potential is enormous. It touches many sectors and it has been delivering benefits for every Jamaican in very tangible ways. The substantial economic impact caused by tourism has been clearly demonstrated and its contribution to job creation is undeniable. Tourism offers opportunity for any Jamaican who can recognize a need and carve out a niche for himself, as it did for fisherman Floyd Forbes, whose dream became a reality in the Pelican Bar in St. Elizabeth. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: That's growth!

Dr. McNEILL: Mr. Speaker, that bar has been recognized in some areas as one of the 10 top bars in the world.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. McNEILL: It has become a reality for Gloria Minto who rose from poverty to become the owner of Hotel Gloriana in Montego Bay. (Applause) It has offered someone who made his living washing cars to move up in life to become the owner of a fleet of buses and it has provided the opportunity for Errol "Blackie" Christie to move up in life to become the owner of the popular Little Ochie Restaurant in St. Elizabeth, and Cosmo Brown to become the owner of a popular beachside restaurant in Negril. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, others have achieved success through direct involvement in areas like promotion, development of attractions, hotel ownership and management. Others have

enjoyed success through an indirect association with the industry like construction, farming, information technology, security services or human resource development.

Mr. Speaker, in my presentation today, I have outlined developments that will bring various benefits to our people: better recreational facilities at beach parks around the island, the provision of rest stops for our convenience as we travel, improved opportunities for businesses in the Hampden Wharf development, improvements to environment in which the citizens of Ocho Rios and Falmouth live and work and the preservation of our valued heritage attractions. I invite all our citizens to share in the care and reaping of the fruits of these developments; to so seek within the industry and its linkages to find the opportunity that it can offer for personal advancement in life.

Mr. Speaker, at the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, as we work to achieve the above objectives, we have been busy with the development of other programmes that time did not permit me to outline in detail today. These include: the bed and breakfast policy, a community tourism policy, the pension plan for workers in the industry, the facilitation of development and promulgation of Development Orders for the resort areas, an important part of the planning, the sports tourism, the craft policy, the entertainment registration.

Mr. Speaker, in his presentation, Minister of State, the Honourable Damion Crawford will provide detailed reports on a number of these programmes.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Shaw)

Dr. McNEILL: And, Mr. Speaker, we are also about to launch, in consultation with the JHTA, our energy efficiency project for small hotels which will assist these properties in reducing cost by improving efficiency in energy use making them more competitive.

Mr. Speaker, we are taking bold and strategic steps to ensure that we continue to develop the industry in a sustainable way. Mr. Speaker, I see an industry that facilitates the distribution of benefits at the community level and in a manner that positively affects the lives of all Jamaicans.

Mr. Speaker, colleagues, we all have a part to play in ensuring that tourism continues to deliver on its promise to provide opportunities and growth for all Jamaicans. I call on all of you to let us cooperate in working to maximize the benefits of tourism and truly make the tourism sector a sector for all Jamaicans.

I thank you.

(Applause)

Mr. SHAW: Raymond, you gone a North East, you gone look *fi* Kern!

Mr. PARCHMENT: Worry bout Val Wint.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Chuck. (Applause)

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me congratulate you and thank you and the staff of Parliament for the service, not only to the Members^ but to Parliament, and also to thank my colleagues on both sides of the House for the courtesy and friendship that we have enjoyed over the past year.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You hear a good speaker.

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, another year, another sectoral presentation. And today I am dealing with how we can secure a prosperous nation. Mr. Speaker, today, without the burden or restriction of being a shadow spokesperson, I want to deal with something close to my heart, how to create wealth and prosperity by our people, for our people and in our people. Without wealth and prosperity, our lives may be physically and spiritually healthy but empty in many other ways.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Government Member)

Opposition MEMBER: Why you don't leave the man alone.

Mr. CHUCK: In spite of all the love bestowed on the poor…

The SPEAKER: (Gavels)

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Shaw)

Dr. PHILLIPS: ... the environment.

Mr. CHUCK: In spite of all the love bestowed on the poor, they are tired of being poor, being kept poor and generally ignored except for the regular expressions of love and support for their many challenges. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, there is no merit in poverty or in our country or anyone being poor, and there is no reason to remain poor.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Is JC write that fi yuh?

Mr. SHAW: Go fix your road.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: I don't faint at meeting.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I am still here. You soon faint out of here.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Let us have some order.

Mr. CHUCK: Jamaica is poor because our people are poor and, on the present course, we are creating more and more poor people. We have to change course. Jamaica deserves better. Jamaica deserves sustained growth, more wealth and increasing prosperity, and it can be done. (Applause)

(The Speaker left his Chair at 4:57 p.m., the Deputy Speaker presides)

Mr. CHUCK: Jamaica can be prosperous if our people are provided with the means and opportunities to be prosperous. We need, Mr. Speaker, to instill in our people that prosperity is a worthy purpose and a worthy state to be in. It is time, Mr. Speaker, to go beyond talk and walk the walk. (Applause) What other newly rich countries have done, we can also do. What Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Bermuda, Cayman Islands and many others have done through human effort and creativity, and without the blessings of natural resources, we too can do. We too can have a first world economy instead of the present third or fourth world quality of life. China, an impoverished nation 40 years ago, is fast approaching first world status. China started on a new economic transformation with Deng Xiaoping, who was hitherto exiled as a dunce, for pushing the market economy, returned to government after the death of Mao Zedong and in 1978 promoted the free market economy: and the phrase "that it is glorious to

be rich or to be rich is glorious" is attributed to him. Since then, Mr. Speaker, and for 35 consecutive years, China has grown in excess of 10% *per annum* while Jamaica, a country with so much potential and blessing, has stagnated.

China is showing prosperity in many regions, and now has the second largest economy in the world. More millionaires are being created in China than in any other country, so much for socialism and equal distribution of poverty. We're depending on China for many gifts and investment, should we not adopt at least this economic transformation, which China did within a socialist regime under the theme, 'It is Glorious to be Rich'?

Mr. Speaker, we need to lift our people from the impoverishment, emptiness and depravation that make their lives so miserable. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: The United Nations millennium goal to eliminate poverty by 2015 will not be achieved, but this goal, Mr. Speaker, is worth pursuing and it will be more readily achieved if we focus on creating prosperity.

We the leaders in this Parliament should learn from the leaders of those countries that have shifted from poverty inducing policies, to prosperity creating hands and programmes. Since Independence, the policies pursued and are still being pursued, have not brought progress or prosperity to the country. In fact, Mr. Speaker, these poverty inducing government policies have brought mainly hardship, perennial recession and unbearable suffering.

Mr. Speaker, in this Parliament we must ask ourselves, are we satisfied with the leadership and service offered to the people of Jamaica? Even if we are, let it be clear, the people are not happy, and in fact, are disgusted with the quality of our national leadership and service. We frequently note the few successes and achievements with bombastic exuberance, but overall, we should be ashamed of the horrid state of the nation.

To be truly honest, on reflection, we should feel a sense of shame and disappointment for the abject state of the nation and the obvious depravation that most of our people endure each day. (Applause) We need to accept that Jamaica has not progressed nor developed significantly and is a damaged ship sailing in troubled waters. Unless we acknowledge the dismal state we're in, we won't extricate ourselves from it.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: When compared with other countries, what other countries have achieved, Mr. Speaker, we have failed miserably. Jamaica's continuing failure must be curtailed and we need to find a path to take us forward.

(*Sotto voce* remarks)

Mr. McKENZIE: Yuh caan refer to di man speech as dawg... (Inaudible)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. SHAW: Carry on man, carry on Delroy.

(Cross talks)

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Chuck)

Mr. McKENZIE: Yuh si how when yuh a talk nobody nuh disturb yuh?

Mr. SHAW: Wi just listen to your speech.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Just a moment, Mr. Chuck.

I am not going to tolerate any utterances that are insulting. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. SHAW: Problem! Problem!

The Deputy SPEAKER: Members can make their usual *sotto voce* remarks but they must not desend into a level of insult.

(Cross talks)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Continue, Mr. Chuck.

Mr. CHUCK: ...in this presentation I hope to do so, I want Jamaica to be prosperous. Like the Prime Minister, in her budget contribution, and other government MPs, especially a strong presentation from the MP from St. Andrew North West - St. Ann North West, we want to move from poverty to prosperity, but how can it be done? Surely, prosperity can only be achieved if we're focussed on achieving it. For a start, let's understand clearly, that nobody owes us anything, we're on our own. The Almighty did not bless us with oil or an abundance of rich natural resources that can make us rich overnight. We can only become rich through our own creativity and industry.

Over the past decades we've been overly concerned with the alleviation of poverty, the distribution of scarce resources and the equitable sharing of increasingly empty government scoffers. Without the natural resources and increased handouts from donors to countries, we've ended up distributing poverty and even greater inequality. Jamaica needs wealth and prosperity and it doesn't need a rocket scientist to tell us how to do it. We have made some headway, more and more of our people are getting a decent education, but to what end? Our children are told that education is the key to success. It means to lift ourselves out of poverty, the tool of empowerment and the door to a better future.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, we have thousands of certified graduates unable to use their education qualifications. Many graduates of tertiary institutions, lawyers, doctors, teachers, accountants having spent years and millions of dollars to qualify themselves, are now without work and seeking employment outside their field of competence. The majority of our graduates are migrating and the best and brightest are lost from our shores.

Nowadays, Mr. Speaker, MPs come under increasing stresses vast armies of unemployed and underemployed citizens beg to go on the farm work and hotel work programmes. In a limited way, Mr. Speaker, I will discuss the path progress to increase wealth and to achieve prosperity if only we allow our people to create the opportunities and thus the jobs and resources.

I will identify 10 factors why we have failed to make reasonable progress, and in discussing them, to examine ways and means to extricate ourselves from the poverty and mess we're in. The order in which I present and discuss them are not necessarily the order of emphasis or priority. I am aware that they

overlap and are interconnected and I agree that no one will agree with all 10 factors or reasons for poverty, and I accept that there are many others.

Reason number one, government policies have been hostile to business and to business creation, expansion and development. We make it difficult for investors and businessmen especially local ones. We view them as money men, eager to make profit and to exploit our workforce. Capitalist seen as the enemy of labour when they should be working together to create wealth.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: We overregulate, we overtax and punish economic transactions and thus chase money from the formal sector with invasive rules, unnecessary restriction and burdensome taxation. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: The abandoned withdrawal tax is another good example of the hostility to monetary transactions.

Mr. PARCHMENT: Foolishness!

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, taxes are needed and more taxes can be collected if we increase economic activities and multiply economic transactions. And this can only happen if we increase the velocity and momentum with which money is moved around to transact businesses, employ people and promote commerce. (Applause)

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, for Jamaicans to become prosperous, Jamaica has to become attracted to capital, a lowering to investors and friendly to business. Tragically, we're going in the wrong direction. Jamaica is becoming more unfriendly to business when we should be working, working, working, to get businesses to take off.

On the ease of doing business, Mr. Speaker, Jamaica has been slipping consistently over the past 10 years and more; and that is the assessment of the international rating agencies.

Mr. HYLTON: All of that goes on under your government.

Mr. SHAW: Shut up!

(Cross talks)

Mr. CHUCK: While other countries see the importance of improving business environment, Jamaica has made it even more difficult for entrepreneurs, investors and business people to do business. In 2013, not before lost years, in 2013, Jamaica slipped from 90 to 94...

Mr. André HYLTON: But the measurement was from your time. It's based upon the measurement from your time.

Mr. CHUCK: In 2013.

Mr. André HYLTON: That is your operation.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. CHUCK: Go and look on Google. ...on the ease of doing business worldwide.

(Cross talks)

Mr. CHUCK: The index uses 10 criteria to assess countries. Out of 189 countries, Mr. Speaker, where do we rank on these criteria?

1) In starting a business 23;
2) dealing with construction permit 52;
3) getting electricity 132;
4) registering property 114;

5) getting credit 109;
6) protecting investors 80;
7) paying taxes 168 out of 189;
8) trading across borders 118;
9) enforcing contracts 131;
10) resolving insolvency 31.

Why are we, Mr. Speaker, handcuffing our business people and chasing away investors? (Applause) If the Minister of Industry and Commerce wants to do something he should let JAMPRO focus on reducing these numbers. (Applause)

Mr. SHAW: Absolutely! Absolutely!

Mr. CHUCK: Investors will flock and rush to countries where they're welcome to do business and to make reasonable profit. If we make it easy to do business, we won't need to beg investors to come here, they will beg us to allow them here. The rich countries of the world are the ones where it is easy to do business! The alternative is obviously true! Make it easy to do business and the country will become rich!

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: It is through business that we're going to create society!

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: It is through business that we're going to create the jobs and opportunities that our young people so desperately need!

Mr. SHAW: Lecture dem! Lecture dem!

Mr. CHUCK: It is through business that we're going to get the taxes needed to fund our free health care, free education and other deserving social policies.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: It is through business that we're going to get the resources to fix our roads and gullies and decaying infrastructure.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. DALLEY: Ray, ray, shut yuh mouth!

(Cross talks)

Mr. CHUCK: Yet in Jamaica, we make it frustrating, inconvenient and so debilitating to do business.

Mr. Speaker, let us learn from the rich and poor countries and decide where we want to go. In our ignorance, we berate Singapore and believe its prosperity emerge from its harsh laws or a great human cost.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. CHUCK: No.

Singaporeans are not running from their country...

A MEMBER: I don't need to go up deh.

Mr. CHUCK: ...and interestingly, they can travel to any country without a visa - virtually any country without a visa. How we wish Jamaicans had that privilege.

(Cross talks)

Mr. CHUCK: Singapore is rich because there, it is easy to do business. Singapore is not only one of the richest nations, but also the easiest place to do business, ranking number one on the worldwide ease of doing business for many years.

Mr. DALLEY: They had no election in 30 years.

Mr. CHUCK: They have an election every five years.

Mr. DALLEY: They had none! They had none for over 30 years

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. CHUCK: They've had 10 elections.

Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere, and not surprising, is at the bottom of the ease of doing business index. Isn't that contrast telling us something? Poverty and the ease of doing business are inversely proportional - I hope all a unoo understand Mathematics - poverty and the ease of doing business are inversely proportional. Make it easy to do business and poverty will disappear. Make it easy and attractive to do business and prosperity will emerge.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, how can we justify that a country that needs taxes like how bodies need nutrients is ranked 168 out of 189 on the ease of paying taxes? How can we impose such financial hurdles, gross inconvenience, and heavy burden on our taxpayers?

Mr. Speaker, just visit any Collectorate of Taxes at the end of the month or the end of a fiscal year and see the long lines and the frustration and anger of taxpayers. Investors have an alternative they can go elsewhere. Taxpayers have an alternative; they simply avoid the taxes perhaps until they are forced to pay or delay paying the taxes. At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, we need to have a full parliamentary debate on the ease of doing business in Jamaica. (Applause) It is probably the most needed parliamentary debate at this time.

Reason number two: we're not putting capital to work.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mickey Mouse.

Mr. CHUCK: Capital – valuable capital is tied up, under used everywhere. The SIPP (Security Interest in Personal Property) passed in this Parliament recently is a major step forward. (Applause) Now, citizens can use their personal properties to access credit and engage in commerce. However, Mr. Speaker, what about the registration of land and the cumbersome process to get certificates of title for unregistered land, which certificates of title can be used to access credit?

Mr. Speaker, Billions of Dollars are tied up in these unregistered lands that if registered could generate an enormous amount of economic transactions and a wave of jobs and opportunities. In truth, apart from the fact that so many assets are tied up or dormant, Jamaica has far too many unregistered parcels of land in every parish.

The LAMP Programme (Land Administration and Management Programme) is a good programme but after the signing of an agreement with the South Korean government entity, the Korea Cadastral Survey Corporation, in which even though it is not well known, played a majored part, I expected that most of the unregistered lands would be rapidly registered, but unfortunately the process of registration is too slow and so properties that could easily be used to access credit remain dormant. Mr. Speaker, when this thing took almost a year and a half to get the contract signed and when the contract was signed, we worked out a programme that we could deliver 5,000 to 10,000 per year, that is 2009/2010. Four years later, Mr. Speaker, I don't think we have delivered 4,000 titles. We

deliver a couple hundred and we get big public relations with the Prime Minister delivering it. That's not what we want, Mr. Speaker; the people want their titles. (Applause)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: And if it means legislation to make it easier, let us change the legislation. We have perhaps over a hundred thousand in every single one of your constituencies waiting to be registered and the cumbersome process is destroying and frustrating the people who want their titles. We must do something about it.

Mr. Speaker, I've also heard estimates of over $60 Billion worth of projects that await development approvals in the parish councils. Why can't the process be expedited now? Do we have to wait on the IMF to force us to so?

A MEMBER: Yes!

Mr. CHUCK: If half of these approvals were acted upon, can you imagine the amount of jobs and economic activities that would emerge? Growth and prosperity would be on the way. Let us get on with the speedy registration of lands and the easy approval process for property development.

Reason number three: the justice system is a major impediment to progress and prosperity. Huge sums of capital and assets perhaps involving tens of billions of dollars are tied up in unresolved civil cases, awaiting trial and a final determination between the parties. And while the cases are delayed, the parties cannot use their assets and capital to engage in needed economic activities. But, Mr. Speaker, even while we wait indefinitely on these judicial determinations, there is an area that could release and untie hundreds of billions of dollars presently dormant and underutilized, because the ownership of these assets need to be formalized. I speak, Mr. Speaker, of the deceased estates that require probating or administration and without the need for court time.

In the last administration, Mr. Speaker, then Finance Minister Audley Shaw saw the need to have the assets of these deceased estates come within the system. He reduced the death duties to 154 per cent and the stamp duty on the probate and administration to $5,000 for those thousands of estates that were tied up in the court system.

A Government MEMBER: That is why it so… (Inaudible)

Mr. CHUCK: As Minister of Justice, I put in place a system to have these probates and administration done expeditiously, but I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, if it is still in place. In fact, I'm sure it is not in place.

A Government MEMBER: You didn't stay long enough.

Mr. CHUCK: In addition, Mr. Speaker, during my tenure, the Ministries of Finance and Justice started regular meetings to speed up the administration of these estates, but I wonder again if it is still going on, because the wait time, Mr. Speaker, is inordinate. What is obvious Mr. Speaker is that it is now taking any time between six and twenty-four months, sometimes longer to have a probate or administration completed. The time to check the documents and approve them, Mr. Speaker, takes only hours. They do not require

a court hearing. It is all administrative work. A probate or administration should take days, at most weeks. But amazingly, Mr. Speaker, it is taking months and years while billions of dollars of assets are tied up and unable to get into the system.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that assets far in excess of J$100 Billion are tied up in deceased estates that could easily make a major impact on our economy. We need to find ways and means to untie and release these assets into the system to drive economic activity.

Opposition MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: Wouldn't it make sense to put together a taskforce to examine the present process and even to spend $10 Million to release $100 Billion that could assist in transforming our economic and court systems?

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: When you were in Government, why didn't you do it?

Mr. WARMINGTON: You have no right to speak.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CHUCK: We've tried - we were doing it. We were doing it, that's why I said I'm not too sure - we were doing it, Mr. Speaker, that is why I'm not too sure what has happened, because the whole process has stopped.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CHUCK: Reason number four: Jamaica remains poor, because it is difficult to access credit.

(Cross talk)

Entrepreneurs rarely have enough equity and assets to start or to expand a business. To obtain credit is a burdensome task as so many of our financial institutions are risk-averse. The real challenge, however, is the high cost of capital. For the Free Market Economy to function properly, the access to credit must be readily available and reasonably cheap. Interest rates over the decades are not only too high, but prohibitive and punishing. The FINSAC debacle is a telling legacy of how high interest rates destroyed thousands of businesses and families. It is sad that the FINSAC Report may never be published. There is so much that should be learnt from the collapse of the financial and business sectors.

Opposition MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: Presently, the banks and other financial institutions are making huge profits while most businesses suffer and are unable to get credit to stay afloat and/or to expand. How can the banks be so profitable when most of their customers and clients are barely surviving?

A MEMBER: Good question, sir.

Mr. CHUCK: Loan rates need to be single digits and remain there. More significantly, the purchase of a home should be the natural right of every adult, but is it really possible in Jamaica for the average wage earner, the purchase of a home remains a dream when it should be a reality early in their career. Mortgage interest rates, Mr. Speaker, are still too high. Real estate development should be allowed to take off and contribute to the country's prosperity. For that to happen, mortgage rates need to fall to low single digits. If mortgage rate loans could be reduced

to 5 or 6 per cent, which is actually high for most countries, the real estate would become a major source of wealth creation and economic activity. (Applause) The real estate market would benefit enormously from reduced interest rates, stamp duties and I dare say, lawyer's fees. The bounce and buoyancy in the economy from increased real estate transactions would solve many of our social and economic problems.

Reason number five, Jamaica is over taxed. To satisfy the public expenditures and public debt, Jamaican taxpayers are being punished with more taxes than they can reasonably bear. Right taxes are needed to balance the budget and get things done. It can be overdone. I have argued repeatedly Mr. Speaker that more taxation does not translate into more taxes. In fact, less taxation often times mean more taxes.

At this year's [Standing] Finance Committee meetings, Minister Peter Phillips noted that during the last fiscal year, in spite of the reduced GCT from 17½ to 16½ per cent, more GCT was collected. If we reduced the GCT rate to 15 per cent, I strongly suggest more GCT would be collected. In the last administration, Minister Audley Shaw reduced stamp duty and transfer taxes to 3 and 4 per cent respectably and more taxes were collected. Minister Phillips, instead of continuing the trend and further reduced the taxes, increased these duties on land transfer to 4 to 5 per cent and not surprisingly collected less taxes.

Burdensome taxation on businesses and the Jamaican people is actually counter-productive. It creates and generates loopholes and avenues for tax avoidance and simply robbing the treasury. Taxpayers know when enough is enough and no amount of moral suasion and tax auditing will coerce them to pay more taxes than they think are just and reasonable. To avoid the burdensome taxation, many companies and individuals are now registering companies abroad to conduct businesses here and, thereby depriving the Government of much needed taxes.

Mr. CHUCK: Customs Duties are so high and punitive that many businessmen are prepared to take the risk and opportunity to cheat its revenue, which undermines the whole integrity of the system and promotes widespread corruption, deliberate delays and many irregularities. Major tax reforms are needed and may be on the way. But taxation must not be an impediment to business expansion, increased productivity and economic vibrancy.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHUCK: Low tax rates would spur more business expansions, greater economic transactions, and thus the likely opportunities for more jobs and more taxes. Low tax rates may even mean more taxes for the treasury and could actually be an impetus to economic growth and development, which are Jamaica's greatest needs at this time.

Reason No. 6

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. CHUCK: What is wrong with that? Jamaica has failed to enforce the law in an effective, pronounced and timely manner. Justice and the rule of law are not seen as

sacrosanct, and the cornerstones on which to forge a good and quality society. Crime, violence, and miscreant behavior are reaching into every corner of hitherto peaceful communities. The erosion...

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time to complete his presentation has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended to allow him to complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended to allow him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Chuck.

Mr. CHUCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I can assure you, we will be out here before 6:00.

The erosion of trust and confidence in the police, the Court system and other agencies of government has undermined the rule of law and the peace and good order of the nation. The failure and inability to effectively enforce the rule of law, send the wrong signals. Actual and potential lawbreakers feel, maybe know, they can break the law without any real of being caught. The end result, Mr. Speaker, is that indiscipline, violence, crime and corruption, or pervasive and corrosive.

Crime remains a scourge in the Jamaican society, and a major impediment to investment and development. Praedial larceny, stealing electricity, pilfering government and private property and many other crimes and irregularity are committed with impunity because offenders know the risk of getting caught is minimal. No country can properly develop, create wealth and promote peace and happiness if the rule of law disrespected, ignored, and consistently breached. (Applause)

Yet, Mr. Speaker, the political parties, the PNP and JLP that have formed Government since Independence must set the example. The indiscipline and corruption that are so evident at Election Time, and the way we practice our politics, contribute significantly to the breakdown of law and order. (Applause) And it is almost hypocritical for us politicians to speak about upholding and maintaining the rule of law. In our eagerness and determination to get into Parliament, or a parish council, nothing is a shackle, and we engage in widespread malpractice, indiscretion and illegalities.

A MEMBER: Confession is good.

Mr. CHUCK: As Leaders, we have to set the examples that we expect our people to emulate. If we are to recover from a society that has become coarse and brutish, anarchic and corrupt, immoral and wicked, and further decaying and declining, we the leaders must show the way. Our mission to foster a kind and gentle society must be renewed and pursued diligently.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: At the same time, Mr. Speaker, if we are to create a decent, upright and prosperous nation, we must ensure that our personal, professional, and political lives are beyond reproach.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: Reason No. 7. Class warfare, divisiveness, badmindedness, jealousy and hatred have stifled Jamaica's economic development. The tragic and stupid promotion of class conflict, discredited and outdated ideology, and racial profiling has done great harm to our social psyche.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. L. Buchanan)

Mr. CHUCK: The big man and big businesses are seen as foes and exploiters of the little man and the poorly paid workers. Many misguided and unthinking leaders, political and religious have argued that the poor are poor because the rich has too much, which is abject nonsense.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. CHUCK: The lost years of the 1970s when the administration of the day tried to institute the lost cause of socialism, depleted our nation of some of the best managers and chased promising businessmen and entrepreneurs to foreign lands. Huge amount of capital, and managerial expertise disappeared. The late Professor Carl Stone declared repeatedly that Jamaica will not recover from the losses of the 70s in our lifetime. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, he was right.

Still, we expound in our discourses, the class warfare, division and conflicts which can get us nowhere. Small minded people decry and despise the successful people and big ventures.

Mr. DALLEY: You just bashing Jamaica... propose something.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: Go and pay the nurses; go pay the bill and keep quiet.

Mr. DALLEY: You are bashing Jamaica... propose something.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. CHUCK: If someone is successful, evil thoughts and speculation are rumored, such as, he must be in drugs, or it's corruption, or political connections why he or the business is doing so well. It is time for such bad mindedness of our people to cease.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Dr. Wheatley)

Mr. CHUCK: We deride and denounce the accumulation of wealth and big business and the big man, when they are the ones providing the environment to create wealth and prosperity, jobs and opportunities and the potential for a better life for all.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: Without calling names of companies, where would Jamaica be without these big businesses and these big men? It is time we revere and praise the big entrepreneurs, and urge more of our young people to emulate them, to think big...

Mr. SILVERA: You just done *cuss* them.

Mr. CHUCK: ...create big business and make big investments. We must send clear and inspiring message that everyone can be successful and wealthy if he or she puts his or her mind to it, and expend the hard work to do.

(Applause)

Instead of envying and despising the truly successful and wealthy, let us praise them and hope many more can emerge. If Jamaica can become, once again, a friendly place for the rich and wealthy, so much more capital, even in small doses, would flow to our shores, and

Jamaica would benefit, and even become more prosperous.

Reason No. 8

The overbearing and burdensome bureaucracy impedes rather than facilitates. The red tapes, hurdles and delays in most areas of government are major impediments to progress and prosperity. One cannot be sure if it is incompetence, laziness, or just plain inefficiency, but at virtually every level it is painful, enervating and intolerable to do business with government. We are putting in place an enormous amount of rules, regulations, and restrictions, and it is true as the present Minister of Finance once opined that those who play by the rules get shafted.

We speak about production, but is there enough valuable production in the public sector. Few areas of the public sector produce goods. The vast majority of civil servants are engaged in a service that is administrative services, whether it is in providing marriage certificates, getting licenses issued, collecting taxes, *et cetera*, the production of administrative services is no less important that the production of other services, be it legal, medical, financial, accounting, hospitality, tourism service, *et cetera.* If administrative service were discharged speedily the economic benefits would be enormous. (Applause) Just ask Minister Azan how difficult it is to get anything done.

Repetitive and catchy sounds are recorded and played daily to encourage our people to be more productive. We are wasting time. Scarce money and creative energy to make these recordings that accomplish nothing. People do not produce by moral suasion. Public relations and great speeches do not induce production. If they did, most of the socialist States would be highly productive and wealthy. They have great speakers.

Mr. SILVERA: You *cuss* them out and say you don't want them.

Mr. SHAW: You are pluralistic, keep quiet.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. L. Buchanan)

Mr. CHUCK: You don't hear them with four-hour speeches though.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, people produce through incentive, rewards, and benefits. The bureaucrats will get things done if there are immediate benefits. The executive agencies have shown the way to get things done expeditiously; simply pay extra to have things done within a day or a given time. So, at the Registrar General and the Passport offices, birth and death certificates and passports can be obtained by express service with the payment of additional fees. The touts who used to collect these fees have disappeared, and the Registrar of Titles, by paying an additional fee of $10,000, registration and transfer of documents can be done within a day.

Mr. Speaker, I take no credit for this but it is something I begged them to do 10 years ago, and three years ago it was done. It was done, and now you can get - when you want a land transfer, or a whole set of documents done within a day instead of two weeks or

three weeks, you pay $10,000 and everything comes back to you in one day. And it is a service that is well-used, Mr. Speaker.

That is the way to go, charge more for the extra service. My only concern is whether the workers are benefiting from this extra payment, otherwise the system may fail. If they work - and they are working - why can't we do it in other areas of government to reduce the delay, corruption and inefficiency in the system? Thus, for example, can land developers be charged extra, $50,000 or up to an extra $1 Million which many desperate but unscrupulous ones will pay if they can get their application for development and building checked and approved within a given timeframe of say, three months. And that extra payment can be shared amongst the stakeholders in the approval process.

Believe me, Mr. Speaker, if we enact an incentive programme, there will be few delays in the approval process. This incentive programme can be instituted in every area of government to expedite the service provided. Pretty and well-crafted speeches, nice sounding tunes and outstanding public relations are great to win elections, but it is incentives and rewards that drive the free market economy to function better. (Applause)

For many civil servants who are grossly underpaid, incentives and rewards would make a difference.

Mr. BUCHANAN: That is why Shaw loose?

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Warmington)

Mr. CHUCK: Reason No. 9.

Jamaica's persistent poverty and inability to create wealth emerge significantly from the politics of entitlement, expectation and handout. Far too many Jamaicans, especially those in the inner city communities, have been nurtured on the practice of a politics that supports and caters for handouts, the freeness mentality, and on the belief that the State should maintain and care for them from the cradle to the grave. Where did this freeness mentality or the politics of distribution of State welfare begin, and how can it be ended? Nothing is really free. Somebody has to pay.

Mr. DALLEY: Say it again.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Tell Shaw, tell Shaw.

Mr. CHUCK: When the State provides free water, free education, free health care, free housing, subsidized transportation, *et cetera*, the resources come from somewhere which means others bear the cost. So even if social water, Mr. Speaker, is a gift from God through rainfall, when provided to residents it has to be chlorinated, pumped and piped, all of which are costly.

The National Water Commission, Mr. Speaker, cannot account for 70 per cent of the water it produces. It chlorinates, pumps, and pipes water from its systems. And most of it, I suspect, is lost, stolen, or provided as social water. Stealing, Mr. Speaker, is neutralized as residents mistakenly believe utilities should be free.

The present challenge of the Jamaica Public Service to get communities to pay for

electricity is a daunting one, as many citizens nurtured in the freeness mentality, strongly believe they have a right to free light and power.

Is the National Water Commission prepared to act like the JPS and recover payments from the residents who use this precious commodity? Are the taxpayers of this country to continue the provision of social water when most of them cannot get a steady and reliable supply?

This state of affairs, Mr. Speaker, cannot last. We need a reality check. We have to separate the needy from the greedy; otherwise our destiny is even deeper poverty.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: That's what the people did in the last election.

Mr. CHUCK: Deeper poverty. Such wide cross-sections of the country...

(Laughter)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: That's why Shaw loose.

Mr. CHUCK: ...cannot expect to live from the hard work and earnings of other taxpayers.

A MEMBER: Separate grade from deed, that is why Shaw lose you know.

Mr. CHUCK: We have to instill in our people across every community that the State can only help the truly needy, the desperate and vulnerable, and others must earn their way and take responsibility for daily care and welfare.

Even though I disagree with the JPS locking off electricity in communities, JPS's action may well be the wakeup call for us, the politicians, to send the clear and unmistakable message that the freeness cannot continue, that the State owes nobody anything and the days of entitlements and handouts are coming to an end.

Reason No. 10, Mr. Speaker, my final reason.

Jamaica's failure and continuing in impoverishment emerge from our governments' tendency to put politics over economics. In fact, some administrations have but politics over everything. Everything is politicized, plus at election time and even in between elections the government of the day, without due consideration for fiscal prudence and without a vibrant economy to do so, is always intent on creating a feel good euphoria.

Huge sums of scarce government resources are spent on unplanned and wasteful government projects that really add little value to the country's infrastructure or its growth and development. Such expenditures have contributed to the fiscal mess we are in. Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, at the present time, the IMF has put the country on a path of fiscal prudence which we hope can allow us to stay fiscally afloat.

However, in other areas, where good managers could make a difference and persons with business and entrepreneurial sense could become good directors and chairmen of government boards. Every administration has put their political supporters and party members to mismanage and maladminister these government entities as if they were political groups or political branches, with the inevitable consequence that these government businesses suffer huge losses perennially, and

instead of contributing to the national purse or drain on it.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I go back to where I started. We have too many poor people. Poor people require support and tend to look to the State for virtually everything. Our humanity forces us to respond to their needs, but freeness cannot last forever. Invariable freeness is abused and unappreciated. The Constitutional Commission in its deliberations and the revision of the 1962 Constitution struggled with the issue of free education and to what level, and concluded that education should become a right at least up to the secondary school level. Now we have free health care. It won't be long, Mr. Speaker, before sound and compelling arguments are presented for the State to provide free meals for the destitute, free pipe water, free light and power, free housing, free public transportation and free telephone and internet service. Where will it stop?

Mr. Speaker, it can only stop if we rid the nation of poverty. It can only stop if we equip our people with the skills and knowledge to fend for themselves. It can only stop if our people are provided with jobs and opportunities to earn decent wages and allow to improve their quality of lives. These things, Mr. Speaker, are possible. A new day will dawn if we untie the hands of our entrepreneurs and allow them to unleash their business skills to create wealth and generate prosperity everywhere.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended for us to do any further business this afternoon, so I move for the adjournment of the Parliament until tomorrow, the 28th of May at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House adjourns until tomorrow, May 28th, Wednesday, and resume at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at approximately 5:50 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015

WEDNESDAY, May 28, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:40 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern

MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Dr. Winston Green

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- The Provisional Collection of Tax (Betting, Gaming and Lotteries) (Bookmakers' Levy Scheme) (Overseas Horse-races and Races of any Approved Species of Animal) (Confirmation) Order, 2014, Resolution
- The Provisional Collection of Tax (Betting, Gaming and Lotteries) (Bookmakers' Levy Scheme) (Confirmation) Order, 2014, Resolution under The Provisional Collection of Tax Act
- The Bauxite (Production Levy) Act Capital Development Fund (Withdrawal) (No. 4) Order, 2014
- Annual Report of the Committee to Examine and Recommend for Approval Proposed Estimates for Constituency Projects Submitted to

the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Project Management Unit (PMU) by respective Members of Parliament 2013-2014

- Ministry of Labour and Social Security National Employment Report entitled Issues and Trends in the Labour Market For the years 2008-2012
- Ministry of Labour and Social Security Annual Performance Report for the Financial Year 2013/2014
- Report of the Joint Select Committee To consider and report on the Bill shortly entitled

"The Banking Services Act, 2014"

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Mr. André HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Chairman of the CDF Committee, I beg to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the Annual Report of the Special Select Committee to examine and recommend for approval Proposed Estimates for the Constituency Projects submitted to the Constituency Development Fund Project Management Unit by respective Members of Parliament 2013-2014.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the Report of the Joint Select Committee to consider and report on a Bill shortly entitled: "The Banking Services Act, 2014".

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Mr. André HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

Be it Resolved that the Annual Report of the Special Select Committee to examine and recommend for approval Proposed Estimates for Constituency Projects submitted to the Constituency Development Fund Project Management Unit by the respective Members of Parliament 2013-2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 28th day of May, 2014, be adopted.

(THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, entered and took her seat.)

PRESENTATION OF BILLS WIHTOUT LEAVE OF THE HOUSE FIRST OBTAINED

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Tourism and Entertainment, I beg to move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled: "The Time-Share Vacations Act, 2014".

Bill shortly entitled:

"The Time Share Vacations Act, 2014"

read a first time.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of second reading.

The SPEAKER: Let me welcome our many visitors we have here today and just to advise them that they must not participate in any way in today's proceedings.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the recommittal of item Notices of Motions Given Orally.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal of item Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY
(Recommitted)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

> Be it Resolved that the Report of the Joint Select Committee to consider and report on a Bill shortly entitled "The Banking Services Act, 2014", which was laid on the Table of the House on the 28th day of May, 2014 be adopted.

Mr. Speaker, I also beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

> Be it Resolved that the Capital Development Fund (Withdrawal) No. 4. Order, 2014 under the Bauxite (Production Levy) Act, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 28th day of May, 2014, be approved.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not usual for me to take notice as I am doing now, but as there are two of them today, we want to acknowledge the birthdays of the Members from North East St. Elizabeth and South St. Andrew. (Applause) We will not adjourn the sitting for the celebrations.

We intend to continue with the Sectoral Debates. This afternoon, Mr. Speaker, we have two presenters: the Minister of Labour and Social Security first and then the Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: I am going to ask, Dr. Campbell, if you could assist me with the noise abatement effort.

Minister Kellier.

SECTORAL DEBATE

Mr. KELLIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, once again I am thankful for the opportunity to address this Honourable House in the Sectoral Debate in my capacity as parliamentary representative for the wonderful people of Southern St. James and a Member of the Cabinet with Portfolio responsibilities for Labour and Social Security.

In doing so, Mr. Speaker, I wish to express profound thanks to the Almighty above for His enduring grace and love for all of us. My sincere thanks to the Prime Minister The Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller for her enlightened leadership and guidance, as well as her expressed confidence in me to carry out the Portfolio responsibilities of Labour and Social Security. Equally, Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank members of my

family, my constituents, some of whom are represented here today, my councillors and members of my support staff, (Applause) the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour Mr. Alvin McIntosh and the hardworking and dedicated and professional staff of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security; our tripartite partners, the trade unions and employer groups and various external stakeholders and, of course, you my Parliamentary colleagues, for the support given to me throughout the past year; and, Mr. Speaker, to your good self and the Deputy and the members of the House staff for the support given to me and to my Ministry over the past year.

The quality of the support extended to me made all the difference to my performance and that of the Ministry over which I exercise policy control.

Mr. Speaker, in pursuit of my objective this afternoon, which is to highlight the commitment of my Ministry in support of the Medium-Term Growth Agenda of the Government of which I'm a part, and I propose at this juncture to draw attention, Mr. Speaker, to the two documents which were laid earlier on the Table of the House, the 2013/2014 Annual Performance Report and the National Employment Report - Issues and Trends in the Labour Market 2008 to 2012 of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. They are in the form of CDs, Mr. Speaker, so you will not see books; we're keeping up with modern trends.

Mr. PAULWELL: Hear! Hear!

(MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. KELLIER: These two documents, Mr. Speaker, complement each other, and I encourage Members and the general public to consult them for substantive and detailed information on the performance of the multi-faceted and varied units and departments of the Ministry during the periods under review, and for an examination of the employment situation in Jamaica, the issues arising therefrom, and the methodologies advanced for treating with them.

This afternoon then, Mr. Speaker, I propose to highlight judiciously that which is the Ministry's focus going forward in implementing those measures, in support of the Growth Agenda and which hold out the greatest prospects leading to the specific outcomes; those of:

- Improvement in the productivity levels in the country
- Improvement in the competitiveness of our businesses and private sector entities
- Improvement in the standard of living of our people
- The creation of decent jobs and greater employment opportunities both locally and overseas
- The ability to strengthen social cohesion and stability throughout the society.

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, I must say at the outset that this presentation this afternoon will be much different from those made by me in the past. It will not be one that will be quoting a lot of figures and percentages and so on and giving the full details. Because as I said before, the details are embedded in these two CDs and it is going to be important that Members... (Applause) ...use them to find out what they need to know. I will make reference as I go along, Mr. Speaker, about where you can find some of the information that you need to find. I know some Members are more interested in some form of the information than others...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. KELLIER: Yes, yes, I know.

...but certainly, Mr. Speaker, the Members have to consult these documents.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. KELLIER: We know, Mr. Speaker, the country is on to a relatively stable development track. Having to enter into a Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies IMF Agreement in February 2013 for the four-year period March 2013/14 to March 2016/2017, which sets out the comprehensive Medium-Term Growth Agenda of the Administration, we have experienced relatively good but marginal performance in the economy - though not without some degree of difficulty.

Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 0.5% in September 2013 quarter followed a decline of a 0.2% for the preceding quarter and the first quarter of 2014 has registered a growth rate of 1.6% relative to the corresponding period of 2013.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the debt - as measured by the Debt-to-GDP ratio - is now moving decidedly in the right direction and is expected to be about 5% to 7% for the fiscal year 2013/2014.

Most encouraging is the fact that the country recently passed the fourth IMF primary balance target... (Applause) ...and according to the 2014 Survey of Business, 57% of firms expected improvements in their business operations in the first quarter of this year, up from 47% last year, and they intend to increase the levels of investment in their companies in the year ahead.

Of note, also, is the stubborn fact that much of this growth-induced improvement has taken place within the context of a faltering world economy with unemployment in countries like Greece and Spain soaring to some 26% with that of our college graduates in those areas is way above 50%.

But, Mr. Speaker, despite our relative success thus far at accelerated economic restructuring of the Jamaican economy and the favourable response by our internal and external stakeholders to our efforts at economic rebalancing, the fact remains that our options remain extremely limited in terms

of what we must do in putting ourselves back on a path of sustained development.

Our survival in this brave new world of the 21st century is dependent now more than ever before on our ability to live together and to learn to work smarter. In this regard, the only basis for guaranteeing our prosperity going forward into this century is predicated on us as a resilient people growing our way out of indebtedness, increasing employment, and shifting radically, and urgently, from a culture of negative to positive productivity growth.

Mr. Speaker, I regret to say that unless we turn around our experience in this country with negative productivity growth which continues to stifle our potential to grow the economy, create jobs, improve the quality of life of the majority of our people, and make our goods and services much more competitive regionally and internationally, our economic reform programme - which, as a society we have worked so hard to maintain over these past seventeen months - could be unraveled to the detriment of all of us.

Mr. Speaker, just consider along with me the following set of facts:

- Rapid labour productivity growth in China, which currently stands at 8.2% per annum, means that output per worker in that country will double in 8.5 years.
- In other words, income per worker in China will rise rapidly going forward.
- In contrast, with labour productivity in Latin America averaging only 1.1% annually, it means that it will take some 63 years for output per worker to double.
- Expressed differently, it will take close to three generations for wages and the standard of living to double in that jurisdiction.

In consideration, Mr. Speaker, of these facts and with Jamaica's labour productivity declining on average by 0.14% annually over the period between 1990 to 2012, can you, Mr. Speaker, and Members of this House and of the general public, imagine the prospects we face in this country in these turbulent economic times if we fail to treat the issue of productivity growth as literally a life and death issue of survival?

This is the reason why I launched the Productivity Revolution for this country two years ago in recognition of the fact that economic growth in Jamaica over the past several decades has underperformed relative to selective countries in the Caribbean, Latin America and the rest of the world.

The objective conditions necessitating this revolution remain a growing concern, which is one critical reason why this initiative must succeed at all costs; for we will not be able to stimulate economic growth or Gross Domestic Product and create gainful decent employment with an annual labour productivity of 0.14% compared to other countries globally.

Neither can we hope to have better service quality, less expensive cost of production, stronger institutional arrangements, better labour management cooperation, and better work ethics while being burdened by a declining average annual Total Factor

Productivity rate of 0.6% compared to countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, India and China with vastly higher Total Factor Productivity rates.

In light of this, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security has gone to great lengths to strengthen considerably, the commitment of the Jamaica Productivity Centre as the government's main productivity promotions unit through increased allocation of resources to spearhead the productivity revolution now on the way throughout the country. And if you listen to the news and listen to the radio very often you will hear the productivity jingles very often, because we want everybody to log on to the culture of productivity in this country.

We have launched a public education campaign, Mr. Speaker that seeks to change the culture and mindset of the mass of the population as a prerequisite for the success of productivity transformation, because productivity is about prosperity.

(Applause)

We will be erecting three major billboards along the Norman Manley International Airport and Trafalgar roads in Kingston, as well as roads in Montego Bay, to sensitize Jamaicans about productivity, because productivity is about prosperity. (Applause)

We propose to make the Schools' Productivity Improvement Project an annual event so as to raise the level of consciousness of our students to the principle of continuous improvement and a better understanding of productivity, because productivity is about prosperity. (Applause)

The Jamaica Productivity Centre will also be increasing the number of productivity audits carried out in private and public sector organizations, because productivity is about prosperity. (Applause)

It will further collaborate with public sector entities to develop new business models for improving service delivery, because, Mr. Speaker, productivity is about prosperity. And it will increase research to enhance worker satisfaction, flexibility, productivity and labour market efficiency, because productivity is about prosperity. And that message must continue to resound throughout the length and breadth of this country.

Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear in stating that the drive to spearhead a productivity revolution in Jamaica, supersedes any attempt at rhetoric about social change, because it is complements by a logical agenda that seeks to reform our labour market as part and parcel of the larger strategy of productivity transformation.

And I therefore wish to advise Members of this Honourable House and the general public, Mr. Speaker, that the long-term goal of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security under my leadership, and in partnership with the trade unions, employers - and various training agencies such as HEART TRUST/NTA - is to ensure that the Jamaican workforce becomes more responsive, competitive and productive on a worldwide basis, by becoming certified, trained and flexible.

For the reform of the Jamaica labour market, Mr. Speaker, is of critical importance

if we are to properly develop the economy so as to end the process of brain- migration, stem the paucity of relevant skill- sets in relation to the demands of industry, and, indeed, to boost productivity. (Applause)

(HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, entered and took his seat.)

While we know that Jamaican industry lacks adequate investments, it is also a fact that its capacity to grow is materially affected by low levels of total factor productivity. In other words, Mr. Speaker, our labour force is not competitive enough to enable industry in Jamaica to thrive in a manner to be globally competitive.

To stem this negative tide, therefore, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security is moving assiduously to amend several labour laws, most notably among them, the Holidays with Pay Act, the Minimum Wage Act, the Foreign Nationals and Commonwealth Citizenship (Employment) Act, and the Labour Relations and Industrial Disputes Act.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, and in furtherance of the process of reform, the establishment of a Commission for Labour Market Reform is being proposed. This Labour Market Reform Commission, Mr. Speaker, will be tasked with conducting consultations with the relevant stakeholders relating to education and training, technology and innovation, labour policies and legislation, social protection, industrial relations and productivity. The major findings and recommendations from these consultations will be used for further legislative amendments and to generate policies and programmes to be implemented by the relevant ministries, departments and agencies.

Mr. Speaker, the actual composition and Terms of Reference of this Commission will be announced at a later date. At present, Mr. Speaker, we have done a considerable amount of work in-house in addressing the mis-match between training and employment. This process includes the revamping of the Electronic Labour Exchange (ELE) platform and the facility to match high-skilled and professional jobseekers with prospective employers *via* the Jamaica Employment Programme, which is designed to impact the level of unemployment among members of the professional class. What we have done in effect, Mr. Speaker, is to bring these labour market platforms to the level where their proper use by employers can boost considerably job creation in Jamaica on the road to the building of a better and more productive nation.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the section relating the Flexi-Work Arrangements. It has been some eighteen (18) years, Mr. Speaker that we as a nation have grappled with the issues surrounding the implementation of flexible work arrangements. From as far back as 1996, Labour Market Reform Committee chaired by Professor George Eaton had recommended the implementation of flexible work arrangements as one of the strategies for reform of Jamaica

Labour Market. It was recognized that flexibility in the labour market is crucial to the country's ability to compete and survive in the global economy. As was stated by the International Labour Organization:

> "In the global marketplace the driving force for industry is to stay competitive, this means searching for greater flexibility and lower labour cost".

(Applause)

A consultative approach has always been taken by the Government and in particular, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security in determining whether or not to implement flexible work and this goes across both governments.

In July 2000, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour and Social Security appointed a flexi-work committee comprised of representatives of the tri-partite, the Jamaican Employers' Federation, the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. This Committee was also comprised of representatives of the Jamaica Manufacturers Association, the Jamaica Council of Churches, the University and Allied Workers Union and Government Ministries. One of the main responsibilities of this Committee was to examine the impact that flexi-work would have on the religious worship.

In the year 2001, a Green Paper on flexible work arrangements was tabled in the House of Parliament and circulated throughout the island, Mr. Speaker, to facilitate discussion. The Green Paper identified what is meant by the term 'flexible work arrangements' the benefits and objections to implementation and the proposed policy to be adopted. And in an effort to ensure that all stakeholders were given the opportunity to be heard, further, the Parliament decided to refer the matter to a Joint Select Committee of Parliament which would invite further discussions from stakeholder groups and interested citizens on that Joint Select Committee, Mr. Speaker, the last one was chaired by the former Minister - the Member from North Central Clarendon.

The Committee grappled with a number of issues and keenly listened to and considered oral and written submissions from several interested parties. Submissions were made by the West Indian Union of Seven Day Adventist, the Concerned Church Leaders Group, the Jamaica Employers Federation, the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce and the Bureau of Women's Affairs. The Committee also reviewed the opinions of organization such as The Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions, the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica, the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, the Jamaica Manufacturers' Association, and the Jamaica Association of Women's Organizations. Having heard all the parties, the Joint Select Committee made several recommendations to Parliament in 2010, relating to the implementation of the flexible work arrangements. Both Houses of Parliament approved the recommendations of the JSC in the year 2010; these recommendations now represent the approved

policy as set out in Ministry Paper on flexi-work which was tabled in Parliament in September 2013.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is quite evident that the ability of Jamaica to compete effectively and successfully in the global economy must at all times be at the forefront of any consideration about the implementation of the Growth Agenda. But our success, at global competition will only materialize when we are able to improve our levels of productivity and employment in addition to being able to attract investments into the country.

We have therefore concluded, after long and arduous debates and consultations, that the implementation of Flexible Work Arrangements can assist the country greatly in meeting these objectives.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. KELLIER: Consequently, the Employment (Flexible Work Arrangements) (Miscellaneous) Provisions Bill was tabled by me in this Honourable House on March 25 of this year, and I am pleased to report that it will be debated in this Parliament by September 2014.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, as I have said elsewhere, the impending debate will take into consideration, *inter alia*, the fact that; There will be no set 8 or 10 hours work days, but instead the work day should be capped at a maximum of 12 hours, that the work week should consist of 40 hours, That all seven days of the week should be considered as possible normal working days, and that overtime should be earned after the worker has completed 40 hours.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the decision to introduce flexible work options as an element of nation-building is expected to vary the traditional Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 work pattern. They are designed, furthermore, to enhance the balance between work and other forms of activities beyond the workplace, giving employers more options to meet business and customer needs while providing employees with more time to meet personal or family needs, and/or to pursue other jobs.

Mr. Speaker, let me address the business community directly on this score by saying that the proposed changes to the new work arrangements does not, and I repeat, does not mean that employers will be obliged, or will be forced to implement such work arrangements. We are saying that the new piece of legislation will be so structured so as to give employers the option to examine their establishments, to determine whether flexible work arrangements will be beneficial to the organization. So, for our part, we are pressing ahead with this Bill which seeks to remove all legislative impediments to flexi-work because productivity is about prosperity.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear! Forward ever, backward never.

Mr. KELLIER: In all of this, Mr. Speaker, we have to connect the whole business of harmonious industrial relations and cooperation. The advent of industrial dis-harmony and strife is a direct threat to the

prospect of economic growth and prosperity anywhere in the world. In circumstances where capital and labour are unable to creatively co-exist in an atmosphere of mutual respect and shared vision and outlook, all prospects for new investments and their attendant benefits to the wider society and the economy are doomed to failure. However, despite the austere economic environment in which we are currently operating, Jamaica boasts a relatively stable and harmonious industrial relations climate on account of an extremely high level of cooperation and shared responsiveness to the challenges between the tri-partite social partners, that is the trade unions, management and the Government.

(Applause)

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity this afternoon on behalf of the Government and the entire management and staff of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to publicly thank the public sector workers of Jamaica for their magnificent sense of patriotism and for answering the call... (Applause) ...to exercise patience, restraint and good judgement at a time when the country had to settle down and navigate intelligently the most serious fiscal turbulence in the post independence period.

(Applause)

And, Mr. Speaker, in making this commendation I want to associate my colleague, the Minister Without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance for his tremendous work and dedication (Applause) to this process. Without their commitment, Mr. Speaker, of putting the principle of nation-building before personal interests, it is doubtful whether the country would have been able to mount a relatively successful economic recovery thus far.

This bodes well for the future, the Growth Agenda, and I invite the Members of this Honourable House to salute our cadre of management and workers who want to see Jamaica prosper - because productivity is about prosperity.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the 2013/2014 Annual Performance Review to which I referred earlier, of the Ministry, sets out in some detail on pages 38 to 46 the trends and highlights pertaining to this 48-year-old Overseas Employment Programme. It is well tabulated here, Mr. Speaker, so I will not go through it and save time for the House.

But just to say the projections for 2014/2015 are as follows, based on investigations and data that we have received at the Ministry as to what the labour market looks like in North America. We intend to place this year some 16,400 persons in employment overseas. (Applause) What that means this time around is that there will be an addition of some 3,300 new jobs, not the recurrent ones; 3,300 new registered additional jobs.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time be extended to allow him time to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question that the Member's time be extended sufficiently for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Minister Kellier.

(Applause)

Mr. KELLIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, under this projection, we also intend to forge new partnerships and strengthen existing ones with employers in the USA and Canada. Our liaison service, Mr. Speaker, the workers that are involved in that programme, need to be commended by this House because they do a tremendous job on behalf of the workers of this nation. (Applause) We intend to collect and compile data for persons placed through private employment agencies, locally and overseas, because as the House will know the Ministry of Labour and Social Security has responsibility for overseeing the private employment agency as well. We will be conducting pre-selection activities for the Canadian farm work programme, as well as the USA, and we intend to construct a gazebo as part of the physical infrastructural development of the Overseas Employment Centre at East Street. We want to make the place look more user-friendly and more attractive. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry continues to explore creative ways in which to enhance the growth and development of the programme in line with the ever changing demands of the labour market. The United States Farm Work and Hospitality Programme and the Canadian Farm and Factory Programme continue to receive serious attention by my Ministry in terms of exploration of further expansion of opportunities they continue to provide for Jamaican workers in search of employment overseas. The contribution of these programmes, Mr. Speaker, to job creation under the growth agenda is impatient of debate and we are committed to deepening our resolve in search of new employment opportunities to open new frontiers particularly in the Oil Sands region of Western Canada and the Pacific Rim states of the United States of America. Success in these endeavours will continue to redound to the benefit of Jamaica by way of further job creation, increased remittances into the local economy, the provision of own-account, small and medium scale entrepreneurial opportunities for thousands of Jamaicans here at home, as well as the overall development of communities and families all throughout the island.

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. Speaker, with this in mind, I now wish to announce to this Honourable House this afternoon that the Ministry will be undertaking a pre-selection exercise for both the Canadian and the U.S. Farm Work Programme over the three-week period from July 7 to 28 of this year. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Clap *nuh* man.

(Cross talk)

Mr. KELLIER: And, Mr. Speaker, for what I am about to say, I know that the sixty-two other Members of this House and those outside have a tremendous interest, so I want everybody to listen very carefully to everything that I am going to say.

(Cross talk)

In order to reduce cost and enhance greater efficiency, Mr. Speaker, this year's recruitment exercise will see us maintaining one pool of workers for both the United States and the Canadian programme. (Applause) We have to cut the cost and make it more efficient, more manageable and easier to track the persons that are within the programme.

(HON. COLIN ALFRED A FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

Additionally, the recruitment exercise this year will see accredited Local Government Councillors joining with Members of Parliament, trade unions and various civic groups in the distribution of application forms for the programmes.

Government MEMBER: *Tek* a sip, *tek* a sip.

Mr. KELLIER: Once again, Mr. Speaker, the allocation of forms specifically to Members of Parliament will be determined based on whether their respective constituencies are of urban or rural origin.

(Applause/Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, as a policy, Members of Parliament from rural constituencies can now expect to receive a greater number of application forms *vis-a-vis* their urban counterparts. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, I wish to state that I will be and the officers of the Ministry will be issuing the application forms to Members of Parliament of this Honourable House this afternoon for distribution to suitably qualified candidates in their respective constituencies with farming experience and/or training.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, my emphasis on candidates having farming experience and/or training is for a good reason. Experience have shown that candidates so qualified stand the greatest chance of convincing the U.S. and Canadian authorities that they are genuine *bona fide* toilers of the soil who are deserving of the opportunity to travel abroad to practice their craft.

In light of this Mr. Speaker, let me, therefore, reiterate that in completing the forms and returning them to their respective Members of Parliament prospective candidates must ensure - and listen to this carefully, we are making adjustments now over last year that:

- they are between the ages of 21-45. Last year it was 40. We're moving it up to 45 (Applause)

Give some real men a chance.

- they must have farming experience;
- possess a certified copy of their birth certificates

- they are literate
- are of good character and in good health
- possess a valid Jamaican passport or a CARICOM passport
- they are free of any criminal record
- have not been deported from any country
- have not been previously disqualified from any overseas employment programme due to medical or other reasons.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, all completed forms which must be submitted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security by the June 16, 2014 should be accompanied by a passport-sized photograph of the candidate and a character reference either from a former employer, a Justice of the Peace, or a security officer.

(Cross talk)

Finally, on this subject Mr. Speaker, let me state categorically that candidates who are successful in the interview will be fingerprinted and their prints sent to the Criminal Records Office to determine criminal antecedents. Those found to have criminal records will be rejected from the programme. For we want only the best of our citizens to be Jamaica's ambassadors overseas in enhancing Brand Jamaica as a tool for increasing our competitiveness in the global labour market chain, because productivity, Mr. Speaker, is all about prosperity. The Members of Parliament within the urban clutch will receive twenty forms while the rural will receive forty forms.

(Applause/Cross talk)

The Members of Parliament in the rural areas will receive forty forms and the Members of Parliament in the urban areas will receive twenty forms....

(Cross talk/The Speaker gavels)

Mr. Speaker, as I said -

(Cross talk)

Yes, yes.

(The Speaker gavels)

I know there is a lot of excitement generated on this subject Mr. Speaker, but as I said earlier, the Councillors who are also elected representatives are being brought into the action as well. (Applause) Last year, we started the programme on a trial basis. We made sure to give every Councillor every single one had access to two forms and the mayors three. This year we are moving it up. Every Councillor will receive four forms and the Mayors will receive five. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, as I said from the outset, my primary focus in this presentation this afternoon is to reinforce the commitment of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to the Government's medium-term growth and restructuring agenda. And turning to the National Insurance Fund, therefore, which currently contributes some 4 per cent of GDP with a current value of some $67.5 Billion as at March 2014, I wish to advise this Honourable House that there is now built into the core value of the Fund a strong component which is dedicated to job creation, increasing export and promoting the practice of import substitution. And if you looked at pages 62 to 65 in the Report that I spoke of earlier, you

will see the details. The refurbishing work on the Braco Hotel, for example, when completed in the third quarter of 2014/2015, will put an additional 300 Jamaicans back to work on a full-time basis and a sustainable one (Applause) when the hotel re-opens.

The NIF, going forward, Mr. Speaker, will also continue to partner with other dynamic agencies, such as the Development Bank of Jamaica and JAMPRO, to develop job creating projects. For example, the Fund is a member of the investor panel, which has been created by the DBJ, to evaluate and invest in businesses which make proposals for venture capital funding. (Applause) And currently, the Fund is lending money to the DBJ for on-lending to the SME sector funder a $1.5 Billion SME loan programme and is in discussion with JAMPRO about developing space for the outsourcing ICT sector, either on lands already owned by the NIF or other Greenfield investments. (Applause)

With an eye, Mr. Speaker, on the $1.5 Billion SME loan programme, the Fund will go further in the 2014/2015 financial year and target three entities and groups where the need for financing remains largely underserved, namely, the creative industries, persons with disabilities, and the youth. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Very good.

Mr. KELLIER: Loans are currently being structured for persons in these groups, which are affordable and designed to encourage entrepreneurship. (Applause) Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the management of the National Insurance Fund is aligned with meeting the objectives of the Government's Growth Agenda because productivity is about prosperity.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Applause)

Mr. KELLIER: In light of all of this, Mr. Speaker, nonetheless, there is need for the reforming of the National Insurance Scheme. The National Insurance Scheme celebrates 48 years of operation this year. As you know, it is a compulsory contributory scheme that provides financial protection to its contributors and their families, against loss of income arising from injury on the job, incapacity, retirement and/or death. Again, if you look at page 66 to 71 of the Annual Performance Report, the information is embedded there, and I won't border on your patience, Mr. Speaker, with the time.

Up to the end of March 2014, benefits were being paid to over 107,000, over 7,000 persons - pensioners were overseas and 100,000 here in Jamaica. The benefits provided under the scheme amounted to approximately $14.7 Billion for the period April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014. But, for that same period, the contributions to the Scheme totalled approximately $12 Billion. That means, you are short approximately 2.7 - roughly $3 Billion to balance the issues there.

In light of that, Mr. Speaker, you have to understand that if the National Insurance Fund is to remain viable, this untenable situation where benefits continue to outweigh contributions must be curtailed. As I have already established, the NIF is an important element of the Growth Agenda, providing as it does, social protection for its contributors and their dependencies. The gap of approximately

$3 Billion that currently obtains, of the NIS contributions to service its contributors, is made up from the proceeds from the National Insurance Fund. In the last end, it was about $3 Billion of its earnings that the Fund had to pass on to pay - to ensure that all pensioners receive their pension.

But despite this challenge, Mr. Speaker, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Through the assistance of the Inter-American Development Bank, the IDB, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security has received an Actuarial Evaluation Report and a road map for the reform of the scheme. The Report, Mr. Speaker, will shortly be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration with a view to the implementation of the measures to increase the efficiency of the administration of the Scheme and the continued growth and long-term sustainability of the National Insurance Fund.

I turn now, Mr. Speaker, to the very important subject of bringing persons with disabilities into the spotlight. Mr. Speaker, a great deal of the thrust by the Government to implement the Growth Agenda, aimed at debt reduction, job creation, structural and legislative reform, and social stability, rest on respecting everyone's right, and the recognition that every Jamaican has a responsibility to play their part in the process of nation-building.

Nowhere could this nation be more tested than in the way that we as a nation treat persons with disabilities, whether at work, at home, in the community, and in our democracy at large.

Despite our ratification of the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007, hundreds of persons with disabilities report continuing discrimination in their daily lives in Jamaica. They experience unacceptable levels of disadvantage, exclusion, stigma, abuse, violence, and regrettably, hate crimes.

Given this, Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased that the landmark National Disabilities Bill, 2014, was tabled in this Honourable House on May 7, and will be debated early in this legislative year. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I want the nation to know that this Parliament will be setting the example and leading the way to comply with the Bill, as they are currently seeking quotations for the retrofitting of Gordon House to enable access by persons with disabilities to this facility. (Applause)

The Bill will seek to promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal employment of persons with disabilities, of privileges, interests, benefits, and treatment on an equal basis with other persons in the community. Its enactment will also pave the way for enhanced contribution by persons with disabilities to the society and economy of Jamaica, by removing impediments to their full participation as citizens within the labour market. (Applause)

I invite the entire nation to join us in the pursuit of this effort because our failure hitherto, to build an economy and transform our labour market in which persons with disabilities can play their full part, has left us poorer as a result.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. KELLIER: For this reason, priority was placed in this year's Budget, on programmes that will empower persons with disabilities and ensure their preparation and participation in the labour market. Again, Mr. Speaker, we consult pages 88 to 97 of the Annual Performance Review Report; the information is there.

Some $67 Million in grant funding has been earmarked for this purpose from the World Bank, the Japanese Development Fund, that will support social, economic, and labour market inclusion of persons with disabilities in Jamaica, in full alignment with the Government's strategy to reduce poverty by investing in human capital development of our vulnerable groups. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in the restructuring of the economy, we cannot afford to leave any group with the potential to be productive behind...

A MEMBER: Hear, Hear!

Mr. KELLIER: ...because productivity is about prosperity.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Absolutely!

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, under the project in question, approximately 300 persons with disabilities between the ages of 18 to 36 years of age are set to benefit from skills development training, and placed in jobs suitable to their qualifications, because productivity is about prosperity. (Applause)

In addition, the initiative to provide the disabled community, those from poor socio-economic background with access to skills training and employment opportunities will further serve to reduce poverty and inequality in Jamaica, because productivity is about prosperity.

(Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, our commitment to persons with disabilities does not stop there. We propose, within this financial year, to expend a further $15 Million in grant funding through the IDB to strengthen the capacity of the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities in its effort to identify and target persons with disabilities for social benefits and labour market opportunities on a continuous basis. This is being done through an ongoing island wide registration exercise of persons with disabilities, and the creation of a Management Information System that can provide critical socio and economic information on persons with disabilities.

And here I wish to pause, Mr. Speaker, to use this opportunity to encourage persons with disabilities in Jamaica to get registered. I am appealing also to everyone who knows of such persons in their communities to please ensure that they are accounted for through this ongoing registration process. We do not intend to leave any one behind.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Not even Desmond.

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, every parish office of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security has a registration centre, and it is easily accessible, so we encourage all persons to go there.

Mr. DALLEY: Desmond, you register already?

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, we cannot understate the importance of the partnership that my Ministry has formed with our Development Partners: the private sector, NGOs and other countries, in delivering these initiatives to our citizens with disabilities, and we wish to thank them.

And so, on behalf of the entire staff of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, I wish to place on record the gratitude and thanks of the Government to our partners who have been providing financial and/or technical support, to assist in designing and delivering services to our citizens with disabilities. Thanks, therefore, to the Government of Japan, the Spanish/Jamaica Foundation...

Mr. DALLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. KELLIER: ...the World Bank, the IDB and Digicel Foundation.

(Applause)

We welcome on board other like-minded organizations to work with us to empower persons with disabilities in Jamaica/to attaining economic independence, becoming more productive members of the society, and to making their individual and collective contribution to the Growth Agenda, because productivity is about prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to enjoin all the Members of this Honourable House who go around campaigning in all the hills and valleys, and in nooks and crannies of Jamaica, to all those persons who they have passed on the house-to-house campaigns, that are disabled to ensure that all those persons are registered and accounted for... (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. KELLIER: ...because we can only plan for them when we know where they are, what state they are in, and what their needs are. So, I am appealing to all of us to take the lead in that regard, in this Honourable House.

To the churches, their membership that they have all over the island, Mr. Speaker... the church has the largest congregation and are in touch with almost every single soul in this country, to help us in this mission to ensure that the disabled persons in the community can take their rightful place amongst all of us. It is something that we have committed ourselves to when we signed the Charter in 2007, and we must continue to uphold it. (Applause)

When the Debate is to take place later on this year, Mr. Speaker, having laid the Bill, we expect to get the contributions from all the Members because this Bill is going to affect every single one of us. So, I am just saying to the Members from now, prepare, for we are not going to be debating it for the whole year, but we want everyone to prepare so we can make our precise input into that Bill, and to show the unity that is within the Parliament when it comes to issues relating to persons with disabilities.

We had promised the nation that we would deliver to them before Independence this year, the Bill, signed, sealed, and approved; and we intend to do so with the support of both sides of this Honourable House.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, in order to ensure social stability and cohesion during this period of economic and social transformation efforts are made to protect the well being of the most vulnerable among us by the provision of assistance in the form of grants to those who are unable to access loans from reputable financial institutions.

In the 2013/14 Budget, 7,629 families were assisted with over $127 Million in grants to carry out repairs to dwellings and see to the burials of their loved ones, Desmond, access medical care and to be engaged in entrepreneurial activities.

On the issue of burials, Mr. Speaker, we in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security have noticed over time an emerging phenomenon where economically challenged families are finding it extremely difficult to bury their dead. Because of the increase in costs of providing the deceased with a good send off the burden of burying the dead has shifted now to the State and the first call when people die now is to the door of the Member of Parliament.

In the case of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, we are usually asked to step in and either provide partial financial support to bereaved families, or in some instances, to assume full responsibility for their entire funeral expenses.

Mr. Speaker, we appreciate that for most families our contribution is minimal and inadequate. In view of this, I wish to advise that in going forward we will have to make the appropriate representation for special budgetary provisions to tackle this problem, especially in light of the phenomenon of the aggravated high incidents of violent and vicious killings and other traumatic deaths in the country.

Over and against this, however, the Ministry has budgeted some $139 Million in this financial year's budget to assist some 7000 families to improving their living conditions.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of the inability of Members of Parliament to inadequately respond to the material needs of needy persons within their constituencies due to severe fiscal constraints, some $75 Million in the Ministry's Budget for 2013/14 financial year was made to assist needy persons, persons recommended by their parliamentary representatives needing to improve their nutritional status, housing conditions, and indeed to start small income generating businesses.

A total of 6,000 persons were assisted with grants under this initiative. The evaluation carried out by our social workers on the majority of these projects determined that these were well-designed, effectively implemented and satisfactorily assisted the beneficiaries to improve their lives.

Based on the positive effects of this that these grants had on the intended beneficiaries, and the appreciative response of the Members of Parliament, the Government of Jamaica and the Most Honourable Prime Minister has insisted that another $75 Million be made available in this year's Budget to assist an additional 6,000 persons, and you can look

forward later on in this year to receive such support.

(Applause)

I appeal to Members of this Honourable House, in ensuring the success of the next phase of this project to increase their monitoring functions of the use of these grants to empower the most vulnerable in an effort to decrease their vulnerability and thereby contribute to the growth and stability of their families, communities and the nation as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak very quickly about the social graduation issues relative to the PATH programme.

The Government, in its drive to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the productive workforce, will be making provisions for the participation of working-aged adults in the labour market that are from poor families that are in receipt of welfare assistance.

The Cabinet recently approved the phased implementation of a graduation strategy which will see some 1,000 welfare families which should amount to some 2,000 individuals participating in the phased implementation of a welfare-to-work programme which is expected to cost some $600 Million over the next two years. (Applause)

Three main outcomes are anticipated from the implementation of the strategy:

- The reduction in the number of beneficiaries who receive welfare support;
- Increased human capital accumulation among welfare families enabling them to seek and retain employment and economic opportunities;
- Increased ability of the welfare families to respond to and recover from shocks.

Mr. Speaker, two main intervention modalities will be used in this exercise: Welfare-To-Work Intervention through the Steps-To-Work Programme, where working-aged members of poor families in receipt of welfare assistance will be enabled to seek and retain employment and economic opportunities through skills-training, job readiness preparation and access to employment and or entrepreneurial opportunities.

Case management.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security has developed what we call resilience standard indicators to assist families recover from shock. These indicators assist families to develop the capacity to deal with myriad challenges on a daily basis, and in pursuit of this objective, our social workers will be engaged to provide the necessary intervention to affect stability and prevent the drift of vulnerable members of the society into deviant social behaviour.

In all of this, Mr. Speaker, our aim is to empower our most vulnerable families to successfully transit from a state of dependency to a state of socio-economic independence.

(Applause)

We want them to rely less on the benefits of welfare programmes by transitioning to be able to provide for themselves through the participation in the labour market and contributing in the process to national development under the Growth Agenda, because, Mr. Speaker, productivity is about prosperity.

In concluding, Mr. Speaker, I have been deliberately judicious in my presentation this afternoon, because I do not believe that it is essential for me to spend an inordinately long time at the wicket to get the point across. (Applause)

That our survival as a nation during these challenging economic times depends on each and every one of us taking responsibility for the ownership of the future. The Government of which I am a part is engaged in doing this and we seek greater levels of partnership to succeed in meeting the urgent material needs of our people.

At the Ministry of Labour and Social Security we are acting as a team with a eminently sensible view that the prevailing Growth Agenda stands the greatest prospect for success with the creative redirection of resources towards enhancing human capital inclusive of vulnerable individuals within the society, to effectively participate in the labour market so as to advance the national productivity process of Project Jamaica.

No longer, therefore, Mr. Speaker, are we prepared from a policy point of view to pursue a purely compensatory path in dealing with our human resources. The strategy going forward will be developmental in nature in all that we do. For unless this is done, all we will be doing is perpetuating the debilitating cycle of poverty and dependency.

This malady is unacceptable, if we are to grow our way out of indebtedness, unemployment and productivity stagnation. Indeed, the time has come for us as a nation to begin to seriously think boldly about the future, that is how to shape and own it.

I dare say, Mr. Speaker that we have no choice in this matter, for if we do not seek to own the future, we will not control our destiny.

Our destiny now as a nation, without any equivocation, is to continue to grow the economy, create as best we can decent jobs for our people, gradually restructure the labour market, improve considerably our social relations and involve the mass of the population in a productivity revolution never before undertaken in this country. (Applause)

We in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and our social partners stand ready to play our part in this change process, because we know, and the facts confirm, that ultimately productivity is about prosperity.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

(Heckling)

Mr. CHUCK: Derrick, where the farm work gone?

(Heckling by Opposition Members)

(Gavels)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that we recommit item, Notices of Motions Given Orally.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal of item, Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY (Recommitted)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

Whereas by virtue of subsection (1) of Section 3 of the Provisional Collection of Tax Act, hereinafter referred to as the Act, the Minister may make an order providing for the variation of any tax for the time being enforced or for the renewal for a further period of any tax enforced during the previous financial year or which was imposed for any limited period;

And Whereas under the above provision the Minister made the Provisional Collection of Tax (Betting, Gaming and Lotteries) (Bookmakers' Levy Scheme) (Overseas Horse-Races and Races of any approved species of animal) Order, 2014, which was published on March 31st, 2014, in the Jamaica Gazette Supplement Proclamation Rules and Regulations;

And Whereas subsection (4) of Section 3 of the Act provides that every Order made under subsection (1) of that section shall cease to have effect unless it is confirmed with or without modification by resolution of the House of Representatives within the next 30 days on which the House sits, after the date of publication by Order in the gazette;

And Whereas it is desirable that the Provisional Collection of Tax (Betting, Gaming and Lotteries) (Bookmakers' Levy Scheme) (Overseas Horse-Races and Races of any approved species of animal) Order, 2014, be affirmed;

Now Therefore Be it Resolved by this Honourable House of Representatives as follows:

1) The Resolution may be cited as the Provisional Collection of Tax (Betting Gaming and Lotteries) (Bookmakers' Levy Schemes) (Overseas Horse Races and Races of any approved species of animal confirmation) Order, 2014 Resolution.
2) The Provisional Collection of Tax (Betting Gaming and Lotteries) (Bookmakers' Levy Scheme) (Overseas Horse Races and Races of any approved species of animal) Order, 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 24th day May, 2014, is hereby confirmed.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I will move:

"Whereas by virtue of subsection (i) of Section (3) of the *Provisional Collection of Tax Act*, hereinafter referred to as the Act, the Minister may make an Order providing for the variation of any tax for the time being enforced for the renewal of a further

period of any tax enforced during the previous financial year, or which was imposed for any limited period;

And Whereas under the above Provision the Minister made the Provisional Collection of Tax (Betting, Gaming and Lotteries) (Bookmakers' Levy Scheme) Order, 2014, which was published on March 31st, 2014, in the Jamaica Gazette Supplement Proclamation, Rules and Regulations;

And Whereas subsection (4) of Section (3) of the Act provides that every Order made under subsection (i) of that Act shall cease to have effect unless it is confirmed with or without modification by resolution of the House of Representatives within the next thirty days on which the House sits after the date of publication of the Order in the Gazette;

And Whereas it is desirable that the Provisional Collection of Tax (Betting, Gaming and Lotteries) (Bookmakers' Levy Scheme) Order, 2014, be affirmed;

Now Therefore, Be it Resolved by this Honourable House of Representatives as follows:

i) The Resolution may be cited as the Provisional Collection of Tax (Betting, Gaming and Lotteries) (Bookmakers' Levy Scheme) (Confirmation) Order, 2014 Resolution;

ii) The Provisional Collection of Tax (Betting, Gaming and Lotteries) (Bookmakers' Levy Scheme) Order, 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 28th day of May, 2014, is hereby confirmed."

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we now revert to Public Business, and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works will now make his contribution.

SECTORAL DEBATE

The SPEAKER: Minister Azan.

(Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: All right. Ready, set, go!

Mr. AZAN:

"Oh, Lord, Oh, Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth You have set Your glory above the Heavens."

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. McKENZIE: You want some Cream soda and two white candles.

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. AZAN: Mr. Speaker, Members of this Honourable House, a good day to you all. I thank the Almighty for His saving grace and for His blessing, my health and my strength. It was Mother Teresa, who I quote, Mr. Speaker:

"People are often unreasonable and self-centered; forgive them anyway. If you are kind people may accuse you of ulterior motives; be kind anyway.

If you are honest people may accuse you otherwise; but be honest anyway. "

(Applause)

"If you find happiness people may be jealous; but be happy anyway."

(Applause)

"The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow; do good anyway, Desmond." (Applause)

"Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough; give the best anyway." (Applause)

For you see, in the end it is between you and God; it was never between you and them anyway." (Applause)

How profound a statement, Mr. Speaker. Many of us have a hard time being truthful to ourselves, allowing others to define who we are. We lose our ability to discover and grow inwardly, no longer are we able to see the truth from lie. For many of us we have accepted lies for too long, that finding out what is truth takes quite a bit of time. This journey, if discovered, can be difficult but never be impossible.

Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to rise to make my contribution to the Sectoral Debate.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. AZAN: In this regard I would like to thank the Most Honourable Prime Minister... (Applause) ...for affording me this opportunity to continue to serve in this capacity as Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works.

(Applause)

And, Mr. Speaker, publicly, I want to say to the Most Honourable Prime Minister, I will not fail you. (Applause) I will not fail the people of Jamaica. (Applause) And most of all, Mr. Speaker, I will not fail my Almighty God.

(Applause)

I also acknowledge you, Mr. Speaker, the Clerk and her staff, for the tremendous work they are doing.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. AZAN: I want to congratulate my Minister of Transport and Works - and I want to wish him happy birthday, today - (Applause) ...for his continued support, the steady leadership of the Ministry of which I am the Minister of State, and for allowing me the latitude in this capacity to discharge my function assigned to me, with confidence. (Applause)

To my assistant, executive assistant, my driver - and Mr. Speaker, I want to add the office attendants...

Mr. ROBINSON: Hear! Hear!

Mr. AZAN: ...who, without them sometimes the office couldn't run. (Applause) I want to thank them also.

(Inaudible comment from Mr. McKenzie)

(Laughter)

Mr. AZAN: To the Minister Without Portfolio in the Ministry, the Honourable Dr. Morais Guy, to the hardworking Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Audrey Sewell... (Applause) ...and to the members of staff at the Ministry, who provide support and guidance, I also want to give my heartfelt thanks to them all.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear! Hear!

Mr. AZAN: I also wish to commend the work of the Advisory Board of the National Works Agency, all the Board and staff members of the Road Maintenance Fund. In particular, Mr. Speaker, I want to pay special tribute to the hard-working Director of the

Road Maintenance Fund, Mr. Clement Watson. (Applause)

Thanks to the CEO of the National Works Agency, the Directors, Regional Managers, Parish Managers and staff of the National Works Agency, for their support. To the many agencies which fall under the Ministry, which I am a part, and I interact from time to time, I say a big thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I wish also to thank Mrs. Lucille Brodber, the Coordinator of JEEP Secretariat... (Applause) ...and members of the Secretariat for the tremendous work that they have been doing.

Mr. Speaker, there are also a number of persons who are present here today in the House, to whom I am grateful, and I extend cordial welcome and thanks for their continued support.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank my daughter, Shana-Kay... (Applause) ...and most of all, Mr. Speaker, my grandson, Abe. (Applause) He is here.

Mr. CHUCK: He is downstairs.

Mr. AZAN: To my sister, Sonia, my niece, Marion, and to my extended family, the people of North Western Clarendon. (Applause) And, Mr. Speaker, to my extended family across the length and breadth of Jamaica, I want to say thanks to them, also. (Applause)

Sincere thanks to the Councillors and to the Management Team of North Western Clarendon; Councillor Marshall, Councillor Gordon, Councillor Shirley and Councillor Hackett.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. AZAN: To the Constituency office staff, Mrs. Dixon and Miss Frazer; to the CDF officers, Mrs. Walker-Rose and Mr. Roy Hanson. They have given me a wonderful opportunity and the honour to represent their interest and I pledge to continue to do so with dedication and the level of determination that they have come to expect of me.

Mr. D. SMITH: You forget to thank Mr. Brooks.

Mr. AZAN: Mr. who?

Mr. Speaker, I declare that I stand here today because of the desire to contribute to the building of a better Jamaica for all Jamaicans who deserve to contribute to a more equal society, a desire to make a contribution to the welfare of all Jamaicans. It is based on these desires, Mr. Speaker, that I am honoured to once again stand here today in this Honourable House to report on the performance during the last fiscal year and outline plan for the new financial year.

Mr. Speaker, the road that I have travelled have been tough, a challenging one indeed when you participate in this process with your objective to gain the people's support to serve the people, you will face many challenges and at the end endless sacrifice. Despite these challenges and sacrifice, however, I give daily praises to the Almighty who have blessed me in so many ways. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, despite the attempt of critics and naysayers to derail the work that we have been doing, the sense of nationalism continues to spur. We will, through this Ministry, keep our promise and accomplish our mission for the betterment of the people of this land that

we love. The path that I have chosen is not an easy one but had been fulfilling.

Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I will share some of the achievements of the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing. This responsibility is a great one and would not be possible without the people of North Western Clarendon. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear! Good people *dem.*

Mr. AZAN: I must therefore speak on some of the matters related to my constituency. I made some commitments to my constituency for the past year and I will be held accountable for these commitments. I declare with confidence that over the last 12 months with the support of the councillors and leadership of North Western Clarendon, we have worked tirelessly and have accomplished many good things. The reason I can say this is that our achievements are evident.

Mr. Speaker, we had focussed our effort on education, farming, welfare, training, and have made many strides in the following areas: road repairs, housing, agriculture, building, education, training, sports, water supply and community beautification. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to congratulate the Edwin Allen High School and Spalding High School for their achievement in the ISSA Boys' and Girls' Championship. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, Edwin Allen had won 1st place in the Girls' Championship while Spalding held 15th place in the Boys' Championship.

Mr. Speaker, despite the notable achievements made, there are challenges that the constituency face. It is my intention during this financial year I will focus on the completion of the following: Mr. Speaker, I have assisted a number of persons with tertiary education, back-to-school assistance, housing as we promised for Edwin Allen High School, assisting the indigent, upgrading our basic schools and, Mr. Speaker, we have completed three additional basic schools last financial year.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we have completed the Thompson Town Post Office and it is in full use today. (Applause) Last year we promised that we will continue removing pit latrines from our schools. We were able to complete two last year: Victoria Primary and Kilsyth Primary School. Mr. Speaker, last year I said we would double the number of persons provided with assistance -with back-to-school assistance. We have achieved that, Mr. Speaker. (Applause) Book grants by 25%, we promised to strengthen infant education and upgraded as well as build additional infant schools. We also promised to continue the programme of replacing pit latrines with water closets.

Well, Mr. Speaker, today I am happy to declare that these commitments which we have made towards the development of education in North Western Clarendon have been honoured, and we continue to focus on the nurturing and preparation of our human resources in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, the CDF is small but it is plenty. It is the way how you spend it. And last year we spent $8 Million in tertiary and back-to-school assistance. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, we have a state-of-the-art infant school at Ritchies today. The Minister of Education was there just last month to open that basic school. We have upgraded the Silent Hill Basic School, upgraded the Coffee Piece Basic School. And, Mr. Speaker, when I said that the CDF is small but it is big - we were able last year from the CDF Fund to remove the Tweedside Primary School. (Applause)

And, Mr. Speaker, I can say that promise made, promise kept.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Working, working, working!

Mr. AZAN: Mr. Speaker, I also promised that addition effort would be placed on skills training. I declared last year that anyone in North West Clarendon, regardless of the age or political orientation, if he or she so desires will be able to acquire a skill in order that they can pursue a decent livelihood and economic opportunities. (Applause)

I can report to this Honourable House that there are renewed efforts for training of young people across North Western Clarendon. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Good MP.

Mr. AZAN: Mr. Speaker, with the assistance of "BARS TO GO" we trained over 500 young people in mixology, bartending, cashiering, waiter, *et cetera*. (Applause)

The Sugar Transformation Unit is helping us also. There is also a major improvement in vocational training in five institutions in North Western Clarendon. Mr. Speaker, as a result of the downturn of the world's economy, it has impacted on the job market in Jamaica and in the constituency of North Western Clarendon. I have undertaken a project geared at improving the vocational areas in five schools in the constituency. And, Mr. Speaker, last year I announced that I will give $500,000 to five schools in North Western Clarendon to improve on the practical area, the $500,000 was delivered to Spalding High, Edwin Allen High, Thompson Town High, Alston High and C Palmer Project Hope Institution. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the $500,000 was to help to improve the practical area because at the end, it was our plan that each child who leaving high school would get a certificate from HEART. I want to also say, Mr. Speaker, that this year I intend to continue that project to improve the practical areas in our high schools and we will continue with $500,000 for Spalding High, Edwin Allen High, Thompson Town High, Alston High and Claude McKay High.

Mr. Speaker, last year I also took the decision - that I remember quite clearly when I used to go to primary school - there was a time that you spend in school garden and I decided that school garden must return to the primary school. (Applause) Each school received a grant to start a school garden. Today, we can say in North West Clarendon, every school has a school garden in North West Clarendon. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Warmington, you too bad mind, *'low di* man.

Mr. AZAN: We also, Mr. Speaker, set up a greenhouse at Knox College, and today I can advise this Honourable House that the greenhouse at Knox is working, they have provided...

(Cross talk) (The Speaker gavels)

Mr. AZAN: I won't spoil it like what you did yesterday. But the greenhouse, Mr. Speaker, is doing well that they are producing for their school canteen. And also my last visit there, Mr. Speaker, is that they are looking on the open market to sell some of their products. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Excellent project.

Mr. AZAN: Mr. Speaker, I have intention to continue having our regular meeting with our principals, our teachers and the PTAs. Meetings have been held with the primary and infant schools.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yes.

Mr. AZAN: And, Mr. Speaker, I must tell you that one of the greatest joys I have is to visit the basic schools and the primary schools, because at that time, Mr. Speaker, you can see exactly the working condition of the teachers and also to see what is happening to the children.

Mr. Speaker, we promised to assist the indigent and the shelterless. We said we would empower the dispossessed and provide shelter for those without shelter. I can therefore report to this Honourable House that the Housing Project that I seek to give housing support to, Mr. Speaker, it is working. And I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, that some of us inside here have good friends and good friends make contribution to *k* housing project. And some of the good friends are in the Gallery and I want to publicly say thanks to them for helping us. (Applause)

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. AZAN: Mr. Speaker, I said last year, Mr. Speaker - and I want the Member from West Kingston to hear this one...

A MEMBER: Desmond, wake up.

Mr. AZAN: ...many of us served for many years, a lot of sacrifice to our family to serve the people of Jamaica; after we leave no one remember us.

A MEMBER: True.

Mr. AZAN: Mr. Speaker, I said last year Mr. PT McLeod served for thirty-odd years in the Clarendon Parish Council and many children don't know who he was. I have taken a decision that we need to put in a transport centre at Frankfield. And it is a commitment that I made that at the end of it, it must be named in honour of PT McLeod. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear! Goh deh Azan! Goh deh!

Mr. AZAN: I am pleased...

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. AZAN: ...I'm pleased to announce that we've gotten a lease from the Railway Corporation, through the Clarendon Parish Council, to put in a transport centre at Frankfield. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Very good! Very good! Very good! Very good! If you do it the right and proper way you wouldn't have a problem.

Mr. AZAN: Mr. Speaker, the success of these that I mentioned above, we have, I must say, Mr. Speaker, a very good Parish Manager

from the SDC. And we have had a number of community meetings to deal with things that we need to do in our community.

Mr. Speaker, one of the places that I looked on and we're working on right now, is at the Peckham Community Centre, we want to develop it into a mini stadium. And I must say that work start and work will continue in this financial year.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended to allow him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is the Member's time be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Five hours, five hours.

Mr. AZAN: Mr. Speaker, let me thank you and the Members.

Mr. Speaker, it is my intention now to focus on the National Works Agency, JEEP and the Road Maintenance Fund.

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. AZAN: Regarding the National Works Agency, for which I have direct responsibility, the focus will be on four goals: Improving the road network...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yes!

Mr. AZAN: ...safety on our roadways...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yes!

Mr. AZAN: ...reducing travel time and vehicle operating cost; additional capacity to reduced congestion, Mr. Speaker.

The successful achievement of the four goals that they contribute - of their contribution to fulfillment of our mission of economic independence are based on us vitally improving the level of productivity. What this means for growth and development of our productive forces especially in sustaining development of our country.

Despite the challenges, we continue to perform very well, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. AZAN: This is due largely to the commitment of our stakeholders and the outstanding team that I have the pleasure of leading. These individuals have been an integral part of the process of leading a sector that is so important - that is so important to all Jamaicans.

Mr. Speaker, 2013/2014 was extremely a productive year for the National Works Agency. (Applause) Our focus and priority remain the safety of our customers and the reliability of the Jamaican main road. Accordingly, we continue to place great emphasis on the public safety to provide a safe road environment for all our road users.

Mr. Speaker, with this regard to road safety, approximately $80 Million was spent during the last financial year on improving pedestrian safety along the Norman Manley Boulevard in Westmoreland and around Papine.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Talk bout Westmoreland, yes.

Mr. AZAN: Critical breakaways, Mr. Speaker, along Oberlin and Mooreland Hill in West Rural St. Andrew were addressed at a cost of $57.3 Million.

(Cross talks)

Mr. AZAN: Road signage was improved through the assistance of the Inter-American Development Bank, Tourism Enhancement Fund, TPDCo and, Mr. Speaker, approximately 1,000 new signs were installed.

Micro-surfacing - approximately 49,280 meter square of critical micro-surfacing works at a cost of $32 million were undertaken to improve road safety along sections of Mount Rosser main road in St. Catherine... (Applause) ...Braco in Trelawny, White River near Dunn's River in St. Ann.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Work should've been done.

Mr. AZAN: And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Braco Hill...

(Cross talks)

Mr. AZAN: ...Mr. Speaker, those who travel to Mandeville...

(Cross talks)

Mr. AZAN: Mr. Speaker, those of us who travel to Mandeville...

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. AZAN: ...those of us who travel to Mandeville will see exactly what happened in Mandeville town centre, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. PRYCE: Hear! Hear!

Mr. AZAN: Mr. Speaker, last year I announced that we will be doing some upgrading work on the Emergency Attention System in the Bog Walk Gorge in St. Catherine... (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Mr. AZAN: Presently, a live feeding from the System has been made accessible to the JDF, Office of Disaster Preparedness and the Police Computer Centre, Mr. Speaker. We expect to make feed accessible to the Water Resources Authority during this financial year 2014/2015, pending completion of the underground ducts and fibre optic cable installation works along Hope Road. These works are included in the recent tendering Package 'A' Duct Tail Works, which will be extended to our Fibre Optic Cable Plant to Papine.

Mr. Speaker, flood control is critical to the safety and reliability of network. Over $100 Million was spent on critical flood mitigation efforts, including drain and gully cleaning islandwide.

Work on the CDB funded Tropical Storm Nicole, Sandy Gully Drainage Network and the Rehabilitation Project is completed at a cost of $2 Billion.

(Applause)

- May Pen Cemetery
- Grants Pen Gully
- Sandy Gully
- Barnes Gully

A MEMBER: Where is that? Where is that?

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. AZAN: Completed.

Mr. DALLEY: Completed, him not getting nothing more?

Mr. AZAN: And, Mr. Speaker, some Members dispute it all the time when the Honourable Minister has said it.

Mr. ROBINSON: A true yuh nuh Delroy, yuh get the most infrastructure.

Mr. AZAN: River training and sea defence works remain the linchpin of sustaining improvement of our road network.

(Cross talks)

Mr. AZAN: During the year, some $220 Million was spent on river training and sea defence works:

- Dry River in St. Andrew;
- Rio Cobre;
- Roselle in St. Thomas;
- Castleton and Annotto Bay in St. Mary;
- Orange Bay and Blueberry Hill in Portland;
- Black River;
- Troy and
- Ironshore in St. James

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Clap man, clap.

Mr. AZAN: Mr. Speaker, some people said nothing is going on, we're working and working and working. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

(Cross talks)

Mr. AZAN: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report on particular level, the role of the National Works Agency in the overall execution to date of the pioneering JEEP. Members of this Honourable House know that JEEP is the first and foremost of a workforce intervention programme aimed specifically at the 10% of the population who are currently unemployed or underemployed, and whose access to providing social safety net intervention.

In light of this, the Ministry and the NWA is targeting participants from the unemployed to the underemployed vulnerable groups.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Mr. AZAN: These groups - these persons were placed in different projects relating to areas for a total period of six months.

The long-term objective is that the participants within the programme, based on performance in critical area will be employed one day.

JEEP and JDIP, in October 2013, we satisfactorily completed JDIP, including JEEP Phases 1 and 2. At the end of March 2014, the value of measurement works performed was US$368.2 Million. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. AZAN: A total of 366 sub-projects have been reported as being substantially completed, with minor works outstanding on three sub-projects.

(Cross talks)

Of this total, 320 sub-projects have been inspected and Taking-Over Certificates issued. In addition, 180 Defects Liability Certificates have been issued to the Contractor, relieving him of any further responsibility for these projects. The performance certificates were issued to the contractors CHEC by the National Works Agency at the end of October 2013, thus closing the JDIP.

Major Road Projects completed during the fiscal year 2013/2014 include: the Fern Gully in St. Ann, John's Hall in St. James under

JEEP, the Ferris Cross to Belmont Road Project in Westmoreland, Mr. Speaker, J$423M was spent to complete approximately 230,000m^2 of road patching across Jamaica. (Applause) And Mr. Speaker, with the instruction of the Minister, no constituency should get priority over another one despite the colour. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, several bridges were completed: Craigmill Bridge in Portland at a cost of JS26.6M; Halls Green Pedestrian Bridge, $2.2M; John's Hall Bridge, J$545 Million; Kintyre Bridge, J$100M , Robin's Bay in St. Mary, J$33.98M (Applause) Sandy Gully Bridge in St. Andrew, J$6.1M; Southwood Pedestrian Bridge, JS24.3M; Stony Bridge, in Westmoreland - J$19.7M

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Repeat that.

Mr. AZAN: Westmoreland Bridge in St. Mary, J$1.16B (Applause) Cave Box Culvert, Westmoreland Eastern J$22.8M (Applause) Spanish River, J$20.3M (Applause) Mr. Speaker that is work. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: A real Minister at work. Desmond, what you say?

Mr. AZAN: Mr. Speaker, we have completed pipe-laying on the Palisadoes Road, complete six (6) kilometers of 400m ductile iron pipe and 15 kilometers of 300m transmission main. Additionally, all the distribution and service lines along the Scott's Cove to Belmont Main Road were replaced. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear! Good place dat!

Mr. AZAN: The Master Drainage Plan, Mr. Speaker, have been completed, despite we are not 100 per cent satisfy, my instruction is that we must share the drainage plan with the parish council and I can report that we have started so far in St Mary and we are going to St Elizabeth...

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. AZAN: Parish Council.

Mr. Speaker, we are taking concrete steps in an effort to make it easier and simpler for customers to conduct business with the National Work Agency. During the fiscal 2013/14, last, we have made doing business easier, a key priority. In addition, with the spike in the size of our development applications backlog, the Agency conducted preparatory work and training towards the final implementation of the AMANDA System. (Applause)

Currently, we are working on our register of authorized users, and expect to commence the full utilization of the application in the new financial year. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, we are also pursuing other strategies to streamline and enhance our development applications process. For example, we have begun to utilize the GIS to assist in the fast-tracking of our case to review the process. We are also reviewing our options towards making the payment of administrative fees hassle free. To streamline the applications review process, a draft review checklist has been developed, and is to be reviewed by Internal Review Committee. Once approved and made public, we hope that it proves useful in guiding applicants towards ensuring that the minimum information requirements are met prior to submitting of their applications. This,

in turn, will reduce delays arising out of the need for additional client information.

Mr. Speaker, we have several ongoing projects that when completed this year will enhance the country's growth strategy. Mr. Speaker, the Water Street is now complete at a cost of $9.29M. in Kingston (Applause) The Santa Maria to Sligoville Road Rehabilitation Project at a cost of $171.2M (Applause) The Bog Walk to Sligoville Rehabilitation Project, $324M (Applause) Road marking exercise, Package B & C, Package A, $9.136M, Package B, $8.75M, Package C, S4.782M and Mr. Speaker, the Kings Way is ongoing at a cost of $15.5M. The George Lee Boulevard in Portmore $68M (Applause), and Mr. Speaker, it is part of the Road Maintenance Fund. Mona Road to Wellington Drive Intersection Upgrade project completion was delayed to facilitate the drainage at a cost of $5.5M.

Mr. Speaker, efforts to reduce congestion through effective Traffic Management continue to be focused on the establishment of the integrated Transportation System. During the financial year 2013/14, we completed the Underground (Ring) Duct and Fibre Optic Cable installation. Lighting of the Cable will take place this financial year, as well as installation of an additional 4,000 meters of underground ducts to extend the system coverage to the Papine, Manor Park and Heroes Circle.

Mr. Speaker, there is the upcoming Major Infrastructure Development Programme (MIDP) J$4B is to be spent this financial year, of which J$1.6B is earmarked towards JEEP, J$1.5B for road rehabilitation and J$124M for bridges and structures. This $1.6 Billion allocation includes the first phase of the JEEP under the MIDP which commenced towards the latter part of the financial year, which was launched at the Jamaica Conference Centre on the 18th of March.

Other projects/programmes executed during the financial year. The Member from Eastern St James yesterday was asking about the Elegant Corridor in Montego Bay, we are happy to report that very shortly, very shortly, the tender process is well advanced and contract is expected to start very shortly. The South Coast Highway Study is at an advanced stage and is to be completed this financial year. Recall that this study included the road from Port Antonio in Portland to Harbour View... (Applause) ...in St. Andrew and from Mandeville in Manchester to Negril in Westmoreland. (Applause)

The North Coast Highway Bushing Programme has resumed from Negril to Port Antonio 282.91 kilometers of road. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, the Replanting of the mangroves along the Palisadoes shoreline, $50M have been allocated in this financial year. (Applause) Legal access and other preparatory works has started on Toms River to Agualta Vale in St. Mary. Soursop Turn to Chapelton to Trout Hall in Clarendon, and Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to report that the Minister of Transport and Works will sign the contract next month to start phase 1 of 10.5 kilometers of road from Soursop Turn to Chapelton at a cost of $1.3 Billion. (Applause)

Working smarter through improved stakeholder collaboration and partnerships

represents an easy win-win for the Jamaican public. One way in which we plan to improve our stakeholder collaboration this year is by way of our new Street-Cutting Permit Application, which will enable Beta Testing Phase. The application provided comprehensive, Web-Enablement Permit functionally and is seamlessly integrated with the system of the GIS.

The Street-Cutting Permit Application Unit - utility companies such as the National Water Commission or private contractors need only a standard Mobile Web-browser to access and view all street and permit activity online using maps created through our in-house databank. With the functionality, contractors and administrators can ensure that projects do not interfere with each other, and that street cutting are undertaken in compliance with applicable guidelines. We expect that over time we will be able to use the application to develop insight into trends and patterns in street-cutting activities that may not have been readily apparent with the existing *status quo.*

Mr. Speaker, there are five new bridges to be built this financial year; and I will start in...

(Cross talk)

...Silent Hill in Clarendon, Jacob River in Portland, Latium in St. James, Fairview in St. Catherine and Kupius in Clarendon. These bridges are planned to replace along the NWA main road. Also, there are two structures planned: one foot bridge in Duncans Trelawny and a box culvert in Mount Charles in St. Andrew.

Mr. Speaker, while the National Works Agency continues to engage in a productive and meaningful participation with the Road Maintenance Fund and the Ministry to deliver maintenance solutions across the entire main road network, Mr. Speaker, let us all face it funds are tight, but we are trying our best to do what we can do.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. AZAN: And I will just say a little here, Mr. Speaker, because I know that the calls are many to both myself and Minister Davies but we are trying to do our best to make sure that we can help. (Applause) And Mr. Speaker, I have travelled and I want to thank the Most Honourable Prime Minister because it's because of her why I can say that I know almost the entire length and breadth of Jamaica (Applause) and because of that I know the cry of all Members of Parliament.

Mr. VAZ: I have some place in Portland. Come check me and I show you.

Mr. AZAN: I have travelled to St. James on Monday; I travelled yesterday to St. Mary and, Mr. Speaker, I got some experience yesterday and I must say that sometimes when we say that our roads are bad, we have to go to some communities to see how bad it is and I think we have to give thanks, we have to give thanks we have to give God thanks for what we have done.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Vaz)

Mr. AZAN: One thing that we do at the Ministry is what we promise we deliver.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

(Cross talk)

A MEMBER: Say that again so *mek mi* hear.

Mr. AZAN: What we promise we deliver.

Mr. Speaker, during the last couple of minutes, you and the Members of this Honourable House have listened patiently as I have recalled our stewardship in North Western Clarendon and addressed the key targets to be advanced during the 2014/2015 financial year. Mr. Speaker, in closing my presentation I recognize that there are challenges, but there are also possibilities. I want to reiterate what we are seeking to achieve; building a road network, the benefits of which can go across the length and breadth of Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, we want to develop our network to First World standards...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear, Hear!

Mr. AZAN: ...so that all Jamaicans can enjoy the country, travelling safely in comfort and arrive at our destination on time. For this reason, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to focus on priority areas of the Ministry now and in the future, an approach that will ensure our objectives are met and the best interests of the Jamaican people are served. I am actually aware of the critical role that the Works portfolio must play in placing our country on a path of growth and economic development. I am pleased to be afforded the opportunity by the Prime Minister and to continue playing a leadership role in this Ministry.

(Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. AZAN: Mr. Speaker, I also wish to state that the people of North West Clarendon is a beautiful constituency with wonderful old time Jamaican people, people whom I think of as being from the good old Jamaica...

A Government MEMBER: *Dem* look good to, Richie, *dem* look good.

Another Government MEMBER: From Clarendon to...

Mr. AZAN: ...where respect, courtesy and good manners (Applause) are all part of the way of life.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, as we navigate the very troubled waters stated with challenges such as the continued rise of the price of oil and food in the world market, the scourge of crime, I am confident that this ship called Jamaica has on it a competent crew. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, we are led by a Captain, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller, with a very-steady pair of hands...

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. AZAN: ...a Captain that is clear on the vision as to where she wants Jamaica to take us. A Jamaica of peace, love, and equal opportunity. A Jamaica of justice and prosperity; a Jamaica where not everyone can be rich, but a Jamaica where with hard, honest work, one can be comfortable.

Mr. Speaker, may God bless the Members of this Honourable House, may God bless Jamaica as we continue to seek His divine intervention, leadership in moving forward as a nation. Thank you and Members of this Honourable House, land we love!

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

(The Deputy Speaker Gavels)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended for us to do any further business this afternoon. I, therefore, move for the adjournment of the Parliament until next Tuesday, the 3rd of June, at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House now adjourns until Tuesday, June the 3rd 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

This Honourable House now stands adjourned. (Gavels)

The House accordingly adjourned at approximately 5:21p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015

TUESDAY, June 3, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:36 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern

MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Dr. Lynvale Bloomfield

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Assistant Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 101/14**
  Health Corporation Limited Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial year 2010/2011
- **Ministry Paper No. 102/14**
  National Health Fund Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial year 2012/2013
- **Ministry Paper No. 103/14**
  Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial year ended 2011/2012
- Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC) Annual Reports and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial years 2010/2011 and 2011/2012
- Micro Investment Development Agency (MIDA) Annual Reports and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial years 2011/2012 and 2012/2013
- The Deposit Insurance (Joint, Trust and Nominee Accounts) Regulations, 2014 Under The Deposit Insurance Act

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, a whole list of items appear - the Assistant Clerk read, laid on the Table of the House. But I don't see anything in front of me. I don't see anything at all. And if it going to be said it was sent electronically, we can't say it's laid on the Table of the House. Laid on the Table of the House, based on the Standing Orders, means I must have it in front of me physically, laid here, and there is nothing here. And we keep on having this problem - laid on the Table of the House and we are not seeing these stuff. I need to have copies of what they said is being laid on the Table of the House. Because there is another problem coming up in a little while to be debated today about laid on the Table of the House, and we haven't seen any of those. I expect to have any item that is stated, laid on the Table of the House in front of me.

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington, thank you. We will resolve to ensure that at least one hard copy is available when we table it there.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

The SPEAKER: Minister Philips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

> Be it Resolved in accordance with Standing Orders 73 that the Deposit Insurance (Joint Trust and Nominee Accounts) Regulations, 2014 under the Deposit Insurance Act, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 3rd day of June, 2014 be referred to the Regulations Committee of the House of Representatives for consideration and report.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today I will move for the suspension of Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: House Leader.
Mr. PAULWELL: Tomorrow.
The SPEAKER: Tomorrow.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we want to deal with item Report on the Joint Select Committee on the Banking Services Act and the passage of the Banking Services Act. The Minister of Finance will deal with that. But before that I gather that there are some Members who didn't see the Report. So we are going to delay the Minister's presentation until after the Minister for Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, after his presentation then we will take that item so that Members can have the time to go through the Report.

(HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker.
The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Smith.
Mr. D. SMITH: …the House Leader is suggesting that it is the intention of the Government to take the Report, the Banking Services Act this afternoon. The Opposition objects strenuously to that suggestion on the basis, Mr. Speaker that the Report was never laid, to the best of our understanding. And this is a situation which the Government has embarked upon with frequency ever since the last calendar year. On occasions the Opposition has always co-operated. But we are not of the view, Mr. Speaker, if you are listening to what I am saying, that this is an occasion where we should bow to this sort of a pressure of thrusting things down our throats. As you know, Mr. Speaker, this is not the custom in this House.

The SPEAKER: No, definitely not.
Mr. D. SMITH: Definitely not. So if the House Leader is suggesting that he is going to be laying the Report today, I believe that the Opposition Spokesman on Finance would co-

operate perhaps to debate it tomorrow; and I think that is only a very reasonable position.

But let me close by saying, sir, we object sternly to that suggestion from the Leader of the House about any debate on that Bill or that Report to take it through to its conclusion this afternoon.

The SPEAKER: So, Mr. Smith, you are saying that you have not seen the Report?

Mr. D. SMITH: I have only not seen it; our information is that it has not been formally laid.

The SPEAKER: I thought we went through that on Wednesday of last week and it should have been electronically sent.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, if I may, because this Bill was first tabled in this Parliament on the 25th of March of this year. It was subsequently withdrawn and a new Bill tabled on the 14th of May. It was subject to a Joint Select Committee comprising Members from both sides and the Report was tabled last week when we sat. So there has been sufficient time for the Opposition to be familiar to prepare a position to be able to respond. Mr. Speaker, the Member is urging that we do it for tomorrow, but we will have to commit to clearing the Order Paper tomorrow because we have a lot of things to do tomorrow. We will allow for the debate to close tomorrow on this matter, but we have some other matters that will have to deal with tomorrow as well. So I am hoping that we will be able to complete all the matters for tomorrow. Mr. Speaker, the Member doesn't have to respond and I will be quite happy to take it around there to you; meet me around there.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker…

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...the Member from South West St. Catherine has spoken and the Leader of the Opposition Business and I would say in the spirit of co-operation and charity we will co-operate. But I will say this, it is quite out of keeping with any reasonable expectation that one should have. This Report was laid last week. The Members on the other side know the urgency of the matter. It is because of the urgency of the matter why the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee met, going up 'til 10.00 o'clock at night Friday, Saturday; met Sunday.

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, because there is humbug and mischief afoot.

Opposition MEMBER: What!

The SPEAKER: Let us avoid those words.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, I object to that right now. I raise strong objection to that term.

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Get up and shout it from the roof. Mr. Speaker, I am on my feet. I am on my feet.

The SPEAKER: We have a point of order.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I am on my feet.

The SPEAKER: We have a point of order from the Opposition Leader.

Dr. PHILLIPS: There is a point of order?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. D. SMITH: He should withdraw that.

The SPEAKER: I will request that the Minister withdraws that.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Withdraw the statement.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, there is - let me say, Mr. Speaker, that there is an extreme manifestation of unreasonableness.

The SPEAKER: Hold on, Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker….

The SPEAKER: Hold on, Minister Phillips. Minister Phillips, withdraw.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker….

The SPEAKER: You can make a rebuttal but please withdraw.

Dr. PHILLIPS: What did I say, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER: That mischief is afoot.

Dr. PHILLIPS: My colleague here...

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, no, don't bother with that!

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, a thousand horses cannot deny me my right to speak.

The SPEAKER: Yes, but you have to follow the rules.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what it is that I am being asked to withdraw.

The SPEAKER: You have imputed motive...

Dr. PHILLIPS: To whom.

The SPEAKER: ….when you suggested that mischief was afoot. I request that you withdraw it and then proceed.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, out of deference to you I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much. (Applause)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I will say, however, that there is total disregard to the point that one with a reasonable mind could presume that mischief was afoot.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, absolutely.

The SPEAKER: Don't spoil it.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, officials of State who have been called upon to work up until the wee hours of night have made themselves available, members of the Committee, including Honourable Members of the Opposition, worked through successive weeknights, weekends, in order to prepare this legislation in order that the country can meet its obligations. Mr. Speaker, we will defer it, but it is an unreasonable, unreasonable request. It is an unreasonable request rooted in no principle whatever.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Warmington)

Miss HANNA: Bruce Lee.

Dr. PHILLIPS: All the requirements of the House have been met, every last single one. It was laid on the Table of the House last week and they know it. And so, Mr. Speaker, one is left to wonder what is the motive.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, nobody is questioning the motive (Inaudible) Report. I have a right to see the Report before it is debated. I am elected by the people of South West St. Catherine to come here, not to

be a rubberstamp. It is my right to get a copy so that I can respond and participate in the debate. So I don't want to be told about mischief and what have you. It is not right and I need to read it - the request was made - it was laid on the Table of the House last week.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Warmington.

(Cross talks) (The Speaker gavels)

Mr. McKENZIE: The man is entitled to express himself.

A MEMBER: Every man has a right to express himself.

Mr. McKENZIE: Yuh a mischief maker.

(DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, entered and took his seat.)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I think the matter requires your intervention, in the sense that there is a misunderstanding that has developed in exactly how a matter is being tabled in terms of the technology of tabling it. And until the Standing Orders are changed to say that when Members get an email with the document, that that must be accepted as something having been tabled. When the Standing Orders are so changed, Mr. Speaker, then we can accept that.

What the Minister has, is ignoring in his explanation, is that a hardcopy, this document, by hardcopy, was not laid on the table in front of the Members of Parliament last week. And to suggest that it was, is misleading this House today. And we're asking you, Mr. Speaker, clear up this issue as to exactly what it means to lay something on the Table of Parliament. If you clear that up, then a lot of the so-called mischief will also be cleared up.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Shaw.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Yes, it is my understanding that a practice has developed over the last year and-a half to two years, whereby once a hardcopy is tabled, then Members are satisfied with receiving their individual copies by way of email. We have the technology now, we need to use it. It is very expensive for the Parliament to have single copies for the 63 Members.

(Applause)

Mr. SHAW: It's in the Standing Orders.

Mr. PAULWELL: So if a Member wishes to have...

(Cross talks)

Mr. PAULWELL: ...if a Member wishes to have his or her own personal copy you can request it, there's no need in this 21st century for us to have 63 copies of paper.

Mr. WARMINGTON: As long as the Standing Orders said so you need to do it, you're obligated to do it. That's what the Standing Orders said.

The SPEAKER: House Leader, the simple solution is for amendment to the Standing Orders, and we will do so in due course.

(Applause)

Mr. PAULWELL: All right, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Amend the Standing Orders.

MEMBERS: Very good! Very good!

(Applause)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, may we proceed?

This afternoon we have two presenters, the Member from North West St. Catherine, the Minister for Environment, Water and Climate Change; and then followed by the Member from South East St. Elizabeth. Oh, and there's a matter just before that, the Minister has a matter to refer to Regulations Committee. Can we just deal with that very quickly?

(Cross talk)

Mr. WARMINGTON: It's affecting his brain! It's affecting his brain!

(MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural, entered and took his seat.)

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, before the House is the amendment of regulations for the Deposit Insurance Act, the Deposit Insurance Joint Trust and Nominee Accounts Regulations. Mr. Speaker, it is proposed that these be referred to the Regulations Committee of the House for consideration and report and I so move.

The SPEAKER: Is that the wish of the House?

Put to the House and agreed to.

(DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health, entered and took his seat.)

The SPEAKER: Minister Pickersgill.

(Applause)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, finally.

Mr. VAZ: What, the 63rd time?

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of...

(Heckling)

...on behalf of my colleagues in the House. I'd like to welcome back the Member from South West Clarendon.

(Applause)

Mr. VAZ: South East.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I beg your pardon, South East?

Mr. VAZ: South East.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Him don't even know is which one.

SECTORAL DEBATE

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present my third Sectoral contribution in this Honourable House.

A MEMBER: What, third?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Sectoral.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I repeat, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. WARMINGTON: What's your colour?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I rise today to present my third Sectoral Contribution in this Honourable House, since this administration regained...

A MEMBER: Okay.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...its rightful place just over two years ago... (Applause) ...at the helm of this Government...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Yuh start on a bad footing yuh nuh?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Don't anticipate what I'm going to say.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Don't listen to him.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I can proudly say that I have served all the leaders of my great party...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...including the Right Excellent Norman Washington Manley...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...and in that regard, apart from my current Leader, Mr. Speaker, I'm the longest serving Member of the Executive of the People's National Party...

(Applause)

Mr. VAZ: Chairman for life.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...which is undoubtedly, Mr. Speaker, the greatest political party in this hemisphere.

(Applause)

I say thanks to all my leaders who, through their confidence placed in me...

Mr. WARMINGTON: What's your colour?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...have enabled me to serve my beloved country as a Member of Cabinet for over 20 years, 18 of which have been consecutive.

(Applause)

I hasten to add, Mr. Speaker, that most of my time as Member of Parliament has been spent on this side of the House. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that I was never comfortable on that side.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: True, true!

(HON ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Truth be told, I felt like a square peg in a round hole.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Speaker, on this side we have an eight star general and two six star generals. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: True!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I proudly say that I'm one of the six stars and my friend - distinguished friend to my right - is the other six star. And, of course, we know who is the eight star general, our great Leader and Prime Minister. (Applause) I hope - is eight or nine? It could be nine.

(Cross talks)

As I was saying, I'm sure you know that our great Leader is the eight star general.

MEMBERS: Yes.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Perhaps, Mr. Speaker that is why I'm appropriately referred to as 'Chairman for life'... (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear! Hear! Hear!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...a description that I guard very jealously and very zealously and very jealously.

(Inaudible comments/Laughter)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Speaker, the fact...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

(Laughter)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I want you to hear this.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...I want you to hear…. the fact is I've outlasted six JLP Chairmen...

(Applause/Laughter)

...that is no mean feat, and I hear that the present one is hanging on, on a slender thread.

(Applause/Laughter)

A MEMBER: Damion, Damion.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Come, come, remember you went in the contest and got three votes.

(Applause/Laughter)

A MEMBER: Three?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Three! Three votes him get.

(Laughter/Cross talks)

Mr. Speaker, it has placed me in a category - and I'd like you to hear this, Mr. Speaker - it has placed me in a category that should cause me not to be restrained or constrained by time limits.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. WARMINGTON: No senior citizen has spoken.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: And I'm sure that you agree with me when I say, respect is due.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Because yuh a senior citizen?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes, yes, yes, I don't deny that.

Mr. Speaker, moreso, sir, respect is due to you. You're the representative of the House itself in its powers, proceedings and dignity.

(Applause)

Miss HANNA: Hear, hear!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: You, Mr. Speaker, provide and enforce the observance of all rules for preserving order in its proceedings. The chief characteristics of your office are authority and impartiality...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...and you continue to demonstrate them very well.

(Laughter/Inaudible comments)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: In fact it was just on show, it was just on show.

I'm mindful, Mr. Speaker, of the tremendous responsibility that rests on my shoulders, and of the fact that the well-being of every man, woman and child in this country is affected by the critical portfolio areas with which my State Minister, Honourable Ian Hayles and I are charged.

The extent to which we can, and must implement crucial policies, plans, programmes

and projects under these portfolio areas will, in no small measure, gage our ability to realize our Vision 2030 Goal of Jamaica being the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business. Place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business.

I stand here this afternoon with resolve born of the knowledge that the team at my Ministry, and its agencies, are creative, proactive, hardworking and determined and that our local, regional and international partners - and many of them are here - (Applause) with whom we're partnering for sustainable development, and are as desirous, as we are, to see Jamaica achieve its sustainable development goals.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we agree that teamwork unifies the effort, divides the tasks and multiplies the effect as we work with the common goal of building resilience and ensuring sustainable development.

Allow me to remind you that we're currently celebrating National Environment Awareness Week, which runs from June 2nd to June 8th. Thursday June 5th is being observed as World Environment Day and Sunday June 8th is World Ocean's Day.

We are also observing disaster preparedness month, and as we are all aware, the hurricane season runs from June 1 to November 30.

Mr. Speaker, the prediction is for between eight and thirteen named storms of which between three and six will become hurricanes and two are likely to become major hurricanes. I, therefore, urge all Jamaicans to advance their preparedness in anticipation of the season.

Mr. Speaker, bearing in mind the share size of the Ministry, the volume of information and the numerous areas for which we much give an account of our stewardship. My State Minister and I decided that we will again split the presentation between us. Indeed, we have fourteen agencies and departments which oversee twenty-nine different subject areas, as such, my presentation will focus on the Water, Land and Climate Change portfolios while Minister Hayles will speak, to among others, the Environment, Planning and Development Portfolios of the Ministry. But Mr. Speaker, it will be remiss if I did not say a word or two about the environment. And in so doing, I quote from Jeremiah Chapter 2 verse 7. And it says;

> *"I brought you into a plentiful land to eat its fruits and its good things but, when you entered you defied my land and make my heritage an abomination".*

Mr. Speaker, no country can have sustained economic growth and development and social wellbeing without due and careful consideration of the environment. The environment is the subject that underpins each and every portfolio, agriculture, health, tourism, industry, water, climate change and social development.

Over the last two years, Mr. Speaker, in fact, in recent months there have been a number of national issues which have served to further highlight the importance of having a

healthy and robust environment. But as I said, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of State will speak more comprehensively on the topic which takes me then to the first portfolio that I will be speaking about namely Climate Change.

I begin my presentation with the Climate Change Portfolio. And, Mr. Speaker, Canadian Broadcaster and environmental activist, David Suzuki has said, and I quote:

> *"The damage that climate change is causing, and that will get worse if we fail to act, goes beyond the hundreds of thousands of lives, homes and businesses lost, ecosystems destroyed, species driven to extinction, infrastructure smashed and people inconvenienced"*
>
> (*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Suzuki, yes.

Climate Change is inexorably linked to, and impacts on every other portfolio. It is likely to affect every individual, every community, every parish and every sector. More than any other issue, climate change poses a direct threat to any and all attempts to achieve sustainable development and by extension, our Vision 2030 goals. And so as I have often said and despite the naysayers, I will continue to say, until every Jamaican understands that "with climate change, we must change."

Worldwide, there is scientific proof and growing evidence that the climate of our world is changing. Recently, news came that a massive glacier in West Antarctica has started to collapse due to global warming; an event that scientists say will contribute to worldwide sea-level rise by about 24 inches Mr. Speaker, or 60 centimeters; this is unsettling news for Small Island Developing States referred to as SIDS, such as Jamaica. In fact, Mr. Speaker, 2014 has been declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Small Island Developing States under the theme, "The Sustainable Development of SIDS through Genuine and Durable Partnerships".

A Jamaican delegation of which I will be a member, will be heading to the conference in Samoa at the end of August, where SIDS will mount a strong platform to negotiate for more durable partnerships in areas such as Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, Disaster Risk Reduction, Sustainable Energy and Food Security, among others. Researchers, Mr. Speaker, out of the Mora Lab at the University of Hawaii stated that climate change for Jamaica is imminent, with climate departure expected as early as 2023. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is predicted that after 2023, the average temperature of the coolest year from then on will be warmer than the average temperature of the hottest year between 1960 and 2005.

Jamaica has long been vulnerable to natural disasters, particularly storms and hurricanes; and according to our best scientists, climate change will amplify these effects. What do I mean by this, Mr. Speaker? The period of time between Hurricane Charley in 1951 and the next storm event which was the island's close brush with Hurricane Allen in 1980 was 29 years? The period between Hurricane Allen and that untamed monster Hurricane Gilbert in 1988 was 8 years;

another sixteen years passed and we were hit by another hurricane Ivan in '04; three years passed and Dean brushed us in '07, then Sandy in 2012 - I hope you see the pattern emerging. Without a doubt the incidence of direct hits and close brushes with hurricanes are occurring more frequently, in fact, Mr. Speaker, on average between '01 and '12 Jamaica experienced 11 storm events whether directly or indirectly so this is not a joke.

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I spoke about that already. We must therefore adjust to new ideas of what constitutes 'normal weather', and modify our disaster preparedness and mitigation plans accordingly. I am pleased, however, at the progress we have made, Mr. Speaker, in our efforts in this critical area during the 2013 and 2014 fiscal years.

First let me state that the Green Paper on the Climate Change Policy Framework and Action Plan is currently being finalized for submission to this Parliament as a White Paper. As promised, the Climate Change Division has been established, and became fully operational as at September last year. The Division is acting swiftly on its deliverables and has already established a network of Climate Change Focal Points in all Ministries - climate change focal Points in all ministries - as well as fourteen agencies and departments. The focal points will liaise with the Division in formulating and rolling out sector plans and projects in respect of Climate Change.

To date, the Division has held two meetings with the Focal Points to sensitize them about their roles and the general approach to be taken in the implementation of their functions. The most recent meeting took the form of a workshop which was conducted with the support of the USAID.

Given the critical importance of the Climate Change portfolio, one very significant aspect is the training of persons who are expected to be the change agents for climate change. A Climate Change Risk Management Tool was developed by the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre referred to as the 5C's. Government officers from various ministries were trained at a workshop held in Belize in the use of the Caribbean Climate Online Risk and Adaptation Tool. Arrangements are now in place for the 5C's to conduct training for all twenty seven (27) climate change focal points in the use of this software. This will be done over a one week period, Mr. Speaker, beginning next week Monday. The scheduled training workshop will also include a Training of the Trainer's workshop. So I hope that all concerned in here will see to it that their focal points attend.

During the latter half of the last financial year, the Division was able to expedite arrangements between the 5C's and the Government of Jamaica for the finalization of a grant Agreement valued at J$27 Million. And the Agreement will facilitate, among other things, the acquisition of two automatic weather stations to enhance the climate data collection capacity of the Meteorological Services here in Jamaica. The development of

a climate change vulnerability assessment as well as an adaptation strategy and an adaptation plan for the fisheries sector.

It is expected that procurement, installation, and/or the completion of deliverables will be realized by the end of this financial year.

Mr. Speaker, in seeking to heighten awareness about issues surrounding Climate Change, we also spearheaded a presentation to Parliamentarians in this Honourable House. One of the presenters at the session was Professor Michael Taylor of the Climate Studies Group of the Physics Department at the University of the West Indies, Mona. The presentation was entitled "The Role of Members of Parliament in Building a Unified Policy Response to Climate Change" and, among other targets aimed to demonstrate to you my colleagues how your constituencies are likely to be affected by climate change, as well as your role in responding to this phenomenon. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, many of you missed the opportunity. However, I am pleased to note that some of you have already begun to engage with the Climate Change Division, to look into how relevant projects may be implemented in your constituencies, and I commend those of you who have for your foresight and your initiative.

In continuation of our efforts to increase public awareness, Mr. Speaker, about Climate Change, we will be facilitating partnerships across Ministries and Departments, including the Social Development Commission and the Parish Councils. We will also be engaged in the civil society and the private sector including the media in order to facilitate the world change regarding climate resilience, hence the reason for appointing focal points.

Last year, I also announced that we had taken the initiative to assist the vulnerable city of Portmore to partner with the city of Hagen in Germany, to formulate and Implement climate change projects at the Local Government level. To date, we have achieved the following under this partnership, Mr. Speaker;

1. Implementation of a complete solar energy System for the Portmore HEART College For Construction Services commissioned by myself and the German Ambassador His Excellency, Josef Beck in March. (Applause)
2. Launch of an internationally recognized Solar Energy Training Programme for Technicians or solarteurs, at the Portmore HEART College for Construction Services.
3. A Student Exchange Programme between The Portmore Community College and the Theodore Hess Gymnasium in the city of Hagen.
4. Commencement of work to establish a Climate Change Park in Portmore which was this year's National Labour Day Project. The park will help to increase climate change awareness by illustrating elements of climate change mitigation and adaptation

strategies such as renewable energy, water recycling and rainwater harvesting.

Mr. Speaker, we also met our targets under the Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction Project, a joint venture between the Government of Jamaica, the United Nations Environment Programme and the European Union.

(Applause)

This project which was successfully completed culminated in the launch of an Audio-Visual Toolkit, which provides vital educational information for members of the public and age specific groups, to include children at the primary and secondary levels. Our aim is to ensure that each school is equipped with at least one of these tool kits and it is... (Applause) ...it is a comprehensive tool kit, Mr. Speaker, and it will be given to all the schools in the island. I have already spoken to the Minister of education, excellent tool kit. (Showing tool kit to Members)

Jamaica is currently a beneficiary of the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience, which is a regional initiative that is intended to increase resilience to climate change effects at the national and regional levels. Grant financing in excess of US$4 Million or approximately J$400 Million provided by the Climate Investment Funds through the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank will be made available to implement activities under the programme. My Ministry will have responsibility for implementing several components of the investment programmes including:

- the upgrading of national equipment and systems;
- increasing public awareness of climate change impacts;
- integrating climate change considerations in development planning processes, plans and policies.

The Division will continue its efforts to facilitate and coordinate the development of sectoral adaptation and mitigation strategies and action plans for at least four priority sectors namely agriculture, fisheries, forestry and transportation sectors. It will also mainstream climate change considerations in at least three key policies, namely transport, water and construction policies.

Work will also continue to develop and register Jamaica's nationally appropriate mitigation actions. We will also be working to place Jamaica in a position to readily access climate change financing, Mr. Speaker. (Applause) In particular, the Ministry has nominated Jamaica's focal point to the Green Climate Fund. Mr. Speaker, the Fund is projected to receive US$100 Billion not Million - US$100 Billion *per annum*; US$100,000 Billion *per annum* by 2020 for the financing of adaption and mitigation projects. (Applause)

My Ministry received preliminary approval from the Global Environment Facility for a grant of US$852,000 and US$90,000 from the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, to facilitate the preparation of Jamaica's Third National Communication, and the Biennial Update

Report to meet UNFCCC reporting requirements. The final approval is expected before the end of June 2014. We are expecting to commence the implementation of this project in July, Mr. Speaker, of this year. It is also noteworthy that the Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United States Government in July 2013 to provide technical support to my Ministry and other Ministries, Departments and Agencies. Under the MOU, Mr. Speaker, we intend, among other things, to develop a Greenhouse Gas Inventory and develop a Low Emission Development Strategy referred to as LEDS. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, I close this section by saying that my Ministry will continue to lead the charge to ensure that with climate change, Jamaica must and will be changing.

(Applause)

(MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I now move to the Land portfolio, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SHAW: You neva have the green folder?

(Cross talk)

Miss HANNA: It must match his shirt and tie.

(Cross talk)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the Land portfolio.

It was the Right Excellent Norman Washington Manley who said, and I love to read this quote, he said:

"Land is the only source of the material life of the people. It provides food and shelter. It furnishes work and wealth. It is the basis of all production, of development, of all security, of all growth. It is, in very truth, the root of our being."

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

(DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Can't be better. End of quote. Mr. Speaker, fundamental and prophetic those words no wonder our national anthem begins with the words, *Eternal Father bless our land.*

There is no hope of building a strong economy, or improving the quality of life for our citizens without ensuring security of tenure, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: The ownership of land remains an effective means of gaining economic and social independence's the national hero said many years ago. As such, my Ministry is working assiduously to continue the tradition of securing land ownership and building the - what we call, Mr. Speaker, the ownership society. The ownership society that this Administration envisions, as we look or rather look and work towards our Vision 2030 goal of making, and I repeat, Jamaica, the place of choice to live, work...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...raise families and do business. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended sufficient to allow him to complete his presentation.

Mr. McKENZIE: Forty minutes.

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Minister Pickersgill.

(Applause)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am pleased to state that during the 2013/2014 financial year, we achieved critical targets. LAMP continues to serve the members of the public in accordance with its mandate to reduce the number of unregistered parcels which now stands, Mr. Speaker, at 349,302 and regularize existing titles with current information. As at April 2014, some 20,315 files have been opened to provide new applications for titles.

- 4,590 new titles have been produced; and
- 2,746 existing certificates of title regularized.

Regarding LAMP II extension, Mr. Speaker, the project has now moved into its new phase, and was formally launched at an impressive titling ceremony on May 15 by the Most Honourable Prime Minister, who expressed her delight at seeing so many elderly Jamaicans, especially women, being able to own a piece of the rock. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, truth is, you were there and at least twenty titles were issued in your constituency.

The LAMP II public-private partnership has been extended for a further period of ten years and the number of parishes expanded to eight, namely Clarendon, Manchester, St. Elizabeth, St. Ann, Westmoreland, Hanover and Trelawny and St. James. Mr. Speaker, there were 250 titles ready for delivery to clients at that launch, that I just spoke about. However, only 80 beneficiaries attended the ceremony to collect their titles. The other titles have been distributed to the field offices in St. Elizabeth to allow beneficiaries to collect at their own convenience.

In order to expand the reach of the programme, Mr. Speaker, additional field offices have been opened by LAMP's private sector partner, Geoland Title Limited, in St. Ann's Bay and Savannah-la-Mar in Westmoreland. This complements the existing offices in Kingston, Santa Cruz and Junction in St. Elizabeth and Golf View in Manchester. LAMP is open for business so you see, Mr. Speaker, we are, as the member across there is saying, working, working, working. (Applause) Using the LAMP II Expansion, we will also be able to incrementally build the cadastral map for Jamaica (Applause) using the survey plans which have been tied into the national grid. Under LAMP II, as at April 30:

- 2,653 land parcels have been surveyed; and

- 3,865 parcels have been placed in the digital cadastral map database for St. Elizabeth.

Mr. Speaker, for those of us who are not acquainted with the term, a cadastre is a comprehensive register of the real estate or real property's metre-and-bounds of a country. A cadastral map shows the boundaries of land parcels in their correct geographical positions and may be used for a wide range of purposes including:

- registration of titles to lands;
- property valuations;
- development planning;
- land use depiction, planning and analysis.

Over 8,000 existing parcels of government land at the National Land Agency have been converted to a digital format and a digital cadastral map for St. Elizabeth has been created with just over 11,000 parcels which will assist in better planning and impact on the development approval process - something that that Member is very interested in.

Of the over 5,911 new files:

- 1,407 applications for titles have been made; and
- 680 titles have been completed.

The relatively low numbers lodged compared to the number of files opened result from:

- the inability of owners to get their names on the tax roll, and this is very important.
- affordability notwithstanding the reduced fees under LAMP, Mr. Speaker, as you know to get a title is a very expensive matter.
- informal subdivisions and
- Root of Title issues.

Those are the problems affecting LAMP. These factors have negatively impacted the LAMP for years and the Ministry has taken measures to address the issues. The measures taken include:

- Allowing for amendments to the tax roll with the use of statutory declarations. This will allow persons to pay property taxes for the portion of land that they own or occupy, as per the opinion of the Attorney General.

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Previously, Mr. Speaker, such persons could not get on the tax roll because they had to pay for the entire parcel of land which included their portion. In other words, Mr. Speaker, they would have a small bit of land, but for them to get it on, they would have to pay for the whole… (Applause)

- the use of section 5 ministerial waivers to address the issue of informal subdivisions; and
- a proposed amendment to the Registration of Titles Cadastral Mapping and Tenure Clarification (Special Provisions) Act dealing with Root of Title.

The Policy Division is in the process of settling drafting instructions in order to amend the Registration of Titles Cadastral Mapping and Tenure Clarification to address some chronic land tenure issues and to improve LAMP'S ability to bring land under the Registration of Titles Act.

Mr. Speaker, it is my firm belief that we must rid ourselves of the Registration of Titles Act immediately since it is anti-poor and is a stumbling block. (Applause)

Mr. PRYCE: Say it again.

A Government MEMBER: Repeat it.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes, it is anti-poor and is a stumbling block to realizing our goal of an ownership society. (Applause) In addition, the Act is antiquated; having came into existence in 1889, way back in the 19th century and has lost its relevance.

During its over ten year operation, LAMP has identified several additional land tenure issues rooted in our culture, which are adversely affecting its ability to bring land into the register. Mr. Speaker, these issues need to be addressed by legislative amendments as ordinary Jamaicans, as you know, Mr. Speaker, ordinary Jamaicans often dispose of and acquire land in an informal manner. So for them to get Root of Title for 20 years is not on. As such, Mr. Speaker, they are often not able to produce the proof required to facilitate the registration of the land. Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that we are an oral society. However, the Statute of Frauds Section 4 states that all land transactions are to be reduced to writing, and that does not happen among our ordinary Jamaicans unfortunately.

The new proposals are geared towards making the law more applicable to our cultural norms and the way of life of the ordinary Jamaican. This will allow for more persons to make successful applications to bring land lender the Registration of Titles Act, and will allow LAMP to significantly increase the number of certificates of title under the programme. Members will recall that the Minister of Finance, in his Budget presentation, indicated that the Development Bank of Jamaica has agreed to provide a grant to LAMP for payment assistance of JMD$90 Million to needy applicants.

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: We need some applause for that too, yes.

(MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, this would help beneficiaries who have applied to LAMP and have made some payments towards their application but are unable to make the remainder of their payments to complete the process. (Applause) This funding will help to facilitate the increased delivery of titles under the programme.

Mr. Speaker, through this grant, through this grant, all things being equal we will deliver some 2,000 Titles to LAMP beneficiaries between 14 and 15.

(Applause)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say that the first tranche of $16 Million will be disbursed by the end of this month... (Applause) …and is expected to facilitate the delivery of 650 Titles between July and August this year. Madam Prime Minister, we'll be having a titling ceremony

by August this year when we again hope that you will be there to be the Guest Speaker. (Applause)

The second tranche of $37 Million will be disbursed by the end of August and is expected to facilitate the delivery of another 675 Titles between November and December, (Applause) while the third tranche also of 37 Million in December, will facilitate the delivery of yet another 675 Titles between March and April 2015. (Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: So you're working, working, working.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Precisely.

(Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say to the Most Honourable Prime Minister, that we will indeed be keeping her busy in keeping with her request in attending more titling ceremonies.... (Applause) ....in the very near future. Mr. Speaker, we are well on our way to the ownership society.

I come now to the Adjudication Committees because, Mr. Speaker, what we have set up is an Adjudication Committee to help the ordinary Jamaican to get around this route of title, so it would be constituted by four reputable citizens, and they are going to approach that Committee, Mr. Speaker, and it will allow them easier access to the Registrar of Titles.

An allocation of $20 Million has been provided to my Ministry to fund the operation of the Adjudication Committees in the various communities within affected parishes to resolve ownership issues which will result in the issuance of Titles for these applicants.

Mr. Speaker, these Committees cover nine parishes, namely, St. Catherine, St. Elizabeth, Manchester, Clarendon, Westmoreland, Hanover, St. James, Trelawny and St. Ann. It is projected that four committees will be established in St. Elizabeth by the end of this month... (Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: Oh yes!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...and the other committees will be established later on this year in consultation with Members of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, as was previously indicated as an added measure, in assisting with our transformation to the ownership society, a grant of J$18 Million was approved by the Board of PetroCaribé Development Fund to assist beneficiaries in paying fees for titling services. (Applause) So yet again we've…

LAMP has to date submitted 62 files for processing and is awaiting funding in order to deliver the Certificates of Title to the beneficiaries at formal ceremonies. LAMP'S plans for 2014/15 fiscal year include:

- depositing cadastral maps and pre-checked plans representing 5,400 parcels;
- Obtaining ministerial waivers under Section 5 Orders for 320 parcels;
- Opening 2,500 new files for new registrations and updating of existing titles;
- Submitting 1,600 applications to NLA to update the property tax roll and…

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes, you have it. You have it. You have it. And regularizing 200 existing titles. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker....

A Government MEMBER: You don't waan hear the good news eeh!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: …as promised, we have amended the regulations under the Land Surveyors Act to make it mandatory for the surveys of property boundaries using the land titling process to be tied to the national grid. This will facilitate more efficient compilation of the National Cadastral Map. You notice I am emphasizing this Cadastral Map, Mr. Speaker, because once we have it, it makes things much, much easier and will contribute to improve efficiencies and accuracy in land titling process.

Mr. Speaker, let me point out to you sir that there are 344 Land Settlement Schemes islandwide. Of these, 139 schemes containing 18,412 lots remained to be titled. The process involves the surveying of the parcels, obtaining approvals for subdivisions and then the preparation of Certificates of Titles.

In 2013/2014 under a partnership between LAMP, the National Land Agency and the Korean International Corporation Agency called (KOICA), we exceeded our target of surveying 1,000 parcels in land settlement schemes - and I am now talking about land settlement schemes - in the parishes of St. Mary, St. Ann and Portland. To date, 670 certificates of title have been issued in the name of the Commissioner of Lands - And I want my colleagues to listen carefully - and 140 have been transferred to allottees. Eighty-six of these titles were delivered to allottees at a titling ceremony held in Port Maria in February. Additionally, 235 lots in the project area with informal occupiers have been approved for divestment and 100 of these persons have made part-payments of the purchase price.

The NLA is committed to completing the remaining titles for the project area in order to get them in the hands of the prospective owners as soon as possible. Mr. Speaker, in order to expedite the titling process for land settlement schemes, for land settlement schemes, the NLA has introduced a Probate Unit, it has introduced a Probate Unit to assist the beneficiaries of deceased allottees. (Applause) As at April this year, Mr. Speaker, 793 files have been opened and are being processed within the Probate Unit. Quite an achievement.

Mr. Speaker, during 2013/14 the National Land Agency issued a total of twelve thousand, nine hundred and twenty-six certificates of title, an increase of 29% over the previous year. (Applause) This amount includes four thousand, five hundred and fifty titles issued to Government Agencies. Mr. Speaker, of the approximately eight hundred and eleven thousand parcels of land recorded on the Valuation Roll - I repeat, of the approximately eight hundred and eleven thousand parcels of land recorded on the Valuation Roll, 57% have registered titles. (Applause) So you see the magnitude of the task. (Applause) To further advance the titling of lands, advice was sought from the Attorney General's Department. As a result, regulations

will be put in place to allow for the use of statutory declarations and advertisements in order to place persons on the Valuation Roll. And this would come under the Adjudication Committees. This will expedite the process of persons obtaining certificates of title.

I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, to report: The National Land Agency is dedicated to providing new products and services for its customers in an effort to make doing business in Jamaica easier. During the year, new products and services were introduced and I'll mention just two of them. The first is Property Watch Jamaica.

The first is, as I said, Property Watch Jamaica which is a critical development in our effort to reduce and eventually eliminate the incidents of fraudulent threats to property transactions in Jamaica. These threats include but are not limited to identity fraud committed against vulnerable registered owners and the impersonation of lawyers, law firms and co-owners.

Property Watch is an online subscription service that sends automatic notifications by way of email to registered proprietors when a transaction is lodged against a Certificate of Title. (Applause) Once the notification has been sent to the subscriber, he/she will be given 24 hours to alert the NLA if the transaction is not legitimate.

Second, if the NLA continues its thrust towards the large scale mapping of urban centres of the island during the 2013/2014 fiscal year, a comprehensive map of Montego Bay and its environs was completed. The map shows natural and manmade features, as well as the parcel data information for that city, including schools, Government buildings, Churches, businesses, and of course, information pertaining to the tourist industry.

Mr. Speaker, I close this section by reiterating that despite all our efforts to issue titles, we still have 8,000 titles to transfer from the Commissioner of lands to allottees, eight thousand. (Applause) These include approximately 1000 titles in the names of allottees that we have not been able locate or contact. That's why I sent you this - all of you got a letter and I am asking you to look at it to see if you know these allottees that you can alert them.

Mr. SHAW: You have the Titles?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Derrick Smith)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: You should have one.

Dr. DAVIES: No, no, Audley....

Dr. PHILLIPS: Because you say electronically.

(Laughter)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: The National Land Agency has placed the names of these allottees on their website and persons are invited to check the listing or contact the Agency for further details.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Give back the Tablets.

(Dr. Phillips refers to Mr. Derrick Smith)

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Give back the Tablet.

(Laughter)

(Heckling by Members)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: However, once again I am appealing to my colleague

Members of Parliament, the Parish Councils, the SDC, the Justices of the Peace or any other authority for assistance in contacting these allottees or their beneficiaries where applicable. Mr. Speaker, I really would like to urge my colleagues for them to endeavour really to try and contact these allottees, the titles are sitting there waiting for them. (Applause) It is the fervent wish of this Administration to get this most prized asset into the hands of the intended beneficiaries who will be able to use it as a tool towards wealth creation, as well as community and nation building aimed at creating ownership society.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I move to the final portfolio.

Mr. SHAW: Final red folder! Eight minutes you have. Eight minutes you have for that.

(Heckling by Members)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I turn now to the critical "water" portfolio. It was the Poet W.H. Auden who said, and I quote: "Thousands have lived without love, not one without water".

(Applause/Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure you heard me, Mr. Speaker. The quote is, "Thousands have lived without love, not one without water".

As a resource, water has no parallel in its ability to propel the social and economic growth of a nation and in essence, quintessence if you might, is the lifeblood of any nation. It is indeed equivalent to what our founding father said about land. Water is critical for the maintenance of environmental and human health and for supporting all human activities whether residential, commercial, industrial or agricultural. You know, not many people know, Mr. Speaker that the agricultural sector - where is my friend Roger - they use about 70% of the water we produce, us, human beings use only about 30%, so it's very important to agriculture.

As such, the provision of potable water, Mr. Speaker, to meet the needs of our population continues to be a major goal for the Administration and for my Ministry; after all, water is life. I have heard persons scoff when I say this, but we have - very important - we have enough water resources to meet the needs of every man, woman, and child in this country. However, whether or not this will be the case in the future, depends on how we utilize and manage the resources that we have.

To this end, we are currently reviewing the '04 Water Sector Policy, with the aim of providing a guide to the provision of universal access to potable water for all Jamaicans by 2020. My Ministry held five public regional consultations between April 10 and May 16 on the policy, and we are consolidating all the comments that came out of the consultations, with a view to taking the policy to Cabinet in July. Parallel to the Policy Review is the development of the Rural Water Development Strategy, which will map, provide data and costs for community solutions, to close the gap in the provision of the water supply in rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, the Water Resources Authority which is the agency charged with

managing and monitoring our water resources has noted…

Dr. DAVIES: Fine civil servant.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...yes, he is up there... (Applause) ...has noted that of the 10 hydrological basins throughout the island, only in the Kingston basin does demand exceed availability. I deliberately did not say supply because some of what exist is polluted. The comparison of water demand and water availability projected to 2025 indicates that in two basins, the Rio Cobre in St. Catherine, as well as in Kingston, demand will exceed the available resources. However, if non-revenue water is reduced and efficiencies improve, the difference between demand and availability can be reduced and the negative balance reversed.

Mr. Speaker, again, I state that this position of overall surplus, water resources can be reversed if despite armed with this knowledge we do not take action to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Mr. Speaker, the upgrade and expansion of the National Hydrological Monitoring Network is being undertaken to provide more climate data and information for effective planning and action at the local and national levels. Already several new rainfall intensity gauges have been installed, and stream flow gauges upgraded to provide more reliable and continuous data to monitor and evaluate climate change and its impacts on our water resources.

To enhance the dissemination of data, the authority formally launched its online hydrologic database in September 2013. The web map allows anyone, anywhere in the world, to obtain hydrologic data without referring to the authority simply by logging on to the site and following the instructions. This is a first in the Caribbean.

(Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PICKERSGIL: Mr. Speaker, the target of the 85 per cent access to potable water by way of in-house and communal tax by 2020 has been repeated many times in this Honourable House and we are committed to meeting this target primarily through our majority utility provider the NWC - the National Water Commission.

Mr. CHARLES: (Inaudible) ...pothole-free from 2003.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Listen, you getting *yuh* road; you getting Sour Sop Turn right up to Chapelton - $1 Billion - you getting a whole lot.

Mr. SHAW: Omar, it became pothole galore by 2004.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Speaker, in pursuit of this goal, the NWC has completed a number of major projects islandwide, which will ensure a steady supply of potable water and adequate sewage services to hundreds of thousands of Jamaicans.

Mr. Speaker, I now move to a report of my stewardship in this sector over the year. I will mention the projects, but in the interest of time, I invite the Members to peruse the document in their possession for a substantive report on the various projects undertaken.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: No, you have not gotten it yet, because I want you to listen to me and after you listen to me then you go and read it.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: But I admire your impatience. The NWC completed a number of projects during the last financial year. Here we go:

- Marlborough to Berry Hill in Southern Manchester.

You, Mr. Speaker - capital cost $20 Million, project completed. Mr. Speaker, I know you can't hit the desk, but certainly... (Applause) But he is not in the House.

- Old Harbor Bay Pipeline in Southern St. Catherine; capital cost $80 Million, another project completed. (Applause)
- Christiana-Sedburgh Pipeline in North Eastern Manchester; capital cost: $30 Million; project completed.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: You said water pipeline completed, but there is no water.

Mr. PICKERSGILL:

- Palisadoes Pipeline in East Kingston and Port Royal. Despite public outcry the project was successfully completed without any major impact on the traffic or the new roadway; capital cost: $230 Million. (Applause)
- KMA (JICA), Lot 2B Pipeline to benefit thousands of Jamaicans - KMA/JICA, Lot 2B Pipeline to benefit thousands of Jamaicans in East Central St. Catherine, South Eastern St. Catherine, Southern St. Catherine; capital cost J$1.4 Billion; Project completed, $8 Billion. (Applause)
- Hounslow to Parottee Water Supply, Phase I, in St. Elizabeth South Western, capital - another project completed - $68 Million. (Applause)
- The Swallowfield Road Sewage Project in which an additional 33 households in South Eastern St. Andrew were connected to the central sewage system; capital cost: $25 Million.
  (Applause)
- Hope Road (Side Roads) Sanitary Sewers which connected all side roads between Kings House and Matilda's Corner in South Eastern St. Andrew and North East St. Andrew...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: No, no...

...to the Soapberry Treatment Plant; capital cost: $90 Million project completed.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, during the consultations on the Water Sector Policy...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: No man, don't finish yet, cool *yuh* foot; cool yuh foot. During the consultations on the Water Sector Policy, the question of the cost of sewage connections was raised, and I want to make this point. I want to point out that only 30 percent of the Corporate Area is sewered – only 30 per cent is sewered. As a result, the aquifer in the Corporate Area is severely polluted by the

numerous soak-away pits in the Corporate Area households. *Yuh* know that.

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Speaker - but I want you to repeat this, after me.

Mr. McKENZIE: I... I...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: No, it is not I. Sewage goes out of sight but it does not go away. Sewage goes out of sight but it doesn't go away. Suffice it to say, we are living on borrowed time as it is now haunting us.

Miss GRANGE: I am waiting to hear about Tawes Pen.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: You know that.

Mr. SAMUDA: What about Liguanea Plain?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes, same thing, pollution all over. As such, we have had to abandon production of water from 13 of the 27 wells in the Corporate Area, and instead, bring water into Kingston and St. Andrew from St. Catherine and St. Thomas, which is not really fair to those people.

A MEMBER: Not fair, not fair!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That is correct - unfair.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: So, Mr. Speaker, too many soak away pits.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: So then, Mr. Speaker, I reiterate; this is the only hydrological basin where the demand for water exceeds availability. I am, therefore, appealing to Corporate Area householders, to get connected to the sewer lines as they become available, as this measure is necessary to safeguard our aquifers. In the meantime, we are exploring options for financing the cost of connection. Over time, the intention is to restore the affected wells to production.

Mr. Speaker, I will now detail the various projects that commence during 2013 and are at this time continuing towards completion. The second component of the Jamaica Water Supply Improvement Project - Category B projects. Sections of this project are on target for completion by February 2015 and will impact some one million Jamaicans.

Segment 2 of the Rio Cobre pipelines replacement, between Content District and Ferry. Among the many constituencies that will benefit are the constituencies of the Most Honourable Prime Minister and that of the Leader of the Opposition. The others know who they are. (Applause) We are talking about a capital cost of $2.6 Billion; supply and installation of 40,000 domestic and commercial water metres to enhance accuracy in the measurement of consumer consumption.

Constituencies island-wide will be impacted. Capital costs $1.8 Billion. Refurbishment of major water treatment plants at Bogue in St. Ann, Great River, St. James and Martha Brae, Trelawny - and I think the contractor is up there. (Applause) More than 500,000 Jamaicans along the North Coast corridor will benefit including: North West St. Ann, Northern Trelawny, East Central St. James, North West St. James, Central St. James, West Central St. James, Eastern Hanover, Western Hanover, Western Westmoreland - and we are talking about $800 Million. (Applause) Martha Brae Water Treatment Plant Extension to benefit St. Ann,

Trelawny, St. James, Hanover and Westmoreland.

Again, Mr. Speaker, constituencies along the North Coast corridor will benefit, as well as the Harmony Cove development - capital cost: $1.5 Billion. (Applause)

In the great constituency of North West St. Catherine, as well as Norwood, supply will be improved to 60,000 consumers in these areas and losses reduced; capital cost: $750 Million.

Construction of six kilometers of transmission mains through the town of Lucea to increase the supply capability to approximately 100,000 beneficiaries in Eastern Hanover, Western Hanover, Western Westmoreland; cost: $1 Billion. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this overall Jamaica Water Supply Improvement Project, category B, is progressing well towards final completion. The NWC and its customers are already benefiting from its implementation in a number of areas across the country, such as the reduction in losses and improved water pressure and reliability.

Mr. Speaker, the Agualta Vale, Richmond, Highgate, Islington Water Supply Improvement Project to benefit persons in Central St. Mary and South Eastern St. Mary. Madam Prime Minister, you announced this project...

The PRIME MINISTER: Yes.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...and I know that several housing schemes are on hold pending its completion. I want to assure you that it should be completed in 18 months and will boost development and employment in that section of the country - capital cost $800 Million. (Applause)

(DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

The Cascade/Claremont/Jericho Water Supply in Eastern Hanover being implemented by the NWC in partnership with the Rural Water Supply; 9,500 citizens in Eastern Hanover will benefit; capital cost: $275 Million. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Phase I of the Port Antonio Water Sewage and Drainage Project to benefit 75,000 persons in Eastern Portland; capital cost: $1.9 Billion.

Government MEMBERS: What, what! (Applause)

Mr. PICKERSGILL. Mr. Speaker, project underway expected to be completed by November 2014.

The Mason River, Kellits, Bull Head, Sandy River Water Supply in North Clarendon will benefit 6,500 residents; capital cost: $205 Million.

The Non-Pariel/Orange Bay/ Retirement Water Supply Scheme in Western Westmoreland, $450 Million; Scotts Cove to Belmont Pipeline Replacement in Eastern Westmoreland...

Mr. McKENZIE: All of them started under Labour Party; you must say it.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...in coordination with the NWA Road Rehabilitation Works, a total of 15 kilometres of pipeline will be

constructed to replace the existing lines. Ten thousand (10,000) persons in Belmont, Whitehouse, Scott's Cove and adjoining communities will benefit. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we understand the inconvenience, and are asking the residents for their patience as we move to complete the works. We are talking about a capital cost of $470 Million.

The Burnt Savannah/Knoxwood Water Supply Scheme in St. Elizabeth; capital cost: $60 Million; project underway and scheduled for completion this month.

The 26 pumping facilities projects under this IDB-funded KMA Water Supply Improvement Programme, 26 water supply facilities in the Corporate Area that are inefficient, and are unable to make growing demand, will be rehabilitated and improved.

Mr. McKENZIE: By when?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: All constituencies, including yours...

Mr. McKENZIE: By when?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...in Kingston and St. Andrew to benefit; capital cost: US$18.4 Million or approximately J$2 Billion. Mr. Speaker, another big project underway.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: The Windsor Heights Water Supply System in Eastern St. Catherine completed. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Working! Working! Working!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: The Troja, Lassie Spring Water Supply System in North East St. Catherine. He is gone, Desmond Mair, he is gone.

Works are substantially completed on the Haining/Belle Castle Water Supply System in Eastern Portland, and people are now receiving water from the system, including the Belle Castle all-age. The system is to be put into operation this month.

(Applause)

Investigations and designs have been completed on the Grant Hill Water Supply System and Kelly Spring in West Rural St. Andrew. Investigations and designs have also been completed for Tom Leinster and Devon Pen Water Supply System in South Eastern St. Mary, Phase One of the Top Hill Supply System in my own constituency in North West St. Catherine. Pipe material has been procured for the Seaton Water Supply System in South Eastern St. Mary. Pipelaying works as well as the construction of chlorine contact tank are scheduled to begin during the first quarter of 2014/2015.

Works were also undertaken on several other minor water supply systems. They include:

- Kerrick Hill Water Supply System, Western St. Thomas; work is substantially completed and the system is to be put into operation this month.
- Work is also substantially completed on the Hagley Gap Water Supply System, which will also be put into operation this month.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard the cries for the water from the Member of Western St. Thomas, and his constituents, and we are working together to ease their plight.

- The designs have been completed and pipe material has been purchased for the Richmond Hill Water Supply System in Eastern St. Thomas. Work is scheduled to commence during the first quarter of this financial year.
- Fifty-nine Million ($59M) has been earmarked in this year's Budget for the immediate upgrading and rehabilitation of several water supply systems, including:
- the Mahoe Ridge/Garlands/Horse Guard Water Supply Systems, South St. James;
- the Gutters/Retirement Water Supply System, West Central St. James;
- the Seaton Water Supply System in South Eastern St. Mary;
- the Georges Valley Water Supply System in South St. James, ongoing;
- the Northern Clarendon Minor Water Supply System.

Work will also be carried out on the Watermount Dam Expansion and upgrade in West Central St. Catherine.

Dr. BAUGH: What about to... (Inaudible) You promised me.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yeah, man. Wait, nuh, you getting it, you getting it. Yes, we have to start small.

- The Windsor Heights Expansion in Eastern St. Catherine;
- the Richmond Hill Water Supply System in Eastern St. Thomas. Designs were completed in the last financial year and the pipes procured.
- The Hagley Gap/Kerrick Hill Water Supply System - Western St. Thomas again - should be completed early.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to rainwater harvesting, climate change is telling us that rain water harvesting is not a technique of the past. However, there is a seeming reluctance to return to this method, particularly in rural communities, as there is a widely-held belief that with pipe comes progress.

Mr. Speaker, needless to say, we will be facing more severe droughts. For the 20 - Mr. Speaker, since the start of the Rainwater Harvesting and Catchment Tank Rehabilitation Programme in 2012...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ….investigations and designs have been carried out on 81 of the 282 Local Government inventory existing catchment tanks, islandwide.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Sixty have so far been rehabilitated.

For the 2013/2014 financial year, a total of Fifty Million ($50M) has been expended for the rehabilitation of an additional 39 catchment tanks, as follows:

- 12 in St. Ann
- 2 in Clarendon
- 7 in Manchester
- 3 in Westmoreland
- 2 in St. Catherine
- 2 in St. James
- 7 in Trelawny and

- 4 in St. Elizabeth

(Applause)

A MEMBER: What happen to Portland?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Communities that have benefitted from the complete rehabilitation of these tanks include:

- Epworth-Friendship in South East St. Ann (Applause)

Miss Lisa - she don't hear.

- York Castle Farm in North West St. Ann (Applause)
- Invemess-Aboukir and Fullerton Park in South West St. Ann (Applause)
- Good Hope, Evans Corner and Quick Step in North West St. Elizabeth

A Government MEMBER: Hutchie! Hutchie!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker...

(Heckling)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mind you fail, Hutchie! Hutchie, mind yu fail!

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I would just like to say, sir - on a point of order, a point of order. I see here that there is something said about Good Hope, Evans Corner and Quick Step - page 28 - North West St. Elizabeth. This is totally false...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: All right, we will...

Mr. HUTCHINSON: ...and I would like him to correct that. It is North East St. Elizabeth. There is nothing whatsoever, that you have announced for North West St. Elizabeth.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I am grateful for the correction.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: You are misleading the House. And once again, you did nothing with roads and you have done nothing for water for North West St. Elizabeth.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: There was something started...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Same thing. That is right, sir, you notice, nothing for St. Elizabeth. There is a New Market system and a Carisbrook system which were started, and we hear nothing them now. This is sabotage! Blatant sabotage of North West St. Elizabeth.

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

He is victimizing North West St. Elizabeth! He did it under the roads and he is doing it under water! Blatant victimization!

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

An Opposition MEMBER: He announced three in St. Ann, none for North East St. Ann!

(Cross talk)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Speaker, I noted what the Member said.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker -

- Inverness-Aboukir and Fullerton Park in South West St. Ann

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

- Good Hope, Evans Corner and Quick Step

- Bruntie in Eastern Westmoreland

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CHARLES: These are just announcements!

Mr. PICKERSGILL:

- Birds and Porters Mountain in Central Westmoreland

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: That's a good place, Westmoreland!

Mr. PICKERSGILL:

- Good Hall, Content in East Central St. James
- Cedar Valley and Mount Moreland in North Central St. Catherine (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Is a PNP ting dis! (Cross talk)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: For this financial year...

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, under the Tank and Pump Programme all constituencies will benefit, all. Let me make that statement.

And for this financial year, an amount of Forty-five Million ($45M) has been budgeted to carry out rehabilitation and repairs to catchment tanks. And, as I said -

- 2 in Clarendon
- 10 in the hilly
- 6 in Manchester

A total of 30 tanks are slated to be rehabilitated during this financial year, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I make my closing remarks. (Cross talk)

Mr. CHARLES: Anyhow, this is just announcement, none a yu nah go get nuttin!

(Laughter)

(Cross talk)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Speaker, I have given an account of aspects of my stewardship for the past year...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Bad account! Bad account!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...in the Ministry that has been entrusted by the Most Honourable Prime Minister.

My Ministry, Mr. Speaker, has delivered 12,926 titles for the year under review. More ordinary Jamaicans are now legal owners... (Applause) ...of their own 'little piece of the Rock' and we are closer to realizing the ownership society that we all want. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we are the pioneers of climate change in the region, and with our local, regional and international partners are implementing adaptation and mitigation strategies to ensure that with climate change, Jamaica is indeed changing.

We have expended Ten Billion Dollars ($10B) *per annum* over the past two years to give more Jamaicans the precious commodity of water, thereby laying the pipeline for sustainable development. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Through our various policies, plans and programmes, the Ministry is proactively pursuing the goal of the Vision 2030 National Development Plan.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Speaker, it is a partnership that does not only include the Government, but all citizens and the way they interact, work and think.

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels repeatedly)

Mr. Speaker, it is a partnership that does not only include the Government but all citizens and the way they interact. As is said, Mr. Speaker, "As every man has received the gift, even so, Minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

Mr. Speaker, I finish with some thanks and acknowledgement. I would like to express my gratitude to so many, Mr. Speaker, who have made possible the achievements I have outlined, and who will continue to play an integral part to my own future accomplishments and that of the Ministry I head. As the saying goes, Mr. Speaker, "an attitude of gratitude can make your life a beatitude."

Mr. SHAW: Don't bother with poems.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: And so I thank - and so I thank first and foremost...

Mr. SHAW: …'bout you a rhyme.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: And, so, Mr. Speaker, I thank first and foremost, my family for their unwavering support throughout the years. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Most of all at this time, I cherish the fond memories of my dear departed brother, Tony.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, my profound thanks also to my leader, Prime Minister the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller... (Applause) ...for giving me the opportunity to serve Jamaica as Minister, in what is undeniably a Ministry with critical portfolio responsibilities. I really could never have a finer and better boss. Mr. Speaker, you look at her, younger every day. (Applause)

I want to assure her that I will continue to do my best to live up to the expectations of this Administration, as well as the people of Jamaica.

My thanks to my Minister of State, Honourable Ian Hayles, who I consider to be one of the best and brightest in the Administration... (Applause) ...and for whose support I am humbly grateful.

Mr. Speaker, my gratitude to the executive management team at the Ministry, headed by my Permanent Secretary Dr. Alwyn Hayles, (Applause) Director General Mrs. Sharon Crooks and Chief Technical Director Colonel Oral Khan, as well as the heads of agencies, departments and divisions within my Ministry, and I think most of them are here. (Applause) Their professionalism and dedication ensure that our policies, plans and projects are implemented in a timely and efficient manner and that our goals are met. I am also deeply grateful to the Board chairpersons and Board members for which I have oversight and humbly thank them for their commitment to serve. (Applause)

My profound thanks to our local, regional and international partners for their genuine and enduring collaboration and support, they

include the European Union, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Government of the People's Republic of China, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United National Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility, the Global Water Partnership, the Korea International Corporation Agency (KOICA), the Korea Cadastral Survey Corporation, the City of Hagen in Germany and the community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as the many stakeholders who attended our consultations on the climate change policy and water sector policy. (Applause)

Thanks, Mr. Speaker, to my team at the office, Loma Bansey and Rodeen Lynch, my Executive Secretaries, the public relations team, as well as office attendants Annmarie and Shelly-Ann. My gratitude also to my personal details: Susan, Audrey, Kerice, Andrew, Wykeham and Monica (Applause) Monica has served me nearly 30 years, Mr. Speaker, whose dedicated support makes it possible for me to give the kind of worthwhile service that the people of this beautiful and beloved country expect.

Mr. Speaker, my thanks to the caretakers, councillors and my constituents in North West St. Catherine, (Applause) which is arguably one of the most beautiful constituencies in Jamaica. (Applause) To them I say, I have received your support since 1989 and indeed, I am currently serving my sixth consecutive term as your 'sixth star general'. (Applause) Without your support I would not have had the opportunity to serve my country in the manner I have been able to. I want to acknowledge you as well again, Mr. Speaker, and all my colleagues here in this Honourable House. Despite being on opposite sides of the floor and our occasional differences in opinion, respect is due. (Applause)

Finally, Audley, you know this one, I give thanks to the Almighty for his continued spiritual guidance and his mercies which have helped me to continue to offer service to my brothers and sisters and to Jamaica land we love. The one that you know and I commend it to all. The one that you know, Audley, is Micah 6 verse 8. And it says, Mr. Speaker, He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?

May it please you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker Gavels)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker...

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I received an electronic notification yesterday, which they live by, which says that the second speaker this afternoon is one Mr. Lester Mike Henry, MP.

(Cross talk)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, just to clarify. Up to last week there wasn't a slot allocated for Mr. Henry. There were three speakers. Mr. Henry was subsequently listed as the fourth speaker because he wasn't sure.

Now the Deputy Speaker is not going today and so we want the second listed speaker to go before – who is actually here with his people from St. Elizabeth, and I do not believe - and I have sent the Member a note. He didn't respond otherwise; I sent him a note as to the listing. No, I sent the Member and I would urge that we allow the Member to speak.

Mr. HENRY: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Henry.

Mr. HENRY: The country is in such dire straits. I don't want to be controversial, but let me really put it on record that having served here, I am the longest serving Member of Parliament, I received a notice and I advised the House from long ago, and we know there were three speakers. I received a notice which said I would be the second speaker. The Leader of Opposition Business confirmed that to me on my way here two minutes ago, thereabout. I received a note from the (House) Leader telling me that somebody else would speak before me. Unfortunately, it will also impact on our television appearance I have later on. The country is too paramount in importance to me so I leave it to my colleagues and I leave it to the integrity of the...

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) We have a long-standing protocol where we alternate the speakers and I don't see why we shouldn't continue in that mode. (Applause) I understand from what I am gathering that there has been some mix up, but I don't think Mr. Henry should fall victim because of this error. (Applause)

Mr. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, I hope I am permitted to speak from a seat other than the one I occupy.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Mr. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, custom and protocol demands an opening salutation to you and your parliamentary staff. And I do so with a great degree of pleasure because I have admired how you run this House over the period of time that you have sat in that chair. (Applause)

Most importantly for me, Mr. Speaker, are the representatives of the constituency here that I have represented for some thirty-odd years, the councillors who are here present who have served continuously like me for very long periods of time, Councillors Jones, Williams and Davis, (Applause) Miss Daphne Taylor, who is just about taking her seat (Applause) and the one who dawns each day with a great delight in my life, my dear wife Dawn. (Applause)

The constituency, Mr. Speaker, faces great challenges, but we intend to seek to develop against modules and we intend to do this against a social development which I am seeking to implement. And in my opening remarks, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank - because part of that development programme means changing community centres into production centres; it means capitalizing on intellectual property rights; it means opening up scholarships for students, especially in the field of sports. I, therefore, want to express my thanks to the Minister of Tourism, the

Honourable Wykeham McNeill for his response to me as I seek to bring to Jamaica on the 20th of June the Under 23 National United States Soccer Champions to Jamaica to stay at Milk River in part of the sports tourism and local development. (Applause) These community centres will be production centres.

Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, the constituency, however, is now threatened by a great degree of increase in crime to social issues that need to be addressed. And having just listened to the Minister of Water, and I heard of one area being dealt with, let me say that water still is the greatest problem that we have in the city and town of May Pen.

But Mr. Speaker, I see where history could repeat itself. In my analysis of the challenges we face today, many of these should have been self-evident to leaders - leaders who unfortunately have buried their heads in the sand and continued follow the 'cousin syndrome' which has created the rigid two-party system rather than adopt to change.

Indeed Mr. Speaker, Marcus Garvey, our National Hero, was the only one to really put all of this in context for me, which is politics and self-esteem is the most important element to your development.

Mr. Speaker, service with a degree of independence, plus the March of Father Time, permits me today to move beyond the mere boundaries of a sectoral debate which in its continued structure, is really only marking time.

For my part, Mr. Speaker, the debate should be more a state of the nation debate; rounding out the analysis of our failures in leadership and dealing with how we will change this nation.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HENRY: This is the path I take today. An approach however that certainly would also indict me at my level, and my length of service; but leaves me only comforted by the realization that we're not really collectively responsible, as we think, as having served at the highest decision-making table, I have concluded that our system is really one - and I quote from my own book - "meetings of the first among equals; where the first ultimately makes the decision".

Mr. Speaker, ignoring these things and their birthing years and moving from growth to decline and providing band-aid to our expanding wounds may not be as apparent to the new generation, but is glaringly stark to those of my age.

Today's world, Mr. Speaker, is a fight for moving the economics of control from cash to plastic world; a money controlled by world linked in the never ending growth of communications and travel, where the money you left in the care of banks is not really yours, but the states, as evidenced presently by the monetary crisis in Greece and Ireland and here in Jamaica - FINSAC, JDX, NDX, where we penalize the investors and the savers so much so, that what was once a virtue could easily be a vice.

Present leaders have failed to challenge it and to change it and those who try, they ran away from it. For I daresay, there isn't one who'd not have made real change by the power of the first among equals.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, I can't, in all honesty, stand today and say that it was good for me to sit here and listen; as the proverbial chickens have come home to roost. Now not to respond with internal sadness of the country's failed leadership who had their chance to make a difference and failed. And yet they still today, speak in almost abstract terms of failures by the society, when they had the real opportunity to make the change.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HENRY: I intend to offend no one, Mr. Speaker, but I must admit a degree of frustration and self blame at the same time, as I reflect and recognize that we continue to play the same game, Nero fiddling while Rome burns.

Over the last three years I had to reflect on the achievements made by the JLP Government in those four short years, and my own role. So as I now realize and analyze that after some 18½ years of the same government we replaced, they were returned to power, which makes me reflect and ask the question, why? And how? What I must ask, by being again in opposition, has made me realize that we on this side, need urgently to come to grips with our failures then and our failures today, for as an opposition we need to wake up and smell the roses; we in the opposition need to seek to find a way to let the people know we can fill the void the people are seeing and which the Government of the PNP are glaringly admitting to.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HENRY: As they stumble from one miss step to another, and almost with a sense of bravado, seem to take the people for granted and all but revel in a belief that this is PNP country. God help us if that is true, as I believe and hope it's Jamaica's country.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HENRY: I still hope and believe that deep down there's a will of the people to say enough is enough; and good must triumph over failures, as we move to overcome the rigidity of party politics which presently caters to a recycling of the genetically endowed, at the expense of performance and ability that is available elsewhere. Oftentimes flying in the face of good sense and higher values, but then, Mr. Speaker, if Government can get away with it, so be it.

And so, Mr. Speaker, history records that in the total span of nearly 25 years, we the JLP have only had four years. And so we must turn to the newly emerging and younger ones; and they come in a variety of shades and ideas, some ideas not new, others that need to be attended to and which left undone will be more of the same; thus at this time Jamaica is seen as having conceded its moral authority and searches for answers.

I'm impressed by some of what I hear. The Leader of the Opposition, Member of Parliament Campbell stands out. (Applause) On my side, I've watched today as former Minister Vaz made his contribution through his discounting salary and I wondered why in not in this the Chamber of the House, we've chucked aside Senator Montague's position on nuclear energy, when we're fighting over an energy battle that is really proven to be not the way we should be going.

For my part and our part then we must remind the country that what we did in four short years, what it would've been like if we'd stayed the course, and what we see needs to be done to get us back on track without waiting on the proverbial mango to ripe...

Mr. BUCHANAN: It would've been a disaster!

Mr. MAIR: This is a disaster. We're living in a disaster; what you're talking about?

(Cross talks)

Mr. HENRY: ...which to the country, is what we must appear to be doing.

(Cross talks)

I hope not, Mr. Speaker, and I hope we can change that.

(Cross talks)

For, Mr. Speaker, the people are suffering and waiting with baited breath for fulfillment, not promises, for honesty and a sense of purpose, they're impatient of debate, they require action, not words and the cry I hear needs to be answered (Applause) abated.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

(Cross talks)

Mr. HENRY: For the older generation like me, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. CHUCK: Yuh remember what PJ said about...

(Inaudible)

Mr. HENRY: ...who are in the discarded file, I continue to admire the referred to youth and exuberance...

Mr. DALLEY: Shut up! You're disturbing the Member.

Mr. HENRY: ...just as I had then, and in a sense still have it now. But in all sincerity I pray and hope that I won't be saddened by the failure to implement, if for no other reason of what I've said in my earlier part, Cabinet is not really truly a collective responsibility decision-making body, instead, it's all about the meeting of the first among equals; if for no other reason.

Now the fact that Ministers serve at the sole behest of the PM, and having served there I know, Mr. Speaker, it is my view then that the country beget a long and meaningful change; Cabinet requires a constitutional change, which has to come from a joint change to both the JLP and the PNP's constitution, as Jamaica's approach to her own constitution, for the constitution of both parties preceded Jamaica's constitution and protects their poor performance.

Mr. DALLEY: So what the changes say - what we need to take to Cabinet?

Mr. MAIR: That's where he's going.

Mr. HENRY: Well the first thing you have to do - and I don't want to sidetrack - is that you must decide, can you have a leader of a party and a Prime Minister. The second one you have to do is that there should be appointments in Cabinet, which is not totally left to the Prime Minister, and the party plays a role in that.

Mr. DALLEY: Okay.

Mr. HENRY: Because, Mr. Speaker, they breed fear in the Members who really bends the will of the leader. So in my search I ask from this very personal position that we have to decide where the buck stops, by continuing in a spirit of passing on the baton and in the interest of our Jamaica, I'm hoping that my

presentation draws on my experiences, as it reflects on the past, which is relevant today as it was yesterday, to draw on my experience, to do my own comparison with an appreciation, there's nothing new under the sun, but we still beg for a vision, a vision equal to the task of hope, which should spring eternal, and where, if I can help, I'm still willing to do, for my record of putting people and country first, is still my driving force.

Mr. Speaker, as the twilight approaches and the failures take us to the precipice, the struggle to rescue our country's future continues to be of paramount importance. What could've been? What are we failing to do in time lost? What we must try to keep to hope alive and save for the fall, as we in our own hands retard growth? Today, I'm speaking from my own practical and sometimes philosophical base. I use my years of experience to guide my thoughts and sometimes smile over how the wheel turns, and how it is true that what goes up must come down.

But I ask, Mr. Speaker, what if, what if as I look back at some 30 to 40 years round about the 1970s and I ask, what if I was right then, when I said that we should have never closed the railways and instead connected it to a new and development airfield in Vernamfield? Would spring plane have been successful, and would agriculture be different? What if I was right when I said we were undercounting our population and because our population count was incorrect, it would lead to an imbalance in planning and demographics, a breakdown in family structure and that we needed a proper head count?

And I stand by that today, Mr. Speaker, what I've seen and what I've heard does not compute, and to my mind reflects the decline seen in the lack of order, decline in discipline, failed family life.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HENRY: For the statistics which I still questioned if they're correct - and we all seem to think they are - then for me, Mr. Speaker, if they're correct we're a failed state, for we have failed our people. For no way should've been where we are today with supposed steady and unwavering population count. I'm looking for a reason for the failures, as I look across the isles as I looked at antecedences, as I look at training, as I look at education, I don't see any real difference. There have been directions that we've changed, but why then, Mr. Speaker, why are we where we are?

Mr. Speaker, we cap the amount of poor on the basis of what we can afford, not on the basis of real need, and I repeat, real need. What that certainly does, Madam Prime Minister, who is absent, is it balances the books and not the lives, for as the economy contracts, we define the criteria not on who qualifies to be poor, and who needs to be educated, but on the basis of who and how many we can afford to be poor and to be educated. This is probably to meet the IMF percentage of our population which we call poor, cap it at the number regardless of how many are in need and thus discard the uncounted, sending them to capture land.

Further study will show, Mr. Speaker, that a youthful population drives growth, and if we fail as a country to take care of our children from basic school and not until primary, what do we expect, except a disjointed development, because that is what is really happening today. A practical result of that in Central Clarendon, Mr. Speaker, is that the Hazard Basic School has received no nutrition cheque since September 2013.

A MEMBER: What!

Mr. HENRY: The teachers remained underpaid on this very challenging job. I salute the struggling basic school teachers and advise of my continued school feeding programme for all the 26 schools that exist in the constituency I represent.

Mr. Speaker, which MP here can be satisfied that the PATH criteria is really equal to the need, and that it's not growing increasingly distant to the real need? For instance, where is the true cost of transport to collect the little fee that they get? While we run a transport system skewed in the wrong way and continuing to run on one-leg road only.

While we rightly talk about bank fees, are we cognizant of the percentage of the cost which the old and infirm have to pay for a mere service of going to collect their money, which will return, of course, to my earlier position on population count?

Mr. Speaker, small business, while we're talking about banks, are we aware that commercial banks hold foreign cheques and bank drafts for 21 business days? When you add weekends it's a month, how can a small business survive? Yes they can go the route of wire telegraphic transfer, but the sender pays exorbitant fees, and every effort made to try and get that dealt with, it's not being dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, what if I was right, when I protested the causeway being built and Portmore being developed? Imagine what Downtown Kingston would be if the resources that had been poured into Portmore, a then vast desert. What if instead the commonwealth loan was used to build high rises in Kingston and as the population grew, build dormitories for the city? But I can recall what the then politician said about my efforts. As we borrowed funds to build the Sunshine City, and yes, Mr. Speaker, we put central air conditioning in on sand and provided carpets wall to wall as part of the whole new way of arriving at living. I guess, Mr. Speaker, we must now face what the scientist says as Portmore is threatened by climate change and even as we still undercount the population in that City.

What if I was right, that ganja should have been made legal through sacramental and religious use of Rastafari, who are the leading proponents of its use as an indigenous herb (Applause) and who made us know that it could be used as a medicine in many ways and was used as so-called bush medicine. (Applause) Forty years ago, Mr. Speaker, and why by extension was Rastafarian not given the right to own land and to pay taxes, and to pay no taxes as was done for the Anglo-Saxons' religions. Mr. Speaker, that was me forty years ago today. What if I plead with us

to act in some of these many and other issues that our country can move to growth and development?

But, Mr. Speaker, the decline I see is heartrending, the row in poverty steep in a food for the poor mentality, a piece of ply request increasingly now the cry of the school -leavers and drop-outs or the Government cannot afford reasons. But, Mr. Speaker that is self demeaning, it damages the psyche and brings a failure to self-reliance where begging, Mr. Speaker is no longer from real need, but a tool to survive as it reaches endemic proportions. We must stop this decline. The Opposition must play the greatest part to ensure that this is done.

We must face the issues we have to successively ignore, grasp the opportunities and remain from failing to follow up on the ideas which we think are not ours or our parties. We have by leadership failures and distraction and diversions, missed so many opportunities to fulfill the promise of yester year, so now we are locked into the hands of others with an IMF test we must pass and obey, and surely looking at a possible failed State. As we end up, Mr. Speaker, with most of our people living on streets with no names, houses with no numbers, known only by an alias, ending up by describing themselves on cell phones as the brown girl by the tank, the boy you just left or talk to yesterday, or the teacher whose only contact with her students is by cell-phone. Bring you up in a society of people each with one foot in the have not world, and the one foot in the never will have world with a decreased loss of hope and despair creeping all around us as the people move to anarchy. The people are now deduced to seeking basic needs that Mr. Speaker, is food, shelter and clothing, how are they expected to think.

Theft of electricity and water is rampant and we sadly, Mr. Speaker, respond by licensing handcarts. In my school days, pushing a hand cart was your threat to learn. I see a better way for us, Mr. Speaker, and I dare to dream the dream which still do at this stage of departure, I pray for better as I make this presentation seeking to say how it can be better.

So let me look at our four years as government. But as Minister I emphasize one, three, five, seven to implement the programmes. A fast blue print to steer the ship away from decline to growth using much of the observation of areas I had experienced firsthand in my life. In the late 60s to mid 70s, Mr. Speaker, when my life revolved around the Singaporean and far east developments with the outreach to Africa, when I spent time in Singapore and shared in the Singapore growth and vision, not the least of which was to see how Japan and Singapore used the vision of open skies, firstly used by the USA after the World War to build out new and major airports and faster and cheaper ways to travel now marveled by all.

I watched the connected growth of the plans for Changi Airport in Singapore, Narita Airport in Japan as they too emerged as world players and growth connectors. I can remember driving into Narita Airport in a zig-zag fashion while it was being built out, while

the farmers were stoning the birds to fly in order to prevent the planes from landing that is before Japan continued to grow and became the leader of the economic world at that time. I later saw it used to expand Great Britain's outreach through Heathrow and watched the value of those time slots at the airports grow about which I warned. You recalled how we once owned fourteen slots at Heathrow and how either by lack of knowledge, or blatant disregard to the people's property, we squandered a value landing slots which is at today's value, Mr. Speaker, is in excess of our debt. (Applause)

Coming closer to home, I shared the vision with Mayor of Atlanta, my late great friend Maynard Jackson and my friend Julian Bond and the fight to build and develop the Hearts Field Airport in Atlanta. Now, Mr. Speaker that fight against all the traditions of the JFKs and all the other airports, that airport now ranks above JFK moving forty two point five million people annually. I say all of that to say, Mr. Speaker; I know where we needed to go. Therefore, when I inherited the Norman Manley International Airport with a Four Hundred Million Dollar investment already started, it was started, Mr. Speaker, while the Palisadoes strip was below sea level. I criticized it then but could do nothing and as we watched the Palisadoes sink by the time we became government, some half of that expenditure was spent and had to be protected and so with no pursuit of development of Vernamfield which was left in a 2000 year plan of that government, I agreed and supported an opportunity with my then permanent secretary, my late junior minister to save the NMIA and build Vernamfield. And let me make it quite clear, Mr. Speaker, because I speak so often of Vernamfield that a lot of people seem to think it is in the constituency I represent, it is miles, and miles away from that, it is in the constituency of Minister Arscott.

I say all that to say, Mr. Speaker, with no pursuit of the development of a new aerodrome as was listed in the millennium project, I agreed and supported it. But with the opportunity given me to set out to assess, redirect and implement quickly I acted on it. As one will not impact on - and Mr. Speaker, one that would seek to integrate and start a new aerodrome development plan, seeking to bury the myth that the development of Vernamfield would impact the privatization of NMIA. It is a fictitious position and must be brought strongly by the Ministers to the Prime Minister, as one will not impact the other. I repeat it is wrong, Mr. Speaker, and we must be aware of the technocrats with small minds that kill big ideas, and this thinking still exists as I speak today. It is still used to delay and prevent the growth of our development of airport networks. Get them out of the system, regardless of their political suasion.

Argentina offered to have developed five airports all at the same time. The question, therefore, Mr. Speaker, is where would we be? So, Mr. Speaker, I set out to correct that error to protect the investment already made. I included in the Chinese JDIP Concessionaire Loan a special provision to build the shoreline protection and that will include the new road

we proudly drive on today, sadly, without the boardwalk and the necessary beautification of palm trees that would make it so much more attractive if you drive on it today. I could bring the clippings which said it was a legacy. I could bring the clippings which said what it was. Just as we apply this new development to Mount Rosser Bypass, now extended to its new North/South Link. In similar fashion, Mr. Speaker, we have to rescue and save 120 million that was already spent, and to save the country from an embarrassing court case with Bouygues. And so with the help of Christopher Bovell and Ferris Ziadie we got the Chinese to agree to complete the North/South Highway and to save the millions spent.... (Applause) ...and all because the Government did not complete the geographic study.

Indeed, we left in that agreement, Mr. Speaker, the plan for Chinese to build the connecting highway link from Glenmuir to Mandeville with a start off position of US 7 Million saved in the extension of the other roads. (Applause)

Dr. DAVIES: At that time.

Mr. HENRY: Seven million as a start. But what is left in that agreement is that CHEC must have the first right of refusal to continue it, because without it the circuitous road that you want to build around the country for development will not be, well I don't know where the 7 million is and the bridge has not started. They negotiated with Chris Bovell and Ferris Ziadie the terms of the concession, Ferris developed an acceptable financial model for the project that included the extension of Highway 2000 as I said. I look forward in this debate, Mr. Speaker, to hear what of the outcome of this programme and the Vernamfield development. Mr. Speaker, in that development that we had in the North/South Highway, we identified the needs and the capability to produce and offering an easy link to rail.

Mr. Speaker, this was all meant to drive a catalyst for real economic change and growth, and now three years, three years hence, Mr. Speaker, and Madam PM in absentia. We should certainly - what we are certainly doing to complete the North/South Highway, is congratulatory in the continuity, but we should have done much more. That is why I am sad not to have heard anything about Vernamfield neither from the substantive Minister or the Minister of Industry. Well I urge them to ensure that the lands, because the criticism of Highway 2000 was the lack of economic development along that highway. And without that economic development to increase the traffic which would make the thing sustainable and return your money earlier than 34 years, without the development of Vernamfield and the stadium and the new towns, they are still struggling below the line to meet the toll charges. But remember how often the toll charges, if it was not raised every six months was in the news, for four years we didn't raise the toll. And Mr. Speaker...

The SPEAKER: The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker. I move that the Member's time be extended to allow him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Henry.

Mr. HENRY: I thank my colleagues, Mr. Speaker.

And that is why, Mr. Speaker, if we had seen a parallel development in these other areas which were left there and ready, we would have seen the ability to become a hub raised and opportunities understood all by this House. For by now, some four years on, dreams would have been realized as we would have also completed the Aerospace College at Vernamfield next to Garvey Maceo that would have absorbed the skills we had from the bauxite and given hope to the 17 to 24 year old, some of whom would be graduating now as I speak.

We would have also built out the Port Authority own logistics park at Tinson Pen. We will be relocating the current flight training school to Vernamfield. We would have tied that to the beginning of a MRO operation at that location, starting small but thinking big. And by now, four years later, some thousands of jobs and a new vision would have been created and Jamaicans and investors would be seeing the light. They would not be looking elsewhere while we talk and argue between ministries and Ministers, between each other, as this impacts on Central Clarendon, Mr. Speaker, because Mr. Speaker, all of that was done with a vision of hope and planning. So, Mr. Speaker, I must be here, sadden today by some of what has taken place.

The sea/air opportunity was left fully planned. The research had shown that Jamaica, unlike its competitors in the region, including Miami, could provide the most cost effective and timely movement of cargo utilizing a sea/air movement...

Mr. MAIR: Multimodal.

Mr. HENRY: ...due to the prevailing recession of high cost of fuel. Mr. Speaker, our economic survival depended on it; our economic survival as the Government still depends on it. The proposed Vernamfield development was fully listed, Mr. Speaker. It was developed in a development opportunity, developed on a phased basis; 4,500 metres of runway, infrastructure to support the development direct equity concession and all of this was already earmarked under the Vernamfield Development Company, which was private development, being driven with the stamp of approval of the country. Maintenance repair and overhaul Mr. Speaker is only done in one area of the world - two areas of the world at the moment. It's either in Singapore or in Europe. So, Mr. Speaker, why am I saddened by it, Mr. Speaker? I am saddened because right now, Mr. Speaker, we need that passenger air development not just cargo, because Mr. Speaker, Vernamfield is a valuable aviation asset. The structure of the business, and I will prove the points I have made in one simple thing of open skies.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what is open skies? I've done some research, Mr. Speaker,

because open skies began after the First World War when North America and Europe recognized that they had to come together to look at the threat of Russia and the countries of the East. In fact, how did we get involved in this before? Actually, President Eisenhower presented his open skies plan in 1955; Eleanor Roosevelt came to Jamaica and visited Vernamfield; Vernamfield was continued to be a hub that would protect the world in terms of movements on goods and services. In fact, it was even toyed with as the idea as to whether you should rebuild Europe or use a hub within this area.

In 1955, Eisenhower presented the open skies plan because that was World War oriented and protective to the element it didn't catch on^ except the United States used it. Well, Mr. Speaker, the impact of the 2007, about the time we became Government, of the United States/EU Open Skies Air Transport Agreement shows how important and how quickly that is necessary to developing countries. That is what lists the movement of people, because, Mr. Speaker, there isn't one person living, with the exclusion of few people in Japan, Australia and New Zealand is considered outside of that range. If you live in India, Malaysia, China, Singapore, Hong Kong, all of that belt in the Middle East, Mr. Speaker, you cannot move without a visa from the United States or the United Kingdom, because even in transit you have to have that visa.

Mr. Speaker, if we then say that we open and give the Chinese the need for no visas, which is important, let us recommend and realize now where we are because you still have to need that visa to come through unless you now use open skies to fly Far East, Africa, Jamaica on to South and Central America. That's where the hub now begins for traffic, Mr. Speaker. And so, Mr. Speaker, why did I say I am saddened about the aerospace college? Because, Mr. Speaker, while we have done this we have HEART, HEART is going to close the Academy at Breadnut Valley. Am I told they say they can't afford - they say it's training the wrong skills and they can't keep it open. Mr. Speaker, if we had continued with the Vernamfield and the MRO development where I left behind an agreement with Singapore to take one thousand of our graduates every year, we would have been able now to take over that facility and begin to train people in the heart of MRO.

Mr. Speaker, it's sad for I left in place that development plan I referred to. I have shown the impact of open skies capitalized on. And, Mr. Speaker, as I speak against that, Heathrow right now is planning for a whole new wider development. Need I remind us that there is a thing also called the charge for your in-transit passengers which was heightened and increased recently and we have been fighting for that to increase the visitor market. Mr. Speaker, this was the aerospace plan being planned by the JLP Government. Being parallel to CMI and maritime industry and in our time we increased the enrolled from two hundred to one thousand students. (Applause) We left in place plans to take it to three thousand students and then on to six thousand. But a decision on the connecting land, Mr.

Speaker, right next to the CMI needs to be made and if it is not made then you will retard the development of the CMI.

And, Mr. Speaker, if the developers who are promising that development can't fine tune and start then let us move that land to the CMI, return our plan for floating dry dock tied to the CMI and training. If we had pursued and implemented it would have driven me into more into your logistic rating and corrections. So, Mr. Speaker, Madam Prime Minister, as long as the ability to implement lies in more than one Ministry you have to crack the whip and take charge. For Madam PM it's up to your chairmanship of the economic Committee Cabinet to prevail and then, with your power, tell them to stop this "my Ministry" rubbish and let's oversee the development of Jamaica.

Opposition MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HENRY: And so I say to you, Madam PM, over to you, you the first among equals *(primus inter pares).* For Madam PM too much at the hub development lies in one Ministry and Mr. Speaker, while one speaks the other one remains silent. Mr. Speaker, let us return to look at the reality of Jamaica's transport situation. Norman Manley International Airport has a capacity is that - is now built to its full capacity.

(The Speaker leaves the Chair at 5:33 p.m. and the Deputy Speaker presides)

How without Vernamfield can we capitalize on open skies? We're at our limit. And, Mr. Speaker, the Sandals chain and all the others can sit down and plan their final growth pattern for taking out their percentage of visitors as our airport can only deliver a maximum of fifteen million travellers into eternity. Maybe what is happening is because Norman Manley was built for 6 million and is only doing 1.3 million, or Montego Bay built for 9 million and is only doing 3 million. We seem to believe that the growth can be built on building up the volume from 3 million to 9 [million] and 1.3 to 6 [million].

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned Hartsfield Airport with 42.5 million in one year. Are we aware, therefore, that if you can't bring the people in what will happen? You know I made a joke here, Mr. Speaker, because what will the economist tell me? The economist might turn to me and turn to the scientist and say, well, Mike Henry you don't have to make that kind of statement because what we'll have is vertical takeoff and landing. I guess since Virgin is giving flights to Mars and thing as a recurring position that's where we may want to go but that will be an attraction that takes away our tourists too.

Mr. Speaker, knowing all of this and coming to grip with the loss four years - what we end up with now, we're looking to continue to be transshipment port only. That is why I call Goat Islands an enclave investment.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HENRY: For I told the Chinese and CHEC, in particular, that I would confine them to Fort Augusta until all of these other developments were in place. (Applause) I knew it did not serve the Chinese main purpose, but it served ours, our Jamaicans and that's who we're here to serve...

Mr. MAIR: Our agenda.

Mr. HENRY: ...and what we were elected. But the development made us a hub for a logistics park like economic zones or merely spokes in a hub and the addition of each enhances your importance as rail and cedars. So if you move from a mere transshipment hub, which becomes the essence of the investment, we must hold the handle. We must demand everyone follows our vision...

Opposition MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HENRY: ...which is the real criterion of a hub.

Mr. Speaker, I sit here and I hear us being compared to Singapore and Dubai. And I share a great vision with the Minister, because yes, Dubai and Singapore are your examples. But, Mr. Speaker, Dubai and Singapore built their airports first. Our airports can't take anything larger than a dreamliner, and that was a struggle. Open skies remain in the front line of UAE's winning aviation strategy. Mr. Speaker, nothing what I am saying is rocket science except I share. But why do I call Goat Islands an enclave investment? Because it's going to be developed outside of the central core of the economics of this country.

Opposition MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HENRY: Much the same as forty years ago when Bahamas thought they were doing that Freeport Grand Bahama, and because it was built on an island outside of the strength of their economic development, it had no real impact and it failed. That is why I offered CHEC from the first initial foray into Jamaica the railway and Vernamfield and despite my best efforts they stuck only to roads. I urged them to do Fort Augusta and entered into a MOU. I'm not surprised that Goat Island is their aim for it suits their transshipment arm of the company who builds large cranes. But the demand for large cranes alone in the anticipated growth of shipping and port development in the region will pay for Goat Islands investment. But for Jamaica what after?

Mr. MAIR: Nothing.

Mr. HENRY: And try as we may the questions remains, who benefits most?

Mr. MAIR: China Harbour.

Mr. HENRY: Knowing the Chinese, I encouraged them to come. I asked them to come back to the table. And just as I urged them to take the North/South investment, as I presented it to them at the first investment in the Caribbean - in Trinidad. I urged them to look at the totality of the integrated hub, which we in Jamaica must become if we are to survive at all.

So as I say to them, work to build our Fort Augusta the limit of its capacity, invest in the railway and Vernamfield at the same time, build some economic zones along the North/South Highway and remember the rail in Jamaica connects all our ports and the Chinese being masters of high speed rail think of how you can develop the smaller ports to suit specific world markets. That should be done now, Mr. Speaker. That should be done while we await the reports of the environmentalist on the Goat Islands. This would create a partnership to suit your transshipment needs and all of this being done while we justify our internal growth and

prevent an enclave investment which perhaps not intentional, but circumstantial, We would allow also our partners to build our KCT, which is now challenged by that Goat Islands transshipment and has turned away other investors and if they won't, that's the Chinese, then let's pursue other partners. For certainly there are other players in the game and all our eggs should never be in one basket for instance, Madam PM. And can the Port Authority and/or the Ministry of Transport by extension the Government disqualify the largest user of our port, ZIM, from bidding on the ownership of the port.

Mr. Speaker, Zim represents 60% of the transshipment capacity of the Port, but they were prevented from bidding or participating in the announced privatization. No wonder they took the leave-it approach, because when I was Minister, we were moving towards negotiating a $74 to $75 per move of container, an increase of, I think about 20%. I do not know what the Port Authority settled on, but I do know that when Zim was banned and when they arrived in their plane here they set four hours by their watch and they said, "this is the price we are going to pay, take it or leave it". If not, we will move 60% of our movements from Jamaica.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, what about the CMA, CGM, where are we with their investment? Is it on hold, is it awaiting the result of the tender, which they are a part of?

I contrast that, Mr. Speaker to our plan of the JLP, our plan was shareholding in the port tied to Vernamfield and the floating of shareholding in the Port Authority with first access to shares being offered to the users of the port.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, the approach now being taken besides creating delays in urgent need, A leaving us with management investors, which will permit them to more than likely see KCT as merely a spoke in their already established hub, and as they are already a part of our major hubs, they will only need the Transshipment connection. It's adding value to them, Mr. Speaker, giving them access to store and transship to the lucrative North American Market and its outreach to Europe while adding the Central and South America.

I hope by this presentation, Mr. Speaker, done with the highest degree of respect, that it will point us to exactly as time is far spent and competitors are filling in the blanks. I will continue to assist with this urgent need but, Mr. Speaker, I must be concerned since China Harbour has also signed a $507 Million contract to expand in Trinidad, which brings me then, Mr. Speaker, as I close that aspect of development to the JUTC.

Mr. Speaker, I want - it is quite surprising to me that it should have been clear from my presentation last year - that what the Ministry is doing is unsustainable and will bleed losses, as we are subsidizing losses, with the result that the more buses you turn out in the KMTR is the more you're going to lose.

We needed to surrender routes properly chosen and color-coded, and over a three-year period bring the whole country to an even cost structured fare; which would be in the region

of $100 to $200. The weighted average, Mr. Speaker, on the KMTR is $60. It comes out to a loss of $140 for every passenger you carry.

(Heckling)

And I've not included in that the stealing of tires or all the other issues we read about.

What this means, Mr. Speaker, is that the full gains which the JLP passed on to this Government, for when we came into power, 187 buses were all that was running. We targeted to make it to 500 where it is today.

Opposition MEMBER: Hear, hear!

(Applause)

Mr. HENRY: And I'm sorry the Minister of Finance is not here, because when I took over that position as Minister of Transport, he and I spoke as he was a former Minister and he was the one who said to me, "Mike, when you going to set the increase in fares use the OUR". Then the OUR tells you the fare is $200 and you continue to subsidize most of the travelling at $60. I don't think it takes a rocket scientist to know where you are. The 500 buses are going to break down gradually every year. You're not going to be able to maintain them and keep them so very shortly the robotting will increase again.

Dealing with the rebotting, was our position, is that we would have tied the import of 50-seater minibuses for the routes to be franchised, bring those in color-coded and bring them in with new license plates flung across the country by the parishes, Mr. Speaker. Because it's equally true, Mr. Speaker, if you are subsidizing losses, you are depressing the poor who is hustling on the street.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. HENRY: You are making the robot man hustle more, because you are keeping the figure with your strength at a false level of value. I think it's perhaps the last time I'll speak on that matter as I move finally, Mr. Speaker, to make it clear that what I have said is not based on what I would have pursued.

So in closing, Mr. Speaker, I await the continued debate on reparations, for you have to come from somewhere. This is the Status Report....

(Mr. Henry holds up the document in reference)

....which I've been waiting for...

A MEMBER: What happen to you Rasta dem today?

(Laughter)

Mr. HENRY: ...which I thank the Rastafarian Millennium Council for providing to me as I couldn't get it from the Government.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Parchment)

Mr. HENRY: So, Mr. Speaker, I await the continued debate on reparations. I will take the opportunity to present and read from the Report of the National Reparations Committee, which I spent some time searching for, for therein in that Report lies the answers to many questions we on both sides of the House ask, which should not be used to delay the narrow case of my search for reparations for chattel and slavery. Mr. Speaker, we should move on to seek immediate reparation from Great Britain for Chattel slavery.

For me, Mr. Speaker, this should be a joint job of approach. On the other hand I'm confident that with the vote we can get reparations for the crime in the British Courts as the conference on reparations concluded. That each country should take a political decision as CARICOM is not a political body. The Prime Minister feels it should not be confrontational and I agree, even though Great Britain refuses to apologize. But if they feel that they have seen the light, then we should be quite willing to sit and face the issues. Money is not all.... (Heckling) ....there are just things as debt for equity.

Almost everything I have spoken to in my speech, if you owe me it could be an investment in development in the country on a joint partnership for growth. The railway needs the investment. The Port needs the investment. The Airport needs the investment. So since you have exploited me in that term, come in and be partners with me.

But like any bankrupt company, the first decision is to look at the Balance Sheet, identify the valuable assets of claims. And I have identified Great Britain's debt as our major resource assets and a claim we must pursue to move from social economic decline to restoring our pride and dignity as a people and claim our birthright and identity. (Applause) The hurdles are many and is spoken of in this 116 page, where the arguments to and from the intelligensia to those who have led it. And I quote, Mr. Speaker, and I'll read into the records:

"The fundamental question facing the Government of Jamaica as it joins its CARICOM neighbours in seeking to redress from European countries is what constitutes a meritorious claim.

It is hoped that this Status Report will assist the Government of Jamaica in its deliberations and the debate in Parliament over the issue of reparation, which is an imperative.

We are aware that the Terms of Reference are yet to be fulfilled, but we believe the debate in Parliament will assist, rather than impede the complete fulfillment of the remaining Terms of Reference and we await the outcome of the debate".

In 1834 when Britain abolished slavery, enslavers were paid Twenty Million in compensation. Today, this amounts to the equivalent - and they give two figures in this Report - the amount is the equivalent of Two Hundred Billion Dollars.

(Heckling)

Another part of the Report says it could reach Two point Two Trillion, because the Two Hundred Billion is only equal to the twenty not to the other side issues that would be developed in relation to it.

The Report says:

"NCR recommends that the Government of Jamaica explores all avenues for reparation. The NCR, also, wishes to stress that the recommendations that follow have taken note of the work of the Chevannes-led Commission, the suggestions made by the Rastafari community and the inputs of civil society.

We wish to make it clear that more scientific assessment of public sentiments was not possible"

In bold letters it states:

Facilitate a debate in Parliament on the issue of Reparation and Repatriation as urged by MP, Mike Henry.

A debate was started in 2007, but was never concluded.

Reparation, Mr. Speaker, in my closing, is about repairing the damage done by slavery and colonialism evidenced by much of what I have said about where the country is today. Allowing our Caribbean society to be placed on a development path, a path made difficult because of the failure of our leaders to negotiate the a compensation package at the moment of independence. However, it is not too late to now do so. To discuss with the Europeans and their obligation, should be because of the state in which they left the Caribbean and using our resources to develop their own countries. The time has come to look rightly and squarely at this legacy and seek to redress by way of reparation. And I close the Report's Code:

And so in closing, Mr. Speaker, I realize my development suggestions require an approach of public/private partnership. It is what Singapore calls Corporatization. And I urge the Government to urgently:

1) Implement the development of Vernamfield to meet open skies.
2) Move the country to more than one-leg of transport.
3) Restore the Railways. It will reduce transport costs on agricultural produce and reduce capturing.
4) Implement a rural/urban transport plan that equalizes the cost of travel. It puts money back in the people's pockets and removes the subsidy on JUTC.
5) Revisit the KCT privatization and return to privatization by user of shareholding.
6) Encourage the stakeholders in tourism to invest in Ian Fleming Airport to make it a Caribbean Hub by accepting American Airline Eagle-size planes to serve the Caribbean.
7) Approve the political vote to claim reparations for Chattel slavery from Great Britain
8) Plan to urgently do a national registration of all our citizens with a census, out of which will come a national registration as a forerunner to reparations claim, with the entitlement to land ownership, entitlement to health care free, to education free and to an education system that's maths and science-based. We can afford it from that claim.

Mr. Speaker, time is well spent in many ways but in my presentation today, I hope that we take it with the real reality that the suffering out there is too great to be merely ignored by what we can announce we can do tomorrow. For if we do not attend to it,

Mr. Speaker, then I do believe - former Prime Minister Patterson said, "You are near the

precipice". He himself felt that he was not reported on morals and attitudes. Let us quite sincerely, Mr. Speaker, realize that where we have come from, realize that we must change that by being bold in challenging the issues, looking at what we have, grasping what is ours and making our contribution once again as great.

I sincerely hope that I have offended none beyond the capacity of my energy to see Jamaica return to a better lifestyle, remembering yesteryear as being the promise of today into the future.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

(Standing ovation by Opposition Members)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. House Leader, who is next?

Mr. PAULWELL: The Member from South East St. Elizabeth will now make his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Parchment.

Mr. PARCHMENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, as I rise to give another report to this Honourable House as to my stewardship for one of the best constituencies in Jamaica...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. PARCHMENT: …I am undaunted by the lateness of the House because even as a night watchman, I can still make a century.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, permit me to start by giving thanks to the Almighty for his continued guidance, care and protection. Mr. Speaker, I continue to be fortified and strengthened by the words as set out in Isaiah Chapter 40 verse 31, which reads:

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, but not be weary; they shall walk, and not be faint.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, let me thank, in a very special way, our dear Prime Minister...

Mr. McKENZIE: You must.

Mr. PARCHMENT: ...for the confidence she reposed in me when she gave me the awesome responsibility to lead the constituency of South East St. Elizabeth.

(Applause)

Mrs. NIETA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has led this country with a level head; a quiet dignity and a befitting grace.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

(Applause)

Mr. PARCHMENT: Her journey as a public servant is an inspiration for an entire nation and her light has shown bright to illuminate the pathway for a grateful people.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

(Applause)

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, today I remember my father, appropriately name Manley, my mother who could not be here today because of ill health, I honour them both for the sacrifice that they made and the investment in love and in education, not only

for me but for my eight other siblings. (Applause)

To my darling wife of 20 years who sits in the gallery, I thank her. I thank you, Lavern for your love and your understanding. (Applause) You make it possible for me to serve, and the constituency of South East St. Elizabeth is exceedingly grateful; to my children Richelle, Kyle and Klae, continue to work hard in school. Daddy's commitment to you and to the other children of Jamaica is to provide for you, a country in which you can all grow and develop and be able to successfully compete with your contemporaries from anywhere else in the world.

(Applause)

To you, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your unbiased leadership.

A MEMBER: Your what?

Mr. PARCHMENT: Unbiased leadership.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PARCHMENT: I also thank the Deputy Speaker who sits in the Chair now, for his leadership, sometimes very humorous. (Applause)

To the Clerk and the other parliamentary staff, thanks for going the extra mile to see to the business of Parliament. (Applause)

To my Parliamentary colleagues, I salute you, especially this evening, for staying so late to hear from me. (Applause) Thanks for your advice, your insights and your wise guidance.

To the constituents of South East St. Elizabeth, especially my executive members, some of whom sit in the gallery today, thanks for your love, your dedication and your unwavering support. (Applause)

Thanks to my personal staff, including my office helper Jacinth, who is here today.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Mr. PARCHMENT: Finally, Mr. Speaker, to the four councilors in South East St. Elizabeth who are in attendance today: Councillor Layton Smith from the Republic of Myersville, the cricketer Daren Powell from Malvern, Councilor Cetany Holness from the capital Junction, and Gregory Myers from my hometown, Southfield. (Applause) Thanks for your partnership in helping me to make South East St. Elizabeth a better place.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, special mention must be made of Councillor Holness and Councilor Myers because they represent the Jamaica Labour Party. Their presence here today, and at last year's presentation speaks volume to the type of leadership that we have in the constituency. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the development of the constituency, the Labourites are not intimidated by the JEEP because we have been traveling in one accord.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Aye... aye.

(Applause)

Mr. PARCHEMENT: Mr. Speaker, the central theme of the presenters in this year's Budget Debate is: Going for Growth.

Mr. Speaker, we are at a point now in our nation's history when it would be fair to say, grow or die. But, Mr. Speaker, dying is not an option for us. Mr. Speaker, the central pillar of

our Growth Agenda must be the development of our rural communities as this is the best way to ensure broad-based and equitable growth of the Jamaican economy. Mr. Speaker, it is my duty to ensure that the constituency of South East St. Elizabeth is so organized that it can play a pivotal role in the development of our national economy.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I was elected as the captain of the team on the back of people power. My approach to leadership has been all inclusive and receptive to divergent views. I have held consultations with all the critical stakeholders and in all communities, no matter the colour. And, Mr. Speaker, a lot of my former detractors are now coming on board because they say what they saw before, they saw somebody who was sleeping, sleeping, sleeping, and now they see a man who is working, working, working.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this type of leadership has resulted in harmony in the constituency despite the challenges. Mr. Speaker, some of the challenges that we have identified are:

- lack of water,
- bad roads,
- cost of education, in particular, transportation cost,
- cost of agricultural inputs,
- low-produce price, high incidence of praedial larceny,
- lack of street lights and no electricity in certain areas,
- high youth unemployment,
- unavailability of decent health care, or having to travel long distances to hospital,
- unaffordable cost to obtain titles, in spite of LAMP,
- continued closure of Alpart.

Mr. Speaker, if these challenges are addressed in a meaningful way South East St. Elizabeth will experience unprecedented and sustained growth thereby fulfilling its mandate to contribute significantly to the National Growth Agenda.

Mr. Speaker, in my presentation today, I will attempt to address some of these challenges, and propose some other measures aimed at developing the constituency, the parish, and our blessed country.

Mr. Speaker, I'll start with water, not because the substantive Minister spoke earlier but because it has been identified as the main challenge in the constituency. The water woes of South East St. Elizabeth are well documented, being the subject of massive demonstrations in the past. Mr. Speaker, every MP of South East St. Elizabeth has struggled to adequately address the water crisis. The fact that there has only been one small demonstration over the last two-and-a-half years speaks to the optimism, the faith, the trust that the people have in this present administration, and also the consultative and truthful approach that I have taken towards dealing with this issue. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, when you talk about water, only about 10 per cent of the constituency is currently served by the NWC, which at best

provides water in these areas once or twice per week in terms of days; the other 90 per cent of the constituency gets its water by either rain water harvesting, supply from parish tanks, supply from Alpart, or water trucking through the councilor, the MP or private trucking.

Mr. Speaker, with the advent of the climate change phenomenon, we have witnessed a steady decline in the country's rainfall. The average rainfall decline by 97 millimeter in 2013, relative to 2012, and in 2013 it was 303 millimeters below the 30-year mean. Mr. Speaker, in 2013, St. Elizabeth recorded a higher than average drought conditions in nine of the twelve months. Mr. Speaker, this decrease in precipitation is expected to continue and we as a country have to act fast in order to prevent this looming crisis.

Mr. Speaker, when I took the job as Member of Parliament in South East St. Elizabeth, I took a politically risky decision to work with the agents of the NWC Revenue Protection Department to point out areas where water was being illegally extracted by farmers and others, thereby preventing legitimate consumers from having their supply. As a result of this intervention, areas such as Bull Savannah, Ridge, Junction Town, Exton, Chocolate Hole and Cheapside are now getting water once or twice per week for the first time in almost a decade. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, this effort has to be sustained because the illegal extractors are very determined.

Mr. Speaker, it is clearly understood that in our lifetime many rural communities remain without the access of piped water. Some of these communities have old parish water harvesting tanks which in the past used to be the only means of access to water. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry, through Rural Water, has been working to repair these tanks through the Tank and Pump Programme which was so clearly elucidated this evening by the Minister.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the four parish tanks which have already been rehabilitated, three more have been approved for rehabilitation which work has already started on the Portsea tank and repairs to Genus and North Hampton Mountain tanks are slated to start later this month.

Mr. Speaker, wherever these tanks have been repaired, we have seen a significant reduction in the request for the MP and the councilors to truck water, so this is an important function, Mr. Speaker, and it has to continue. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, one of the other major failings of the NWC is that it does not expeditiously respond to mechanical failures, especially in its pumping operations. Mr. Speaker, the Hounslow and Duff House Wells from which NWC pumps water to satisfy the few customers in South East St. Elizabeth, have extremely old and obsolete pumps. There are frequent breakdowns and customers are severely inconvenienced, sometimes for months because there are no spare parts and very little inventory to repair them.

Mr. Speaker, the management of NWC has now assured that as a general policy, going forward, spare pumps and parts will

now be re-stocked for any facility currently without, and Hounslow and Duff House will be given priority. Mr. Speaker, I have heard this before, but NWC will be held to account now.

Regarding water improvement in South East St. Elizabeth, we cannot speak without talking about the Essex Valley Water System which has been dragging on for the better part of 14 years. The Minister, earlier in his presentation, mentioned a completion schedule and the residents of South East St. Elizabeth are happy for that.

Mr. Speaker, also mentioned elsewhere in his presentation, the residents of the Essex Valley communities are suffering immensely due to Alpart drastically reducing their trucking because of financial constraints. Many of these communities have developed around Alpart and Alpart was their only source. Mr. Speaker, it is an imperative that there are no more delays in completing the Essex Valley Water System.

As MP, Mr. Speaker, I am also grateful that the scope of the project was changed from just the communities in closer proximity to Alpart, but the system will go all the way to Junction to complement the Duff House system which could only provide water, a maximum, two days per week. Mr. Speaker, this system is expected to impact close to 40,000 and residents and it will be a great day in the constituency when the system is commissioned. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is often said that the MP who completes the system will be MP for life. I don't intend to be MP for life, but I want to do it because it is due to the people of South East St. Elizabeth.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, let me again thank the former Administration, and Member Chang in particular for the work done in 2009 and 2010, on Phase 1A of the system.

Mr. Speaker, we applaud B.M.R. Energy, and wish them all the success.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PARCHMENT: The Minister says he approves.

Mr. Speaker...

(The Deputy Speaker gavels - 6:25 p.m.)

Mr. McKENZIE: Can I get the protection of the Chair from the Prime Minister and the two female Ministers?

The Deputy SPEAKER: You are well protected, Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. House Leader, the time for the speaker has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended to allow him to complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the speaker's time be extended so that he may complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Parchment.

(Applause)

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, I thank you, and colleagues I am in your debt. I thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, we applaud B.M.R. Energy, and wish them all the success. And it is my

hope that next year this time when I am presenting in this Parliament, I will be announcing an expansion to that wind farm in Munro.

Mr. Speaker, this is indeed rural development paving the way for growth and development of our national economy.

Mr. Speaker, last year I came to this Parliament and also reported on a solar ice plant that an investor was constructing in Junction. Some people thought it was a pipe dream. But, Mr. Speaker, this plant was completed and production started in September last year. The Honourable Minister of Energy even visited the plant and gave it his approval.

Mr. Speaker, the tremendous demand occasioned by lower prices has caused the owner to be now seeking additional capital to double his output. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, this is clear evidence that if renewable energy is properly harnessed and used in our productive processes, Jamaica can successfully compete anywhere in the world.

(Applause)

On to Information Technology, quickly, Mr. Speaker. We want to thank the Minister - the STEM Ministry, that during the course of the year three community access points were established in the constituency: Bull Savannah Primary, Queensbury Resource Centre and Epping Forest Community Centre. A total of 50 computers have been set up at these centers and are now being subjected to heavy use.

Also, Mr. Speaker, because a wireless hotspot has been created at these centers, laptop owners are now coming in increased numbers to access the Internet at these centers. Four other community access points have been approved for installation this year. And I want to specifically thank Mr. Damian Lowe, from the SDC, who has been going around and preparing the project documents. And I also want to thank the management of the Universal Service Fund for their consideration.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker...

Mr. McKENZIE: Finally.

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, I sat and waited on Minister Mike Henry to do his thing, and I will not be daunted by any noise coming from that side. I come to report to this Parliament, and I intend to do so.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes!

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, a critical aspect of the Rural Development Agenda must be the accessibility and the availability to decent and reliable health care. South East St. Elizabeth, with its salubrious and alluring climate and very low crime rate, has been a preferred location, especially for returning residents.

Significant employment opportunities have been created by the construction of homes, especially in the Dunder Hill, Southfield, Munro and Malvern areas, resulting from persons relocating.

Health care delivery Mr. Speaker, is always a crucial consideration for persons considering relocation and easier access to health care will cause more development in our area.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased with the focus of this Administration and the upgrade of health centers, especially in rural Jamaica. (Applause/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PARCHMENT: Member Pryce is not here but the Minister is here - and the upgrade to the Santa Cruz Health Centre to create a centre of excellence, is much appreciated. Persons requesting health care from several communities in South East St. Elizabeth will now be saved the time and expense from travelling to Mandeville or to Black River, which on a good day those two hospitals are always seriously overcrowded.

Mr. Speaker, let me thank again, Mrs. Lucille Brodber and her team at JEEP. (Applause) Through our combined efforts we secured Five Million Dollars ($5M) from the PetroCaribé Fund, to give a much-needed facelift to the Junction Health Centre. (Applause) And, Mr. Speaker, Minister Buchanan was there and can confirm that. The treatment rooms, the doctors' offices, the waiting area and the dining areas were all done over. This refurbishment has been most welcomed by the staff and the over 2,000 patients who pass through the doors on a monthly basis.

Mr. Speaker, arising from a tour by Junior Minister, Luther Buchanan, in March of this year, and subsequent discussions with Minister Ferguson, the following improvements can be expected this year:

- four brand new autoclave machines and their sterilization machines will be purchased for the other four health centres, apart from the Junction Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, this is an absolute priority, because what pertains now was not good. All of the medical equipment in need of sterilization from the four other health centres had to be sent to Junction to be sterilized and then sent back to the health centre. That is untenable.

Just over Two Million ($2M) will be spent to retrofit a building at the Bellevue Health Centre to provide a decent waiting area for patients, and a new nurses' station. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, two dental chairs will be purchased for the Junction Health Centre. This will now allow adults to be treated in Junction, and they, will not have to travel all the way to Santa Cruz to access dental care. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, what pleases me most is that the maternity wing at the Junction Health Centre will this year become operational. (Applause)

A MEMBER: What!

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, I think it is necessary to give a little background to the project. And, no, Minister Pickersgill, I won't be accessing the facility.

In the mid-1970s, the Honourable Derrick Rochester, OJ, MP at the time, thought it necessary that part of his development plans for the rapidly expanding and emerging town of Junction, that a first-class medical facility should be provided. Part of this facility should include a maternity wing where pregnant mothers could go to deliver their young ones, with the appropriate medical care, thus

avoiding or reducing home deliveries, which was prevalent during that time, and ultimately aimed at reducing both infant and maternal mortality rates.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Derrick Rochester donated two acres of land and he mobilized the local community and the Diaspora.

And I just want to take time out to welcome former Councillor Winston Sinclair, who is in the Gallery today, who was the man charged with the responsibility to mobilize the Diaspora in the UK to get all of the donations.

(Applause)

Honourable Derrick Rochester even got every worker at Alpart to donate one day's pay toward the project. This building was started in the late 1970s, and was only completed in the early 1990s, when the Honourable Derrick Rochester was reelected as MP. Mr. Speaker, can you image a building that could rival any small hospital, being entirely built through donations and through volunteers? (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in 1996 the health centre was relocated to this facility, but the maternity wing was never furnished nor staffed and opened.

But, Mr. Speaker, after decades of waiting, my Minister of Health, the Honourable Dr. Fenton Ferguson, will correct this injustice to the people of South East St. Elizabeth by opening this facility... (Applause) ...and finally the dream of the Honourable Derrick Rochester and the entire constituency of South East St. Elizabeth will be realized. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, this is an Administration that cares, this is an Administration that understands that rural development is central to national development.

(Applause)

(Cross talk) (The Deputy Speaker gavels) As a result of consultations and discussions. No stick-up.

Mr. Speaker, please allow me to again thank the staff of the JEEP Secretariat, the Ministry of Transport, Housing and Works, the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, through the TEF, and JBI, for providing funds towards infrastructure development particularly road improvements.

Mr. Speaker, during the course of the year the following roads were upgraded, and I will just quickly tell you them:

- Junction to Todd Town
- New Building
- Ballards Valley to Tryall
- Plummer Town
- Brinkley (Phase II)
- Elgin
- Lititz to Grazeland
- Southfield to Malvern
- Third Street Lititz
- Lovers' Leap to Dixon Town
- Chocolate Hole
- Southfield to Malvern

Mr. Speaker, this impressive list is on top of the 17 road upgrades that we have had in 2013. These repairs, Mr. Speaker, have given the residents a sense of pride, and remarks have been made in certain districts of Elgin and Plummer Town that this is the first time

that they have seen repairs to their roads since Michael Manley's first term in government. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the Councillors for playing their part. The Councillors - Councillor Layton Smith has repaired the Myersville to Warminster and the Buena Vista roads. In the Malvern Division, Stanmore Phase 1 and Phase 11 were done by Councillor Powell. Councillor Holness had fixed the Green Olive and the Tryall roads in the Junction Division. And Councillor Holness is a skillful politician, after we do certain work with the JEEP, what he does is just a continuation, and we applaud him for that.

In the Southfield area Down Country.has been repaired and Powell Town is scheduled to be repaired. All these projects, Mr. Speaker, employed scores of local residents, somewhat cushioning the fallout from the continued closure of Alpart.

In South East St. Elizabeth, Mr. Speaker, the JEEP is the vehicle of choice. And we eagerly - Prime Minister, we eagerly await a fourth ride in the JEEP.

But, Mr. Speaker, success creates its own challenges, and there is no great agitation from the residents whose roads have not yet been repaired. These expectations, Mr. Speaker, have to be skillfully managed to maintain the harmonious relationship that currently exists in the constituency.

Mr. Speaker, going forward - even though the Minister is not here - I am recommending the following:

- That one spray/patch truck be permanently assigned to the parish, fully supplied and working around the clock.

Mr. Speaker, even though we have been working, working, working to repair the road infrastructure, there are still many Parish Council roads that require major repairs.

- I am recommending that these roads be repaired through the Major Infrastructure Development Programme, because the JEEP allocations will be unable to effect these repairs.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on something that is dear to my heart, and this is education.

Mr. Speaker, in 1992, in his first Budget Debate as Prime Minister, former Prime Minister, the Honourable P.J. Patterson, remarked - and I quote:

> "Our nation's development is inextricably linked to its investment in education."

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, now more than ever must this investment be made in education, as growth and development of our national economy is the overwhelming imperative of our time.

Mr. Speaker, almost every Member of this Honourable House is seized to this imperative, and have been allocating a greater percentage of their CDF to education. In South East St. Elizabeth, Mr. Speaker, over one-third of the CDF goes directly to education.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, by any objective assessment - and the Minister is here - by any objective assessment the conclusion is that education is moving in a positive direction in South East St. Elizabeth. For example, Mr. Speaker, Grade IV Literacy and Numeracy Tests are improving; GSAT averages have increased; high school and CSEC passes are moving up; an increased percentage of high school leavers are now matriculating into tertiary institutions.

Mr. Speaker, I want to personally thank the principals and the staff of the over 60 educational institutions who, for the most part, go beyond the call of duty to ensure that the students are given the best education. (Applause) And, Mr. Speaker, in South East St. Elizabeth those 60 educational institutions include a school for the deaf and a school for children diagnosed with autism.

(Applause)

Special mention, Mr. Speaker, must be made of Mrs. Heather Murray, the Principal of Hampton High School, who was elected by her peers to be President of the National High Schools' Principal Association. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I will now highlight a few of our accomplishments in education. The GSAT Scholarship Programme, Mr. Speaker, sponsored by the CDF continues to be an excellent motivator for students preparing for those exams. Last year, Mr. Speaker, 50 of the brightest students were recognized and awarded for their achievements.

Mr. Speaker, please allow me to make special mention of two young miss who, although they are in high school now, they continue to benefit from the GSAT Scholarship that was set up because their averages continue, in high school, continue to be over 90%. (Applause) We want to specially mention Miss Sudaine Wellington and Miss Shanique Joseph, both from Top Hill, who attend the Hampton High School. And what is more remarkable, Mr. Speaker, Shanique has carried this average right through to 5th Form and we are expecting no less than 10 ones with straight A profiles from her in her exam this year. (Applause) Exams almost complete and she speaks with me daily.

Expansion at the Hampton High School has started, a 10-classroom block at Hampton High School costing the Ministry of Education over $40 Million has been started and we thank the Ministry for this. (Applause) But, Mr. Speaker, not to be outdone this great institution is well on its way to raising an additional $25 Million to construct an additional 10 blocks of classrooms on top of the 10 that they are getting from the Ministry. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I as Member of Parliament is contributing $1 Million from the CDF to this effort. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, this will ease the congestion and allow this institution of learning to accept a larger GSAT cohort.

Mr. Speaker, last year I came to this House and I also reported that I had made some move to get the old JFF facility that was purchased and retrofitted by the Ministry of Education to become a Munro Sixth Form Academy. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that this is now a reality. (Applause) This new Academy, Mr. Speaker, started accepting students in September last year and was

officially opened exactly a month ago by the Minister of Education. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this is indeed a blessing as this will create a larger space for the GSAT cohort at Munro. It will also provide additional Sixth Form places for students from the area who would normally have to travel over 25 miles to Santa Cruz, to Black River or even further to Mandeville. Mr. Speaker, with the opening of this new facility Munroe College has accepted girls for the first time since its 155 years. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, for years I have watched the Junior School Challenge Quiz and I have been entertained by it. I have also been impressed by the general level of knowledge by these little students. But sadly enough, Mr. Speaker, no school from South East St. Elizabeth was ever a part of it.

Coming out of the Principals Association Meeting that I had, it was decided that we could do our own quiz competition. Mr. Speaker, in sponsoring the South St. Elizabeth, and hear me now, South St. Elizabeth included a part of Member Buchanan's constituency as well, I sponsored a quiz competition which was a resounding success. The winner, I never had anything to do with it, Mayfield Primary, my alma mater, will now represent the area in the TVJ's Junior Schools' Challenge Quiz Competition. (Applause) And, Mr. Speaker, all four students from that winning team will be getting scholarship, GSAT scholarship to go off to high school. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, right now the students and their teachers are busy preparing for next year's competition. And I want to personally thank the principal and the staff who worked beyond the regular school hours to ensure that the first year's competition was a resounding success.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

And I don't reach B.B. Coke yet.

Mr. Speaker, the Sanitation Programme is continuing. St. Mary's Primary School got their new spanking flush toilet system. The staff and the students and the parents of the community are exceedingly grateful. This project will continue this year with Bull Savannah Primary and Warminster Primary already approved.

Mr. Speaker, much needed infrastructural improvement at the Seaview Primary was done with expenditure of over $5 Million to re-roof the school and to change the windows and the doors. What is significant of this work is that this expenditure did not come from the Ministry of Education but from a diaspora group, and I want to thank the Lynne Mitchell Foundation for making this donation possible. (Applause) But, Mr. Speaker, this Foundation has also agreed that they will work with the Seaview Primary School and other ventures at the appropriate time.

And, Mr. Speaker, let me just give you a little heads of what is coming. The principal for that high school has decided to move on to a bigger school to get an additional income, but this Foundation wants to keep this principal in that school because they think that she is doing a wonderful job, and what they have done is that they have decided to match the difference in the pay to ensure that the

principal remains at Seaview Primary. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, at an appropriate time I will be hosting an event to thank them for their contribution.

Mr. Speaker, let me also thank the college students and teachers from Boise State University, University of Connecticut, Wisconsin State University, the University of Florida and Oregon State University, who instead of going off and having fun on spring break, used their money and their time to come to Jamaica to work and upgrade our schools. Mr. Speaker, the Epping Forest Primary, Seaview Primary again, St. Mary Primary are significant beneficiaries from this generosity. And I must say also Sandy Bank in Member Buchanan's constituency got some work done also. But special mention must be made of Mrs. Winifred Hylton of Taino Cove Resort in Treasure Beach who provided accommodation for these volunteers at a fraction of the economic cost.

Mr. Speaker, please permit me this afternoon to welcome six students from the B.B. Coke High School. (Applause) I never intended to keep them so late but such is life in the House of Parliament. (Applause)

Last year I promised this Honourable House that I intend to transform B.B. Coke High School into a center of academic excellence and sporting prowess. Mr. Speaker, the transformation has started, the transformation has started - soon finish - the transformation has started. I want to spend some time on B.B. Coke. Mr. Speaker, the transformation has started; we have a new principal and a new Board. Mr. Speaker, the Tuck Shop profit has moved from $24,000 the previous year to $1 Million this current school year. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, an audit was requested and after the auditors came in, the Bursar has abandoned – AWOL - she has abandoned her post now for six weeks.

As a result of improvement in the tuck shop profits the school was able to enter Champs, Headley Cup and even advanced to the second round of the DaCosta Cup. This is the first time in history, Mr. Speaker, that B.B. Coke was able to participate in all three competitions at the same year.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, students at B.B. Coke are now busy preparing for TVJ's Schools' Challenge Quiz Competition, the first time they will be participating in the school's history. Mr. Speaker, Physics and Chemistry are back on the curriculum and the school's farm is now getting some attention. The Music Room is being refurbished and a request made to the CHASE Fund for the replacement of certain key pieces of musical equipment.

Mr. Speaker, tenders are now out for the completion of the perimeter fence which was started over a decade ago. But, Mr. Speaker, what pleases me most is that in this year's education budget, there is a provision in this year's education budget to build a new block of classrooms at the B.B. Coke so that finally after 46 years the shift system will come to an end. I thank you, Minister, for that effort. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this Board is Chaired by Senator Wentworth Skeffery who could not make it here today, but two of the Board

members are here today in the Gallery and I want to honour them specially, Mr. Manley Horne and Miss Channa Ebanks. I thank you for the work that you have been doing. (Applause) I thank them for the work that they have been doing, but the journey has just started.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to education, Mr. Speaker, I think that the most exciting development, I think that the most exciting development in education in decades was announced in this Honourable House when Minister Reverend Ronald Thwaites in his Budget Debate announced the introduction of Art Level I and Art Level II in high schools, and this will ensure that by 2017 every high school graduate will leave with at least one marketable skill. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker - and I am happy that the Minister of National Security is here - Mr. Speaker, I ask this Honourable House to reflect on the following Statement made by the Honourable Dr. Peter Phillips writing in the book, Michael Manley, Putting People First, as compiled by Delano Franklin, and I quote:

> *"Our educational system, while much more inclusive than in the past, continues to fail as more than two out of three students leave school without certification. More tragically it is these uncertified school leavers trapped in the ghettos of despair of hopelessness who increasingly, make up the criminal armies dominating the so-called inner cities and driving a runaway murder rate which is among the highest in the world."*

Mr. Speaker, our educational system is now geared to be producing certified school leavers. (Applause) Think of the impact that will have, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, whilst this announcement by the Honourable Minister might not have attracted the same fanfare as when the Common Entrance Exams were announced over 50 years ago, it will nevertheless be just as game changing.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, on education I feel compelled, I feel compelled to register my dissatisfaction at the pace at with the rural bus service is being addressed. I think it is discriminatory for the fares of students in the Corporate Area to be subsidized while students of rural Jamaica, who often have to travel greater distances, have to pay the full fare. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, a rural bus service - school bus service - is absolutely critical for rural development. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, to achieve our goals of using rural development as the centerpiece for national development, human capital must be enhanced through education. Mr. Speaker, South East St. Elizabeth is well on the way of achieving this.

Mr. Speaker, I move on to agriculture and I will be very quick with agriculture because I know that the night is far gone.

Mr. D. SMITH: Don't leave out the weather.

(Laughter)

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, agriculture has been the star performer in the

last three quarters, having achieved 5%, 13% and 18% growth in the last three quarters respectively.

(Laughter/Inaudible comments)

Mr. JACKSON: The Parliament need to get a little composure back.

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, given that our growth projections for GDP this financial year is between 1½% to 2%, if agriculture continues on this trajectory it will single handedly achieve this growth projection.

(Applause)

Miss HANNA: Hear, hear!

Mr. PARCHMENT: It will single handedly, agriculture will single handedly, if it continues on this trajectory, will single handedly achieve our growth projection; so all of the other sectors would be just brawta.

Mr. Speaker, the main factors that have accounted for this growth were the:

- Reduction in agricultural outputs;
- Agro-park developments;
- Drought mitigation programme; and of course we had
- No natural disaster; so I'm thinking about the weather.

(Laughter)

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, agriculture in South East St. Elizabeth is on the rise. The reduction in vegetable importation has seen a rebound in demand from the hotel sector and farmers have responded. Notwithstanding that, Mr. Speaker, our farmers are experiencing severe challenges, chief of which are the:

- Cost of inputs
- Lack of irrigation
- High cost to purchase NIC water
- Low output prices/limited market and
- Praedial larceny.

Mr. Speaker, the activities regarding praedial larcenies are well established. You know what is happening because the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries reported to this House. But I want to say one thing on agriculture, Mr. Speaker, before I move on, the farmers of South East St. Elizabeth plant and then seek divine intervention for rain, while hundreds of acres of irrigated lands in other areas remained idle for decades.

Mr. Speaker, how can a recent graduate from an agricultural institution like CASE, or a *bona fide* farmer from South East St. Elizabeth, not having access to a single acre of irrigated land, while well connected persons sit on hundreds of acres of irrigated lands without planting a crop for over 20 years?

Mr. Speaker, this must not be allowed to continue. The Government must move posthaste to rescind every lease agreement for irrigated agricultural lands, which is not currently being used in agriculture. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, these lands have to be put in the hands of persons who're serious about agriculture. Mr. Speaker, this is how we grow a country.

Mr. Speaker, winding down.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Mr. PARCHMENT: Winding down.

A MEMBER: Coming down.

Mr. PARCHMENT: Coming down to the end.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. PARCHMENT: Let me congratulate the St. Elizabeth Parish Council for its expeditious handling of Building and Subdivision Plans in the parish.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Mr. PARCHMENT: This has caused a significant boom in construction activities in South East St. Elizabeth. Mr. Speaker, in just approximately one square mile in the Southfield area, I, along with a member of my constituency executive, Lauren Gayle, who is here with us today, drove around last weekend and we counted 18 palatial dwellings being constructed in just one square mile. This significant construction will lead to job creation.

There's also significant commercial construction taking place in the town of Junction, as approximately eight acres of land in the centre of the town, which was subject to over 30 years legal dispute, is finally settled and a construction frenzy is now on the way. I am requesting that the Parish Council though, remain vigilant, to ensure that these constructions are undertaken in an orderly manner.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, I could never come here and not say something about the Youth Ministry, and I want to thank the Honourable Minister for choosing Nain for the construction of a Youth Detention Centre. Positive things are happening in South East St. Elizabeth.

Mr. Speaker, the Lovers' Leap Nature Trail has been certified by the Jamaica National Heritage Trust...

Mr. McKENZIE: Is that positive?

Mr. PARCHMENT: ...and this Trail will be improved by the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment as part of its Community Tourism Drive. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, plans for an Agricultural Museum in Malvern are being developed by the South Coast Resort Board.

Mr. Speaker, please allow me to bring to this Honourable House one request, not only from South East St. Elizabeth, but from the parish of St. Elizabeth; we need a revenue centre in Junction. And I'm going to repeat it again. We need a revenue centre in Junction. Mr. Speaker, the majority of persons in South East St. Elizabeth are now paying all of their taxes in Mandeville, and what tax revenue goes out, stays out of the parish.

(*Sotto voce* remarks)

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, the Councillor for the Junction Division has been a tireless advocate for this, and through his many writings to the Parish Council, he has convinced the Parish Council to make available a building which could be easily retrofitted for this purpose. I am asking the Minister of Finance to give this some consideration, for as much as we love Manchester, we would rather have our tax revenues stay in the parish of St. Elizabeth.

(Cross talks)

Mr. PARCHMENT: In conclusion, Mr. Speaker - it's 7:00 o'clock, Mr. Speaker and

we are concluding. In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, what a difference a year makes. Last year at this time it was doom and gloom. The critics were out having the time of their lives. Mr. Speaker, the wheels on the IMF agreement were just being reinstalled to put it back on track.

Mr. McKENZIE: Ask Dalley...

Mr. PARCHMENT: GDP was declining; NIR was $900 Million and declining...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Mr. PARCHMENT: ...agriculture was in decline...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: True.

Mr. PARCHMENT: ...debt to GDP ratio stood at 146% and climbing, the multinational agencies - lending agencies were not even looking in our direction...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: A true dat.

Mr. PARCHMENT: ...and the Current Account Deficit was also widened, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, let us fast track to June 2014. The test score from the IMF has moved up from a U to 100% - 4 out of 4. (Applause) And, Mr. Speaker, in this regard, U means ungraded because that is where it was.

Mr. McKENZIE: Yuh get yuh light bill fi dis month?

Mr. PARCHMENT: GDP is now increasing; NIR is $1.3 Billion and increasing... (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. PARCHMENT: ...agriculture is up, up, up and almost away... (Applause) ... the GDP is 139% and declining; over $500 Million has been received from the multilaterals and another cheque is on the way... (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. PARCHMENT: ...the Current Account Deficit is narrowing; inflation has declined from 9.1% to 8.3% in spite of depreciation of the dollar and bus fare increases...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Working, working, working.

Mr. PARCHMENT: ...Parliament has discharged its responsibilities in enacting legislation like never before in the history of the country... (Applause) ...confidence has returned to the economy and Foreign Direct Investment is on the rise.

For example, Mr. Speaker, in the hotel sector - we'll just name two - Playa Hotel and Resorts, $9 Billion...

Miss DALEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. PARCHMENT: ...and the New Marriott in New Kingston, over $6 Billion and many more, I could go on.

The North South link on the Highway is on pace and Linstead to Moneague leg will be our Independence present.

Miss DALEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PARCHMENT: Wharf Expansion is on track and Goat Island is not if, is when. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PARCHMENT: Serious crimes, Minister, serious crimes are down in every category! (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PARCHMENT: The Ananda System in the parish councils is now fully operational and plans are being approved like never before in the nation's history. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PARCHMENT: Mr. Speaker, I could go on, I could go on, but this is clear evidence, what I have done here is to give clear evidence that this Administration is working, working, working. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Working! Working! Working!

Mr. PARCHMENT: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleagues for your kind and patient attention.

(Applause/Standing ovation)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. PAULWELL: Colleagues, colleagues, colleagues, colleagues.

(Cross talks)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Take your seats please!

Yes, Mr. House Leader.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business this evening. I therefore move for the adjournment of the Parliament until tomorrow, June 4, at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House now adjourns until tomorrow, Wednesday June 4, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House was adjourned accordingly at 7:06 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015

WEDNESDAY, June 4, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:32 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Raymond Pryce

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- Addendum to Ministry Paper No. 100 entitled amendments to Tax Regime to allow for retention of benefits and reduction of taxes.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, two questions are due, Questions 1 and 2 in that order.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

(MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP) St. Thomas, Western, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, just before I ask Question 1, could I ask the Minister in relation to the addendum that had just been announced. I notice that in the summary under the suspension of customs duty payable on cellular phones that there is to be a reduction or a loss of $516.2 Million, correct. Now, I just want to know, that is over a three-year period so is that $516 Million per year or aggregate over three years? And would this - and either figure whether it is 516 or divided by 3 about 172 Million, whether that in fact would then mean a reduction in your expectation of the original revenue that you had indicated?

(DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP) St, Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: The fact is, this is an annual amount $516 is annually. The fact of the matter is that we took it into - while this is actual, we took into account then we had put together the revenue estimates that we already had the application, had the intension of making the application but could not announce. So we expect that the other measures in aggregate and our compliance efforts will mean that we will not have a loss in the overall revenues that were announced.

(REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston Central, Minister of Education, entered and took his seat.)

In other words, this represents what will be the actual cost of the reduction, but we had taken this into account generally in our revenue so there is not going to be - we don't expect there to be less revenues in aggregate than was announced.

(DR. KENNETH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St, Catherine West Central, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. SHAW: For the avoidance of doubt, you - I think the revenue package was about what, 6.7 Billion?

Dr. PHILLIPS: 4.5.

(MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP) St Andrew North Central, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. SHAW: But on an annualized basis what you are expecting is $500 Million, which is not insignificant. So are you saying that the - it is one of two things. It is either that the overall revenue expectations continue to be more ambitious than you had stated or you expect the money to be filled from compliance. Which one is it?

(HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon North, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Well, I expect it to be filled by compliance, and I dare say, if you look at it, while it is a $4.5 Billion package, the overall revenues expected in the order of Four Hundred and plus Billion Dollars - so 500 Million really represent say small proportion of the overall. So there is a compliance effort or, shall we say, given the conservative assumptions in some of our estimates we don't think that this will result, giving up this will result in lower aggregate revenues.

(DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the Minister to answer Question 1 standing in my name on the Order Paper?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker,

Question 1:

What is the total amount of funds collected under the PetroCaribé Programme with the Government of Venezuela?

(HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP) Clarendon North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, entered and took his seat.)

Answer:

US$2,936,918,066 covering the period July 2005 to 31st March, 2014.

Question 2:

Have all these funds been paid into the PetroCaribé Development?

Answer:

Yes. However, there is an amount of US$108,574,882 which was outstanding as at March 31, 2014 and which in accordance with the standard practice Petrojam is allowed to settle in 3 months the obligation in being settled in accordance with the agreed schedule.

Question 3:

Has Petrojam made all its payment to the PetroCaribé Development Fund in foreign exchange, US dollars?

Answer:

No. The PetroCaribé Development Fund Currently receives payments from Petrojam in Jamaican and United States dollars.

Question 4:

What is the total amount of funds so far repaid to the Venezuelan Government Agency, PDVSA; please disaggregate the payment by principal and interest?

Answer:

April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2014 principal $178,864,030 principal interest $43,018,638 principal US$221,882,648.30.

Question 5:

Please provide a comprehensive list of all loans and grants by the PetroCaribé Development Fund since the inception of the fund and indicate the status of each loan setting out the principal value of the loan portfolio and the specific classification of each account in accordance with international financial accounting standards?

Answer:

Please see attached schedule for loans at 31st March 2014, as well as the Social Development Fund Grants at 31st March 2014.

I don't know, you want me to read each?

Question 6:

How are loans valued on the balance sheet?

Answer:

Loans are valued on the balance sheet in accordance with accepted accounting principles as per notes 2(c), (e) and (k) (i) of the PetroCaribé Development Fund financial statements as outlined below.

Note: 2(c) says: Impairment of non-current assets, and I shall read, and I quote:

"*Property, plant and equipment and other non-current assets are reviewed periodically for impairment. An impairment loss is recognized for the amount by which the carrying amount of the asset exceeds its recoverable amount, which is the higher of an asset's net selling price and the value in use. For the purposes of assessing impairment assets are grouped at the lowest levels for which they separately identifiable cash flows.* 2(e) loans receivable:

Loans receivables are recognized when cash is advanced to borrowers. They are initially recorded at cost, which is the cash given to originate the loan including any transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortized cost using the effective interest rate method."

(MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western, entered and took his seat.)

Note (k) (i) loans and receivables:

loans and receivables are non-derivative financial assets with fixed and determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market. They arise when the Fund provides money directly to a debtor with no intention of trading the receivable. Loans and receivables are initially recognized at fair value, which is the cash consideration to originate or purchase the loan including any transaction costs."

Question 7:

What is the total value of the non-performing loans on the balance sheet of the PetroCaribé Development Fund?

Answer:

As at 31st March, 2014, the total value of non-performing loans was US$36,442,384.00. These are identified in the attached Schedule. Of this amount, approximately $1.3 Million was paid on April 4, 2014; $2.7 Million was paid on May 14, 2014, and a remaining amount of $31.7 Million was the subject of negotiations between Petrojam and the PetroCaribé Development Fund These negotiations which were ongoing since April 2014, have concluded, and I'm advised that later this week a loan agreement is to be signed, which will effectively eliminate the arrears.

Question 8:

How are the non-performing loans represented on the income statement? Are loan/loss reserves set aside for bad debt? If so, how much is set aside?

Answer:

Non-performing loans are reviewed for impairment by management. This is further examined and verified by the Fund's external auditors. An impairment loss, if deemed applicable, is recognized on the income statement as part of the expenses of the fund. Loan/loss reserves

are set aside if the carrying amount of the loan receivable exceeds the recoverable amount.

No loan/loss provision is considered necessary as the NROCC loan arrears, which I mentioned earlier in response to Question 7, were settled in May, 2014 and the Central Government balance was settled in April, 2014. A negotiated loan agreement has been reached between Petrojam and PetroCaribé as indicated in the answer to Question 7.

Question 9:

How are the delinquent loans represented on the balance sheet?

Answer:

Impairment loss for delinquent loans are netted from the gross loans receivable and, therefore, a reflected net of the impairment on the balance sheet. A note to the financial statement would also be done reflecting the gross loans receivable and the corresponding impairment loss deducted to arrive at net loans receivable.

Question 10:

a) Is Petrojam in arrears in the transfer of funds or loan payments to the PetroCaribé Development Fund? Please state whether the transfer of the proceeds under the PetroCaribe arrangements are in accordance with established procedures?

b) Does Petrojam have a loan with the PetroCaribé Development Fund? Is Petrojam in arrears in payment on any loan with the PetroCaribé Development Fund?

Answer:

All transfer of the proceeds under the PetroCaribé arrangement has been in accordance with established procedures. That is, payments within 90 days. As at 31st March, 2014, Petrojam is not in arrears with regards to the transfer of funds to the PetroCaribé. In respect to loan payment to PetroCaribé, please see the answer to Question 7.

Question 11:

What are the cash balances and other liquid assets such as investments made by the Fund?

Answer:

As at 31st March, 2014, the following were recorded:

- Cash balances: J$1.37 Billion;
- Long term investment: JS77.89 Billion;
- Short term investments: $41.98 Billion.

Question 12:

What are the procedures that govern the transparent management of the PetroCaribé Development Fund?

Answer:

There are several corporate governance practices, which include:

(a) The development and execution of a three-year strategic plan, which is submitted by the portfolio Ministry, the Ministry of Finance and Planning on an annual basis and monitored by the Ministry.

(b) The Board of Management is established and meets monthly; appoints subcommittees to ensure detailed reviews of policies and procedures as well as compliance with the Fund's Energy Accord Agreement.

(c) Management establishes systems and procedures to ensure controls over processes so as to mitigate risk from losses. These systems and procedures are audited by internal and external auditors as well as the Government's Auditor General Department as required by the Public Bodies Management and Accountability Act. These systems are further overseen by responsible officers to ensure effective implementation of policies approved by the Board of Directors and the Ministry of Finance and Planning.

Question 13:

Has an independent risk assessment of the PetroCaribé Development Fund been done?

Answer:

As part of the systems established by the Board, management, with the approval of the Board, commissioned a consultant to undertake a risk assessment in 2013.

Question 14:

If the risk assessment was done, what was the outcome? Was it favourable or unfavourable? What are the conclusions of the risk assessment with regards to the sustainability of the Fund?

Answer:

The risk assessment process was aborted due to concerns regarding the *bona fides* of the consultant and the possible copyright infringement. The matter has been referred to the Attorney General's Department for a legal opinion as to the best means of protecting the interest of the PetroCaribé Development Fund. The Fund awaits their response. The matter was brought to the attention of the Board of Directors which instructed the Fund to seek to recover monies that were paid to the consultant as well as to sever all ties with the individual.

Additionally, all reports that had been issued to the Fund by the consultant were to be retrieved from the senior managers and filed. The assessment provided by the consultant has not been adopted.

Question 15:

Will you make a copy of the risk assessment available to Parliament?

Answer:

See response to 14.

(DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western, entered an took his seat.)

Question 16:

Are there any delinquent loans to the PDF portfolio for which PDF (PetroCaribé Development Fund) has sought

government guarantees?

Answer:

No.

Question 17:

When was the last audited financial statement submitted to Parliament?

Answer:

The audited financial statements for the period ended 31st March, 2012 was submitted to Parliament in September, 2013. The audited financial statements for the period ended March 31, 2013, are now with the Minister of Finance and Planning and have been submitted to Cabinet and will be submitted to Parliament shortly.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, let me thank the Minister for these responses and you will note, Mr. Speaker, that there are some detailed submissions which have not been gone over (sic) and I would like to be able to do that and with your permission to ask supplementary questions in relation to the attachments.

The SPEAKER: At a later date?

Mr. SHAW: Pardon me? Yes. But I do have a couple questions I'll ask now. The first one would be, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the loan to Petrojam. Now, I want to know if the $31.7 Million referred to in your response that would be in addition to the current liability of a US$108.5 Million; would that be in addition to it, or is that a part of it?

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

(MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, that is including. That's a part of it. Ask the question and I will get back to you.

Mr. SHAW: Yeah, I simply want to know we have two figures in relation to what is owed by Petrojam: $108 Million, which we're told it's standard practice; that it takes about three months to be settled and then further on in the questions in terms of a non-performing loan at Petrojam of $31.7 Million, for which you say there is now an agreement to be signed. I simply want to know if that is in addition to $108 Million?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes, one was arrears on a loan. The other was the $108, which is being settled within the ninety days. So it's two separate.

Mr. SHAW: Okay, so we're looking at about $140 Million. Now my second question, Minister, has to do with the issue of the - Question No. 13 and 14, has to do with the independent risk assessment of the PetroCaribé Development Fund. Now I take note in asking the question of your answer to Question 13:

"As part of the systems established by the Board, management with the approval of the Board, commissioned a consultant to undertake a risk assessment in 2013."

I asked what was the outcome? Was it done? What was the outcome? Was it favourable?

Was it unfavourable? What are the conclusions of the risk assessment with regards to the sustainability of the Fund?

(MR. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

I am to indicate, Mr. Speaker and Minister, I find the answer a little bit curious, because - first of all, let's focus on the answer to be fair. There is no answer to my question. The answer provided is that:

"The risk assessment process was aborted due to concerns regarding the bona fides of the consultant and the possible copyright infringement."

Now, my hesitation on this response, if you go further into your response, it is clear that some kind of report was submitted. So my question is, is it a matter that the Board did not like what they saw? And if it is a matter of a concern about the *bona fides* of the consultant, why wasn't that due diligence done prior to engaging the consultant? Could we start with that?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Well, there is no doubt that there is a legitimate question about the quality of the due diligence, but I think it is to the credit of the Board that before the process was concluded, their examination of that or re-examination of that due diligence process and their subsequent efforts raised concerns about the actual qualifications of the person who was engaged to undertake this. And so there is a question of what are the liabilities in law and what remedies are available to the PetroCaribé Development Fund. They will need to examine their own procurement processes in this regard.

Mr. SHAW: Minister, I hear you. In your answer, you went on to say:

Additionally, all reports that had been issued to the Fund by the consultant were to be retrieved from the Senior Managers and filed. The assessment provided by the consultant has not been adopted".

Why hasn't it been adopted? What is, what is, is it - I ask the question again. Didn't the Fund like the conclusions of the consultant? Is that a question that they just....They rejected the conclusions of the consultant and, therefore, retrieved it from everybody and filed it? What, what, is this? This is something that we have paid for. Yes.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, well, it hasn't been paid for first of all. Put it this way, such moneys as have been paid are to be recovered. But it would be tantamount to getting a medical opinion from somebody who turned out not to be a doctor.

(Laughter)

Would it be a medical opinion, that's the question?

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. SHAW: Which would be a very grave indictment on the Board of the PetroCaribé Fund to have appointed a quack... (Laughter) …to do the work of an appropriate consultant in medical terminology.

(Inaudible comments from Members)

Mr. SHAW: No, we're not going to reduce this to frivolity now; it's a very serious matter.

Now, could I ask, so are we saying then, Minister, are we saying that this Report that has been provided by the consultant, and I am assuming that, at least preliminary funds must have been paid, you are trying to recover funds, so funds were paid.

Dr. DAVIES: It is still... (Inaudible)

Mr. SHAW: So funds are paid and this is information that is now owned by the Government of Jamaica, wouldn't that make it public information that should be provided to Parliament, Honourable Minister?

Dr. PHILLIPS: But, in the same way, if it is, if it is a.... First of all, it's an issue which is in dispute, legally, so we at least need to let that process run its course. And secondly, if the *bona fides* of the persons preparing the Report are in doubt, then there would be no benefit to the public or the institution from circulating that Report.

(Applause)

Mr. SHAW: That assumes, that assumes, Honourable Minister, that we in this Parliament would accept the argument of the PetroCaribé Board lock, stock and barrel that there were issues that challenged the *bona fides* of this consultant. I believe that having regard to what has been presented here; don't you think that we should at least receive more details on why the *bona fides* are being questioned?

Dr. PHILLIPS: That may well be so, but in the interim, we would at least need to get the legal judgement of the Attorney General's Department, which is what the Board has sought, and that's the appropriate authority to make the final judgment as to the *bona fides* and to provide the advice.

Mr. SHAW: And, can we ask that once that assessment is complete that the Report be made available to Parliament?

Dr. PHILLIPS: The advice of the Attorney General's Chambers.

Mr. SHAW: Yes, and the details surrounding the question of the *bona fides.*

Dr. PHILLIPS: Well, depending on the advice of the Attorney General's Chambers.

Mr. McKENZIE: That wouldn't be a good advice at all.

Mr. SHAW: Minister, Mr. Speaker, let me indicate that I am less than satisfied with the responses of the Minister on this matter and will be obliged to pursue it further. But, my final question is, my final question is, in view of the importance that was perceived by the Board of the need for a risk assessment to be done, will another risk assessment be commissioned?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes, it is part of the standard procedures of the Board to have risk assessments done. And they will need, as has been indicated to pay very close attention to the procurement of appropriately qualified persons to do this. But, yes, a risk assessment will be done.

It should be worth noting, however, that there are no arrears on the accounts and that the PetroCaribé Fund is in sound financial health. (Applause) I think it's important that this be reinforced, especially given the fiduciary responsibilities not only to the

Jamaican public, but to our partners in Venezuela, who have made this very generous contribution to our development possibilities.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the points made by the Minister, but I would urge a $3 Billion United States amount of money that has been garnered from the PetroCaribé Fund, and the circumstances where a consultant was deliberated upon, clearly was hired on the basis of normal procurement procedures and in which case the *bona fides* of those who bided would and should have been carefully assessed and examined. And, one was selected, a Report is presented. The Board does not like the Report, so we then question the *bona fides* of the consultant. If you are talking about a concern by Venezuela and others, start right there. I think you should start right there.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, which - on a Point of Order. I don't think the Member should impute motive to the Board of the PetroCaribé Development Fund (Applause) to suggest that the reason why they question the *bona fides* has anything to do with the quality of the Report is without foundation and indeed, total speculation and…. (Heckling) ...unnecessary in its imputation about either the Board and the Honourable Public Officials who comprised this Board, the Cabinet Secretary among them, the Financial Secretary, the Honourable Shirley Tyndall and others who make up the Board. It is, it is, not responsible, Mr. Speaker, and indeed in breach of the Standing Orders of this House.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I want to make it abundantly clear that I have not imputed any motive. Whatever conclusions I have drawn have been drawn as a result of the cryptic nature of the responses that have been provided to me in this document! It is an insult to provide this document to us in this House!

(*Sotto voce* comments by Government Members)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, it has been made clear that the *bona fides* of the consultant came into question. The issue of when they came into question was not stated here. And indeed, it is purely an imputation on the part of the Member to suggest that it was after a Report was completed.

It is certainly within the responsibility of the Board to consider whether they have found adequately qualified personnel or not. And indeed, Mr. Speaker, if you think you buying a horse and it turns out to be a mule, thank God, you found out before they escape from the barn.

(Laughter)

So, Mr. Speaker....

Mr. SAMUDA: No, is an horseman better analogy.

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: (Laughter) You understand though, we are not horse in here.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the important point to note is that the PetroCaribé Development Fund is in sound financial health and no reckless talking or otherwise should cause us to impugn what has proven to be the best managed Fund under the PetroCaribé

Arrangement in the entire hemisphere. (Applause) It has been operating as such. It originated in this Administration. It operated with the same mandate during that Administration. It is comprised of Public Officials and continues to be so. We should never seek by careless talk or imputation in breach of the Standing Orders to try and....

Mr. WARMINGTON: That's not what he did! That's not what he did!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ....to try and damage the reputation of this venerable and highly reputed institution.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I am bringing this matter to a close now by serving notice to you, Mr. Speaker, that right now, we don't know whether it's a horse, purebred, a mule or a donkey, but there are Reports, there are Reports that are at PetroCaribé, at least a down-payment has been made for the consulting work, those Reports are in the hands of senior managers and we are told by your answer that they have been retrieved and filed! These are now public documents which must be provided to this Parliament, and I am therefore, serving notice, Mr. Speaker!

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness. (*Sotto voce* comments) Hold on. Hold on. Hold a minute, sorry, sorry, sorry. There was a signal from Dr. Davies.

Dr. DAVIES: Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, it's not normal for a Minister to speak on a matter which involves responses from another Minister, but I have a few comments and a proposal. As the person who work to put together the legislation for the establishment of the Fund, and this was unique at that stage, I do not know whether any of the other beneficiaries from the PetroCaribé Agreement, any other has done this, but we did it deliberately to take it out of the hands of the, I would say, political decision making, in terms of ensuring that the proceeds from the sale of the fuel from Petrojam had to be lodged and lodged in a particular timeframe. And I believe that the Member of - the Opposition Spokesman would have continued this practice.

This matter, apart from the fact that this represents the single greatest source of bilateral concessionary support, apart from that fact, and I'm not going to go down the road of trying to score political points, except to say that, we were all never - once upon a time we weren't united about this Fund.

This Fund, Mr. Speaker, if you did anything to undermine confidence in its management, there are strong forces internationally located, who may not share our - this Parliament's endorsement of the Fund or appreciate its importance to us. There are certain issues, Mr. Speaker, and having presided over several Standing Finance Committee meetings, example...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Warmington)

Dr. DAVIES: ...whereby information, or so, can be shared about vital matters - Defence being one - can be shared, but in a confidential manner, but not necessarily brought to a full Parliamentary discussion.

Mr. Speaker, I implore colleagues to note that this Fund is important, not to PNP, not to JLP, but to the Government and people of

Jamaica. (Applause) Let us not, for whatever reason, cause - some of my colleagues, and perhaps even you, would have recently realized that there are no private speeches. (Laughter) But, it is important. I am not trying to suppress democratic dialogue, but I would like to suggest that there are ways in with the Opposition Spokesperson on Finance can meet with the Minister of Finance to discuss a matter of great sensitivity, but it is too easy for what seems to be a harmless set of questions, to then become a headline, not just in Jamaica but elsewhere, which will be detrimental to the future of the Fund.

Those are my comments, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Thank you for your words of advice.

Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are some questions on the Question Paper - Question No. 2 standing in my name, to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, please answer the questions.

The PRIME MINISTER:

Question 1:

Can the Prime Minister outline the Terms of Reference of the proposed six-member Enterprise Team?

Answer:

The Electricity Sector Enterprise Team is appointed by the Cabinet to lead and manage the procurement process in consultation with the OUR, JPSCo, and the Minister, for the development of new electricity-generating capacity.

The ESET will report to, and advise the Cabinet on the way forward in that regard, and is expected to manage the implementation of a comprehensive programme to urgently replace the base-load generation with a more efficient plant, utilizing lower cost fuel, in order to ensure that electricity is reliably provided to Jamaicans at affordable rates. The full Terms of Reference has been Tabled.

Question 2:

Will the Prime Minister define the role of the Office of the Utilities Regulation, going forward, as it relates to the 381 Megawatt energy plant?

Answer:

The role of the OUR is outlined in the Office of Utilities Act, and includes the overall regulation of the Electricity Sector, including advising the Minister, as well as regulating the transmission, distribution, generation, and the supply of electricity to the public.

Question 3:

It has been stated in the Sectoral Debate presentation by the Energy Minister that the project is now under the Office of the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister state whether the Energy Minister will have any oversight responsibility, or involvement in the project?

Answer:

The Minister has statutory responsibilities for the Energy sector, including the granting of licences for electricity generation and will continue to discharge those duties.

As stated in the answer to Question 1, the ESET will report to Cabinet on the procurement for new electricity generating capacity. However, in leading and managing the procurement of new electricity generating capacity, the ESET may consult with the Minister as the need arises.

Question 4:

Will the Prime Minister provide a Status Report on the process of revocation of the licences to Energy World International (EWI)?

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took her seat.)

Answer:

The Minister has written to EWI, giving them the requisite notice regarding the revocation of their licence.

Question 5:

Can the Prime Minister affirm that none of the individuals being considered as members of the Enterprise Team is connected in any way to any of the bidders?

Answer:

To the best of my knowledge, yes.

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you for your response, Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, would you allow me to read, for the record of this Parliament, a section of the JPSCo licence, the amended licence, August 19, 2011:

The Office shall have…

and this Office is the OUR...

…shall have responsibility for the preparation and revision of all requisite lease cost expansion plans for the addition of generation capacity to the system, subject to due consultation with the licensee, and other stakeholders in the electricity sector. That is, the Office shall have responsibility for the management and administration…-

this Office now being the OUR

…the management and administration of the competitive process for the addition of any new capacity as this term is defined in the All-Island Electric Licence, 2001.

Mr. Speaker, the JPS licence clearly states that it is the OUR that has the authority, the responsibility, the duty to lead any process of determining what we are try to do now - the least cost...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Dr. Phillips)

Dr. DAVIES: Sooner rather than later.

Mr. HOLNESS: We are going to come to the questions. Thank you for your encouragement, Member.

Mr. Speaker, the issue here is that the Prime Minister's response has now set up another Body.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. HOLNESS: Yes. Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's response seems to suggest - well not suggest - states clearly that the Enterprise Team will now take over this rule.

Is this then, a violation of JPS's contract - licence?

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, no. It is not a violation of JPSCo.

Mr. HOLNESS: Will the Prime Minister explain why it is not a violation? Clearly, JPS licence states that it is the OUR that should be in charge of any competitive process. It is the OUR that should lead any such process to develop the capacity, but yet, Madam Prime Minister, you have now put in place another Body. It would appear that it is a conflict. Please explain.

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, we have already begun discussion with JPSCo concerning the process - the contract.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, is the Prime Minister going to change the licence to allow for the Enterprise Team to be, appropriately, the body to lead this process of expanding the capacity?

The PRIME MINISTER: The JPSCo licence, Mr. Speaker, is a contractual condition, agreed between JPSCo and the Government of Jamaica. All conditions can be amended by agreement.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker.

Dr. DAVIES: You have to think up another question.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, there is no question, on either side, about the serious nature of the energy crisis we now face. And we don't want, in these questions, to reduce the discussion to a partisan level. I think, at all times, we must keep our eyes on the national goal, that of bringing in cheap, affordable electricity that can be universally available to all Jamaicans.

I want it to be understood, Mr. Speaker, that the questions that I am asking are only intended to facilitate the process of Jamaica finally getting cheap, universally accessible electricity.

Mr. Speaker, the establishment of the Enterprise Team does not bring clarity to the administrative role that the Minister will have over the process. The whole thing seems very clouded, and Jamaicans want to understand clearly now, what will be the role of the Minister and the role of the OUR.

The Prime Minister said that the Enterprise Team will consult with the Minister. In this matter, does the Enterprise Team now take on the role of procurement? Does it take on the role of defining a licence; and what will be the role of the Minister in the definition of a new licence, once you have determined how you are going to proceed?

The PRIME MINISTER: The Enterprise Team, Mr. Speaker, will report to the Cabinet; the Minister with responsibility is a Member of the Cabinet.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister who still remains the Minister of Energy, have any oversight role in the work of the Enterprise Team?

Mr. CLARKE: They work in tandem.

The PRIME MINISTER: I don't know what you are not understanding. The Cabinet will take the decisions. The Enterprise Team will report to the Cabinet, through the Cabinet

Secretary, to us at Cabinet. The Minister is a Member of the Cabinet.

Mr. HOLNESS: So you are saying, Prime Minister, that you can't tell the Jamaican people what 2016 means? Well, okay, we understand, we understand.

Prime Minister - Mr. Speaker, the Minister in his Sectoral presentation in other documents, explained why it was that he signed an amended licence.

Dr. DAVIES: Is that a question for the Minister?

Mr. HOLNESS: No, I am asking the Prime Minister. You are all so protective of your Prime Minister. She is the Prime Minister, you know, she can answer questions, yes.

So, Mr. Speaker, could the Prime Minister tell the country what is the status of the bid bond since an amended licence was signed?

(*Sotto voce* comments from Government Members)

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, I think in fairness, the Leader of the Opposition needs to table the other questions, that particular question that he just asked.

Dr. DAVIES: Horace, is your time.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, I have not had a chance to - you have just tabled - and thank you for the TOR, the full TOR, and I will go through them. But you may very well have the answers in the TOR, but allow me to ask, just in case.

Will the Energy Monitoring Committee have a Confidentiality Agreement to sign? And what will be the nature of that Confidentiality Agreement, if it is so?

(Cross talk)

The PRIME MINISTER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the commercial Confidentiality, certainly, that provision would be in place.

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you, Prime Minister.

So you are saying that there will be a Confidentiality Agreement, which will be a limited one. Is part of the Terms of Reference for them to report to the public as well, or solely to the Cabinet?

The PRIME MINISTER: No. The Cabinet established the Committee, they would report to the Cabinet and then we would inform the country.

Mr. HOLNESS: Prime Minister, is the Government minded to approach using, I would say, a sole-source method now that the previous competitive process has failed?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The PRIME MINISTER: There is no meeting yet of the Enterprise Team, so I would not be able to say that to you. When they begin their discussions, when they meet then we will be able to...

(Inaudible)

Mr. HOLNESS: Prime Minister, the Minister of Energy in his Budget presentation - another very important area that needs clarifying - suggested that he should have a hand - meaning the Minister should have a position in procurement. I suspect what you meant to say was that the procurement should

be taken from the OUR. In your actual statement you said that the Minister... (Inaudible)

Is it now that the Government is contemplating moving the procurement duty from the OUR to the Ministry?

(Cross talk)

The PRIME MINISTER: That will be subject to Cabinet discussions, the question you just asked.

Mr. HOLNESS: Prime Minister, I wanted to go back to the issue of the bond, I just want to be clear on something. Not the bid bond this time but the performance bond.

It has been stated publicly that the EWI has in some way deposited - posted the required amount. Can the Prime Minister state - just for clarity so the nation understands - what is the current status of the licence with EWI? Is there a bond posted, and what is the status of the bond? It's very important because it's not quite clear whether or not they actually posted or they just said they were posted.

The PRIME MINISTER: If EWI had fulfilled what was required then we would not have to revoke it, there would be no revocation.

Mr. HOLNESS: So, just to be clear, you are saying that EWI has not fulfilled its obligations? Just for clarity, just for clarity.

The PRIME MINISTER: If they had there would be no need for revocation.

Mr. HOLNESS: Well, possibly, if you couldn't get it financed.

But it is also important for us to know, has EWI indicated to the Government that they will be taking legal action since they are the holders of a licence?

The PRIME MINISTER: No, we have gotten no such indication so far, we have gotten none.

Mr. HOLNESS: Is there - are you expecting - are you preparing for any such indication?

Government MEMBERS: Nooooo! Si' dung! Si' dung!

(Heckling/Cross talk)

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker...

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. Speaker, the Government that I lead, we do not believe in speculation. I indicated that we do not believe in speculation, I certainly do not.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the establishment of the Enterprise Team that the Government has just put in place, is it the understanding of the Government that the Enterprise Team would fall under the jurisdiction of the OCG as well?

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, we do have an OCG Act, and I am sure that would not be in the Act.

Mr. HOLNESS: Is the Prime Minister saying that the Enterprise Team will not fall under the jurisdiction of the OCG?

Dr. PHILLIPS: All procurement are subject to...

Mr. HOLNESS: But the Prime Minister didn't say that.

Dr. PHILLIPS: That's what she said.

The PRIME MINISTER: I said the OCG Act remains in place. I made it quite clear.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, just for clarity - she has to understand this. It is

curious that the Prime Minister didn't see it fit to name the OCG as one of the bodies that the Enterprise Team would consult with.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HOLNESS: And it - hold on - and it would be wise...

A Government MEMBER: Read the TOR!

Mr. HOLNESS: I just said I didn't get to read the TOR.

(Heckling)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yeah, well all you have to do is say dat!

A Government MEMBER: Read it and come back!

(Heckling)

Mr. HOLNESS: But, Mr. Speaker, it would also be advisable that at least membership from the OCG be placed on the Enterprise Team.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The PRIME MINISTER: You know, Mr. Speaker, it is very unfair for the Leader of the Opposition to be asking questions which were addressed in the document that we gave him. (Applause) And he said he got no opportunity to read the TOR. If he read it he would not have asked the questions. And I ask the Leader of the Opposition to refer to page 5 of the document.

(Heckling)

Mr. HOLNESS: That's all you need to do, just say you have the answer. You just gave me the document.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness, Mr. Holness, no, no, hold on, Mr. Holness. If you want - Mr. Holness, if you want the opportunity to read the document and later, on a different date ask questions, then it would make more sense than to stumble through this.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the nature of how questions are asked is that when these voluminous documents are provided we don't get to go through them.

The SPEAKER: No, I am saying, if you want an opportunity...

Mr. HOLNESS: So it is a perfectly legitimate question.

But, Mr. Speaker...

The SPEAKER: No, I am saying, if you want the opportunity to ask at another date...

Mr. HOLNESS: Yes, and I am going to ask you for that opportunity.

The SPEAKER: Yes, then we can avoid this guessing and spelling.

Mr. HOLNESS: I just want to establish though, Mr. Speaker, that by virtue of the last time the authority of the OCG was questioned - which was taken to Court for a judicial review - the opinion then was that it was the IOP or whatever you had called it then, was considered to be a public body, and therefore fell under the jurisdiction for review of the OCG. I want that to be clearly understood that now that you have established this Body that it will now fall under the jurisdiction of the OCG for review. I want that to be absolutely clear.

Mr. Speaker, given that the Terms of Reference are just now provided in the complete form, I would want to have this

question session suspended, for us to take up at another time when I have had the chance to review the documents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: That is okay. Thank you, Mr. Holness.

Mr. Samuda.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to ask the Prime Minister a few basic, simple questions.

Prime Minister, in the matter...

The SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda?

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes, sir?

The SPEAKER: Those questions you are going to ask are clarifications to answers given?

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes.

The SPEAKER: Okay.

Mr. SAMUDA: They have nothing to do with what has been said so far.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SAMUDA: Very little.

Mr. Speaker - Prime Minister, when matters get to the stage where decisions have to be taken by the Cabinet, it usually is presented in the form of a Cabinet Submission. Who will be bringing that submission to Cabinet, you or the Minister of Energy? Because surely, you will have to go to Cabinet for its approval.

The PRIME MINISTER: In relation to the Enterprise Team, it would be me, it would be the Prime Minister.

Mr. SAMUDA: Thank you.

Is the Enterprise Team as you noted very briefly, I saw it, where it is to lead and manage the procurement process. Is it intended to amend the provisions under the OUR? Is it intended that the provisions that now enable the OUR to exercise and discharge this responsibility, will be amended to provide for this activity to be handled by the Enterprise Team?

The PRIME MINISTER: The answer is yes. Very good question.

Dr. DAVIES: And I know you support that. You have said you support it.

Mr. HOLNESS: The question then, Mr. Speaker...

The SPEAKER: Hold on Mr. Holness.

(Inaudible comment)

Mr. HOLNESS: No I still have some questions further to ask.

The SPEAKER: Okay, because you need to...

(Inaudible comment)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister as a Minister of Energy, she has taken away the largest energy project that Jamaica has ever done and probably will ever do in the next 50 years. Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has not explained to us clearly what will be the role of her Minister of Energy. For example, Mr. Speaker, in her response it is still the Minister of Energy who has written to revoke the licence. Now, you have to be clear. Are you going to take away the project from the Minister or are you going to still allow the Minister to function? We need to understand that, Prime Minister. Is it a real separation of the authority of the Minister or is it just here as a facade?

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, I want to make it quite clear. This is a follow-up to Question 4. This is a requirement of the

licence as stated in section 15(l)(a) and 15(2) of the amended licence which deals with terminating the licence.

When the licensee has failed to comply with any of its obligations the Minister may revoke the licence after the breach has been specified and the licensee has been given 30 days, 30 days within which to make written submissions or to be heard why the licence should not be revoked. That notice period will expire June 14, 2014. The notice was issued on May 16, 2014.

I hope this will assist your understanding.

Mr. HOLNESS: Prime Minister, it was said here in this Parliament that you have taken the project from the Minister.

(Heckling)

Mr. DALLEY: Nobody said that!

Mr. HOLNESS: The Minister himself said it in his presentation.

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, for clarification, it was never said in this Parliament, never said in this Parliament -

(Heckling)

- and I want the Leader of the Opposition to be truthful on this matter.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Could you specify exactly when and by whom?

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, in the Sectoral presentation, in the Sectoral presentation the Minister stated that the project was removed to the Office of the Prime Minister. So then, so then, after that statement the Minister still carries out functions as it relates to that project.

I think that the Prime Minister needs to make a decision. Are you going to keep your Minister of Energy or are you going to just give him back the project? Are you going to change him or are you going to give him back the project?

(Heckling)

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, let me make it quite clear. I have a Minister of Energy in place... (Applause by Government Members) ...and I have no intention of removing the Minister of Energy unless he does something wrong that could affect and impact the Jamaican people in a serious way and the Government of Jamaica. Thank you.

Mr. HOLNESS: Very good, Madam Prime Minister. Very good, very good.

The PRIME MINISTER: And that will be my decision not yours.

Mr. HOLNESS: Very good, Madam Prime Minister.

Now, let us, Madam Prime Minister, look towards what you have just said. It's a very important statement you have made.

Dr. DAVIES: This is not a debate.

Mr. HOLNESS: It's not a debate; I have a question to ask.

Mr. Speaker, the OCG upon reviewing the procurement process concluded that the process was flawed, that the Minister's actions were inappropriate. I would like to ask the Prime Minister, when the OCG tabled his Report what action did you take with regard to the OCG's Report?

The PRIME MINISTER: Well, we disagreed with the Report.

Mr. HOLNESS: Fine. There is nothing wrong with disagreeing with the OCG's Report. The OCG, as the Minister of Transport would know that you can disagree. We don't have a problem with that, but when a constituted body, Mr. Speaker, especially a body that reports to Parliament makes such a pronouncement on such a major energy project and all will you say, Prime Minister, is that you disagreed and you did nothing else? Did you, for example, Prime Minister, ask for further legal advice on this matter? I mean, certainly, you can disagree but the OCG's Report must carry some weight on decisions that the leader of a country will make.

The PRIME MINISTER: I just want to say to Members that, I don't know if they remember that there was a disagreement between OCG and the OUR on this matter.

Mr. HOLNESS: Well that makes the point even clearer, Prime Minister. So, another arm of Government comes up with an alternative report. Independent report, I am not disputing that. What did you do as Prime Minister to resolve that?

Dr. DAVIES: You have a new set of questions now?

(Inaudible comment)

Mr. HOLNESS: You heard the Prime Minister's statement, that she would only fire her Minister if...

(Inaudible comment)

The PRIME MINISTER: We got, we got, aam, we got legal advice on it.

Mr. HOLNESS: It would be useful, Mr. Speaker for the legal advice to be provided. We recall that when there was a similar difference in opinion, this time a difference in opinion taken by the Minister of Transport, the Government sought to resolve the matter through a judicial review.

Mr. McKENZIE: The same legal advice. From the same legal advice.

Dr. DAVIES: And they have invited me to the opening of...

(Inaudible comment)

Mr. CHARLES: You are the Prime Minister?

Mr. HOLNESS: We wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether or not this matter of the difference between the two opinions should not have been acted upon with the greater responsibility. Because, Mr. Speaker, it is on that matter why we are here today, because another body who was to be called upon to finance the project has said that we will accept what the OCG has said and not what the other body, which is not the competent body to pronounce on procurement procedures. We have to wonder whether or not the Minister did something wrong and whether or not by the Prime Minister's own statement that she doesn't have reason to address the Minister's state.

The PRIME MINISTER: You know Mr. Speaker, the urgency for me right now is to get the energy project going that will offer cheaper electricity to Jamaica, to the Jamaican people and certainly to the business community, particularly those who have to be using the electricity and the cost. (Applause by Government Members) I am not here to score political points; I am here to work on behalf of the Jamaican people, working,

working, working. (Applause by Government Members) That is my responsibility.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Sleeping, sleeping, sleeping.

Mr. HOLNESS: You know, Prime Minister, on another day I would have allowed you to escape.

(Heckling)

On another day, but not today, not this day. You know why, Mr. Speaker? It is that very reason why we are here today. The very attitude that says, I am not here to business 'bout the law and if the law don't shoot me I will ignore it. It is this very appeal to say, let us abandon rules and regulations why we are here today.

(Heckling)

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister of the country cannot stand up and say to the nation that my only concern is to get the energy and not to pay attention to the procedure. It is the failure of not paying attention to the procedure why we don't have energy today.

Mr. McKENZIE: Bad legal advice.

Mr. HOLNESS: That is the reason, Mr. Speaker….

(Applause by Opposition Members)

You know, a lot of people want to blame the Minister but the blame really should be laid at the feet of the Prime Minister. When a competent body such as the OCG tables a report on a major project of this country and says to us, there is something wrong, we didn't pay attention to it, we had to now wait for an external body to come and say, you what, this doesn't smell too right, we are going to leave it alone and now we are here having to jump through hoops to get it done. Prime Minister, it is the wrong approach. Wrong approach.

(Inaudible comment by the Prime Minister)

Mr. HOLNESS: It is the wrong approach. It is the wrong approach.

(Heckling)

It is the wrong approach and I will not stand here and allow my country to go down. It is not your country alone. (Applause by Opposition Members) Not your country alone.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Dam foolishness.

Mr. HOLNESS: I have had to be dealing with this -

The SPEAKER: Hold on, hold on, Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, allow me.

The SPEAKER: No, hold on.

Mr. HOLNESS: We have had to be dealing with this issue over and over and over again. When are we going to pay attention to rules in this country? It is by the rules that we will succeed and for a Prime Minister to stand up and tell us that she is not going to pay attention to the rules.

The SPEAKER: No, hold on, hold on, hold on. Hold on with that.

(Heckling)

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, I did not come here for any grandstanding. I came to respond to the questions, I answered the questions, he is not satisfied and I am not going to bow to grandstanding.

Thank you very much.

(Applause by Government Member)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, it is said...

The SPEAKER: Hold on, Mr. Holness, hold on. Let us confine this to specifics.

Mr. WARMINGTON: But he has not strayed from it. Mr. Speaker, he has not strayed from the topic. He has not strayed from the topic.

The SPEAKER: You can ask for clarification on the questions answered.

(Heckling)

Hold on.

Mr. WARMINGTON: He has not strayed from a topic.

Mr. HOLNESS: Hold on, man, you hold on. You hold on.

Mr. WARMINGTON: He has not strayed from the topic.

(Heckling)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, all my questions are pertinent. They have kept to the matter that is before us.

The SPEAKER: Yes, but...

Mr. HOLNESS: And, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that we have to keep within the lines of what is parliamentary -

The SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

(Applause by Government Member)

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker, just for clarity. It has been said both by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Energy, that 2016 is sacrosanct, and just so that the public understands, does 2016 mean that you will have a signed licence ready for implementation? Does it mean that by 2016 the plant will be built and ready to generate? Or by 2016 does it mean that the Jamaican consumers, residential, commercial, industrial, all of us, those who have light that they can't pay, everybody who wants electricity, will they be seeing the reduction in their electricity rate? What does 2016 mean?

(Heckling)

Dr. DAVIES: Twenty sixteen means some more things too. The second consecutive defeat.

(Laughter/Applause by Government Members)

Mr. CHARLES: All of a sudden you turn Prime Minister.

(Heckling) (The Speaker gavels)

The PRIME MINISTER: Mr. Speaker, our greatest interest right now is to ensure we can get the generating capacity to be in place so that our people will not have to string up and steal electricity but will be able to pay their electricity bill because the cost will go down, and we are working very hard to achieve that and we would love to see if we can achieve that for 2016.

Thank you.

Mr. SAMUDA: Is the Enterprise Team to be a permanent body or is it specifically established for this project? In other words, Prime Minister, if a new project comes on stream that will replace old equipment that the JPS now manages is it that this team will be maintained as a permanent fixture to manage all such future project?

The PRIME MINISTER: No, it is to deal with the 381megawatt project, that's it.

Mr. SAMUDA: Is it intended, Prime Minister, for the Minister who draws his authority from statute, is it intended for the Minister to remain virtually paralyzed in the

full discharge of his responsibilities in the future? In other words, this is a specific problem that has arisen with this particular project. Is it intended that the Minister at some future point will resume his legitimate role as the guardian and the person responsible for management of projects like this, or is it that he is to remain in a state of being unable to discharge his responsibilities as the Minister of Government with the specific responsibility that has been taken from him and put elsewhere?

The PRIME MINISTER: The Minister as you will see - Minister, can you stand for me.

(Dr. Phillip standing)

The PRIME MINISTER: He is not paralyzed and the decision to deal with the 381 project, it has nothing to do with removing the responsibilities of the Minister.

Thank you.

Mr. SAMUDA: And finally, Prime Minister, I notice in your answers and in the Terms of Reference that it includes or it has provisions for the Enterprise Team to consult, doesn't say shall, may consult with the Minister and the OUR and the JPS. It says nothing about the Office of the Prime Minister, yet they are reporting to you but there is no provision for the consultation.

Dr. DAVIES: That's where they are.

Mr. SAMUDA: No, but if you are going to be, as the Leader of Opposition says, if you are going to...

Dr. DAVIES: Don't weaken your point.

Mr. SAMUDA: You have to set up a set of rules and regulations and it must be clear so that when the Enterprise Team reaches a point in its consultations with the Minister and the OUR and the JPS, does it mean - what I am saying to be absolutely clear there should be the inclusion of the responsible Minister, which is the Prime Minister.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Davies)

The PRIME MINISTER: Yes, I am the Chair of the Cabinet and if the thing is to be discussed at Cabinet then certainly it must come to me to get to the Cabinet, and I am sure you will remember that as a former Minister of Government.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: It was too short.

Mr. SAMUDA: You see, Prime Minister, I am accustomed - in the brief time that I spent in Cabinet - I am accustomed to consulting on the matter that I am going to pilot through Cabinet. It doesn't come to me as a finished product that I have no say, we discuss and we consult, so that is an integral consideration prior to submission to Cabinet, and I am simply saying in your response there is no mention of a requirement to consult with that person who is going to pilot the matter through Cabinet.

Dr. DAVIES: Take it as read.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Derrick Smith.

The PRIME MINISTER: I would just like to say that would never be a contention in my Cabinet.

Dr. DAVIES: Not in your Cabinet.

The PRIME MINISTER: We operate in a particular way in the true spirit of joined-up government.

(Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: Prime Minister, the OUR is now charged with the responsibility that has been given to the Enterprise Team? The two can't coexist.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. SAMUDA: No, let me finish. The two cannot co-exist in a constructive manner; one has to yield to the other. So therefore is the OUR's provision going to be so altered that injected into any process in the future will be the Enterprise Team carrying the reigns? So all we are looking at is an administrative change in how we procure equipment for the JPS, fundamental change. So, therefore, I want to know is it intended for the Enterprise Team to replace the OUR in this essential role?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Procurement. Yes but she answers.

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes, but they can't both exist together because one has taken over the reins.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. SAMUDA: No, no, no. That's what I want her to say. You said that you are going to alter the OUR's provisions that they would have nothing to do.

The PRIME MINISTER: I said it earlier.

Mr. SAMUDA: No, the OUR has a dual role to regulate and to procurement.

Dr. PHILLIPS: As a condition of licence.

Mr. SAMUDA: As a condition. What you are saying is on a permanent basis you have removed or intend to remove the licensing side of it.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Procurement side of it.

Mr. SAMUDA: Procurement side of it. Yes, the procurement side of it. So what you are really implying is that this Enterprise Team will form a permanent part.

Rev: THWAITES: The Cabinet will.

Mr. CHARLES: How many Prime Ministers...

Mr. SAMUDA: How can you have something now operating as the OUR and now you are going to take that procurement part of it from them and you are not going to replace it as a permanent feature of anything. How can you have that? It doesn't make sense. Who is going to procure in the future, not for this particular project, who is going to be responsible for procuring in the future if you remove it from the OUR, that is all I am asking simple?

The PRIME MINISTER: May I say, Mr. Speaker, this remains the purview of the Cabinet.

Mr. SAMUDA: I didn't hear.

The SPEAKER: It's the purview of the Cabinet how they proceed after this. Mr. Derrick Smith.

Mr. SMITH: Through you, Mr. Speaker to Madam Prime Minister. Against the background of the early warning of the OCG and based on subsequent issues is the Prime Minister prepared to admit that your Government made a grave error in proceeding after the warning that you received out of the OCG?

The PRIME MINISTER: No, capital NO.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Prime Minister.

Mr. D. SMITH: I will leave you and the media for that.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, under Public Business the Minister of Finance will commence with item 9 and then to move to the Capital Development Fund (Withdrawal) (No. 4) and thereafter we will have two presentations under the Sectoral Debate.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, on account of the decisions yesterday we have a range of items today, Mr. Speaker, to be considered.

Mr. D. SMITH: What decision.

Dr. PHLLIPS: To postpone the discussion on the Banking Services Act. It means that we have to do the Banking Services Act today as we have, but we also haye to do the Items standing at Number 9, Number 12, Number 13 and Number 14. I propose, Mr. Speaker, with the permission of the House to do 9 and 12 and then 13 and 14 and then to do the main item of the Banking Services Act after.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the matter at Number nine which is the amendment to the Fourth Schedule of the Financial Services Act - Financial Services Commission Act the issue, Mr. Speaker, is that the Fourth Schedule sets out offences under the Insurance Act and the Securities Act for which a person may be given the opportunity to pay a fixed penalty in lieu of prosecution. Currently, the Fourth Schedule does not include offences under the Pensions Act 2004, as this Act was promulgated in 2004 and subsequent to the FSC Act.

Given the proven benefits of the fixed penalty regime in easing the strain on the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions while at the same time enabling the execution of relatively swift enforcement action on the part of the FSC, the decision was taken to make this regulatory tool also available to the Financial Services Commission in relation to the breaches under the Pensions Act. The levels of fixed penalties that are proposed to be prescribed for breaches under the Pensions Act are in line with those recently updated in relations to the security and the insurance industries. In addition, matters such as the severity of breaches played an important part in arriving at the amounts which ranged from $50,000 for the failure to display a certificate of registration, for example, or as licensing certificate up to amounts of $200,000 for performing the duties of a fund administrator without being licensed.

I should point out also, Mr. Speaker, that the Financial Services Commission has consulted with the pensions industry on this fixed penalty regime and there have been no objections in respect of the proposals. What is required, Mr. Speaker is that this Resolution be affirmed by this House, and I so move.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, the Minister has clarified one of the concerns I had which is to do with whether there was consultation

and he has answered that. Now, the list of items or areas of infractions are fairly straightforward, failure to do this, failure to do that which is very specific. But I do have a concern about items 13 and 14 in which the $200,000 proposed penalty relates to knowingly filing incorrect returns, knowingly filing incorrect returns in terms of individuals or body corporate.

My question is who determines *knowingly*? Is that an arbitrary determination by the Commission? And is this not a matter that might very well have to require judicial proceedings to determine whether it was knowingly or not?

Now, I'm not an attorney-at-law, but it seems to me that - it just seems to me that it leaves a, you know, more than a grey area as to the determination of whether it was done *knowingly* or not. And I'm just leaving that with you as a query.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the point I'd make that ultimately that would be a matter for an adjudicating tribunal to determine whether the evidence constituted was such as to constitute knowledge of the offence. But ultimately, with respect to the fixed penalties it's going to be applied with the consent of the party that is committing the offence. In the absence of that, they have access to the courts if they're of the view that the charges unfounded are to be resisted. And certainly given the amounts involved here, my own view is that this is a judgement that they would not take lightly to go to the courts as the case may be. But there is always the ultimate determination of the courts, which is not superseded by these provisions.

Mr. Speaker, this is a regime which has worked in relation to the insurance provisions, for example, and the security's segment of the financial sector that is regulated by the Commission. It's a new scheme, which as we will see is being extended further, but I think it serves well to take matters out of the court system wherever that is possible, with the consent and agreement of the parties subject to the jurisdiction of the Financial Services Commission.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I propose to the House that the Resolution be affirmed.

The SPEAKER: Those in favour of the Resolution?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: The Resolution is passed.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the second issue at Item 12 relates to the Capital Development Fund and the withdrawal order Number 4. The issue here, Mr. Speaker, is that the - it was agreed from as far back as April 1999, that the Capital Development Fund and resources could be used in the privatization process. And certainly specifically, a sum was earmarked for use in the privatization of the Jamaica Railway Corporation.

Cabinet decision of July 2012, entitled the closure - in relation to the closure and privatization of the Jamaica Railway Corporation, approved the initial drawdown of $145 Million from the CDF to meet the commitments of the JRC, resulting from the privatization process. These amounts are

being sought from this withdrawal as part of the withdrawal under these funds. There's an amount for $115 Million from the Capital Withdrawal Fund to facilitate the Jamaica Railway Corporation. There's an additional amount here for the Jamaica Bauxite Institute to cover the budgetary obligations for the year, as has been typical, and for Jamaica Bauxite Mining Limited to settle the obligations to Glencore representing the third installment of quarterly payments due on outstanding debts in the 14/15 financial year amounting to US$6 Million.

The sums paid in this order, Mr. Speaker, subject to all the laws for the time being in support, and represents the envisage withdrawals for the entire fiscal year for the - from the Capital Development Fund. As I said, the amounts involved are $115 Million for the Jamaica Railway Corporation privatization; $179 Million for budgetary support from the Jamaica Bauxite Institute to cover its operations for the fiscal year, which really represents $15 Million above the $163 Million drawn down in the previous financial year due to increased activities and, of course, the impact of higher cost.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, there's an amount which represents the amounts owing under the agreement between Jamaica Bauxite Mining Limited and Glencore involving the settlement.

The balance in the Capital Development Fund as at May 1, 2014, was $344 Million. This could satisfy the amounts required for the JRC and the JBI. Projected inflows of US$12 Million will be available to fund the payments to Glencore during the 2014/15 financial year. The presentation of the order at this time is to provide the support required for the JBI and the JRC as well as to avoid the need to return subsequently to get additional amounts. What we're doing is seeking the approval of Parliament to facilitate withdrawals up to this amount from the Fund for the entire fiscal year 2014/15.

Mr. Speaker, I so move that this Resolution be taken.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I would be grateful if the Minister would provide just a little more information on the payments to Glencore in your reply. And because as I understand it, the other cost factors related to CAP are supposed to be dealt with as part of the agreement with Noble. So I'm presuming that this arrangement with the Jamaica Bauxite Mining Limited has to do with other residual obligations that are due to Glencore.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, the spectre that we face here is one in which apart from the optimistic announcement that was provided by the Minister of Energy and Mining concerning a possible new bauxite and alumina project to come on board. The fact is that we don't know, we're paying out money from the paltry sums that we're now getting under the - from the bauxite levy, most of it is just being paid out either for administrative or for debt servicing. So there's no money left for capital development; we talked about it, the name of the account is Capital Development but there's no money for it. There's no money for water in Mocho, we rip

out all a di bauxite out of Mocho, we caan send - even send a little - a few truckloads a water to Mocho, right. Some big breed goat gone up there, is that it? They probably dead already cause they caan get any water to drink.

A MEMBER: Dem supposed to dead di same day dey go up deh.

Another MEMBER: Di big ones dem first.

(Inaudible comment)

Mr. CHARLES: Flush toilet and no water!

Mr. SHAW: So we've seen statements that have been made in the Press recently about the misuse of funds from the Capital Development Fund over the years, and here we are talking about roughly close to $1 Billion that will have to be withdrawn for the privatization of the JRC, which itself requires more information, for the servicing and operational expenses of the Jamaica Bauxite Institute, and the giant amount to give to service debt with Glencore. Glencore, we seem to owe them a lot of money, we need that cleared up.

But what's the future of the bauxite industry? What is the future of JAMALCO - of Alcan or - what you call it - WINDALCO? What is the future of ALPART? We can't - the Minister spoke in this House and told us about the new project, but while he's talking about the new project they're scrapping WINDALCO by the week. Every week there is scrapping. The Plant at WINDALCO is literally, Mr. Speaker, being scrapped. You know the Plant, you used to work there; and that Plant is now being scrapped. Some of the material is being transferred to Ewarton Plant, other material exported out of the country, being sent to Guyana where RUSAL has operations, but WINDALCO for all practical purposes, Mr. Speaker, is dead! Is dead in the water!

A MEMBER: Then what about Kirkvine?

Mr. SHAW: Kirkvine! Kirkvine, yes, Kirkvine I'm talking about, we're Manchester men, we know what we're talking about, Kirkvine, WINDALCO at Kirkvine!

Dr. DAVIES: Just accept the correction.

Mr. SHAW: And they're scrapping it! And there's been no denial inside of this House or outside of this House as to the fact that it is being scrapped! So we don't know the future of Kirkvine, we don't know the future of ALPART, and we've heard the Minister state - issue threats that if things are not done with those plants soon, that - he's threaten the revocation of licenses for mining. Now where is that gonna get us? So here we are, of the little money that we get, we're paying debt, we're doing a little administrative something, and the people whose communities have been depleted of resources over the years, they cry out for a little infrastructure; they cry out for a little water, which is life; they cry out. It's a very, very sad day, very sad day for all of us.

(Inaudible comments

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I just wish to remind the House that the RUSAL people do have three facilities in Jamaica, the Alpart and Kirkvine and Ewarton. And I just want to remind the house that due to the action

of this Government, we have been able to preserve the operations of the Ewarton Mines, 600 jobs and full capacity. In fact, it has led to some of the growth figures that we see now coming out of the mining sector.

A MEMBER: We assisted you.

Mr. PAULWELL: But you should know that, you should know that the reason why Ewarton is open today is because of the concession that we have been able to negotiate with them. Which concession if it were made applicable at the time when Kirkvine was closed would have resulted they say to me, with Kirkvine being opened as well today. But at that time in 2009 they said that they were denied, that is what they have said to me, but that is what they have said to me.

Mr. SHAW: That is not true; you are not telling the truth.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we are deeply concerned about the continued closure of both Alpart and Kirkvine and the team from RUSAL actually came to Jamaica, I mentioned to the Parliament that they were due to come, they came in May and during those discussions with the insistence by the Government that these plants cannot continue in their current state, the shareholders have agreed to return to Jamaica during the last week of this month because they know, based on what we have put to them, that we cannot countenance continued delay without a firm, written agreement signed between both parties as to the date of reopening of those plants.

So, we have telegraphed the RUSAL people that even though Ewarton is continuing and we will be making an announcement in Parliament next week about the basis of that continuation and some of the important changes that will come with Ewarton, the energy component being very significant and I will be saying some more about that next week; they know that Alpart and Kirkvine will have to be treated in a similar manner and the shareholders are actually coming to Jamaica at the end of this month to make those determinations.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I think it's - in addition to what the Honourable Minister of Mining and Energy has said, it should be recognized that indeed, while I think all of us can - should benefit from and maybe this Parliament still needs to or this country still needs to review how the Capital Development Fund which was, shall we say one of the more innovative ideas that many countries subsequently followed, certainly in the 1970s when we put it in place...

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...in the 1970s following the bauxite levy, the Capital Development Fund and many administrations drawn from both sides have used it primarily to meet recurrent expenses. It was not intended for that and that is something that we certainly should take account of as we move forward.

It is also the case, Mr. Speaker, that in the recession of 2008, and then in the recovery as commodity prices globally moved up, perhaps the one, the single commodity which didn't benefit from that price movement in global market was aluminum and bauxite aluminum. And so Jamaica has had to give up considerable benefits, in terms of tax

adjustments that have had to be made in order to keep the plants operating, such as we have had them operating and this has resulted in a reduction of the inflows of revenue into the Capital Development Fund. But I think it is important that we take account of this, because this is what globalization means in many respects. Even recent events in Ukraine will affect producers operating here in Jamaica, their viability, their credit status in global markets and their demand for our product that is the nature of living in a globally inter-connected world.

Specifically, in relation to the $6 Million when Jamaica ended its commitment with Glencore there was an amount of - for the supply of raw product - there was an amount of US$33 Million of debt to Glencore. This was settled by an agreement to pay over in quarterly installments of $6 Million until the debt had been settled, and with interest, unpaid interest on the amounts, interest being due at the rate of 8% *per annum*. The fact is that, we have - a payment is due in September and there is a requirement for a Parliamentary approval to be given prior to that payment. Amounts flowing into the fund will be in excess of that over the course of this year. And what we are seeking is Parliamentary approval as per the agreement that Parliamentary approval needs to be given at least 30 days before the fund. We have the August recess coming up and, in view of the need for us to ensure that we meet our obligations we are including this - the authority for this payment to be made in this Capital Withdrawal Order.

Mr. SHAW: How much is paid already?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Six, yes 6 paid, 6 now, another 6 in 3 months after September and then a final one. So we expect that between this year and next year we would have concluded those obligations. In the meantime...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Shaw)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes, 33 Million, 6 paid already. So we will have 4 payments in the course of this year, that is 24, and then in the course of next year we will have a balance amounting - a balance to settle which won't take the whole fiscal year; and in the meantime there are other commitments taking place, which are being satisfied under our other arrangements, to facilitate the continued operations of JAMALCO, right.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those remarks I move the approval of the Capital Withdrawal Order No. 4.

The SPEAKER: Those in favour of the Resolution?

Motion put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: The Resolution is passed.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, in relation to the Provisional Collection of Tax Orders 13 and 14, I seek your authority on that of the House, Mr. Speaker, to date them together. These are two Orders, the Provisional Collection of Tax (Betting, Gaming and Lotteries, (Bookmakers' Levy Scheme) Confirmation Order, 2014 and the Provisional Collection of Tax, Betting, Gaming Lotteries (Bookmakers' Levy Scheme) Overseas Horse Races and Races of any Approved Species of

Animal Confirmation Order, 2014 in respect of the Horse Racing Levy.

The first, Mr. Speaker - the first point to note in this is that these Orders, both of them were executed in April previously they will expire after 6 months and will need to be renewed. In good order we are bringing them here in good time for them to be confirmed.

The provisions here relate to the levy arrangements regarding the Bookmakers' Levy Scheme necessary for the Commission and also, Mr. Speaker, the Order intended to ensure that the taxes can be collected both in relation to the Bookmakers Levy and the other arrangement to allow for the carrying out of the functions of the - for the provision of persons and the carrying out of the functions of the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries arrangements. As I said, the Provisional Collection of Tax Act, allows the Minister of Finance as delegated by Parliament to impose and alter laws in relation to taxation. These amendments were implemented in April 2014 under the current orders and would become void in September, taking into account Parliament recess in August in order to ensure that the revenue is not hampered to ensure the legality of the Order; the confirmation is being done now. So this continues essentially, arrangements which are currently in place regarding the assignment, the tax arrangements in relation to the race horses' betting and the assignment of resources under the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Bookmakers' Levy Scheme) Order.

Mr. Speaker, it needs the affirmation of the House and I so move.

Motion put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Resolution passed.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, the final issue today both 13 and 14, the final...

The SPEAKER: What about 14, Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Both 13 and 14, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Well, I only ask for one.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I now move 14, Mr. Speaker.

Motion put to the House and agreed to.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I turn to the matter at No. 11 on the Order Paper which relates to the Report of the Joint Select Committee to consider and report on the Bill shortly entitled: The Banking Services Act, 2014. Time come.

Mr. Speaker, the first thing I would like to do, Mr. Speaker, is to remind the House of the decision to establish the Joint Select Committee to consider this Bill. And I would like here, Mr. Speaker, to express appreciation to all Members of the Committee on both sides of the House who discharge their responsibilities with great response - with great avidity; and I dare say enthusiasm, in ensuring that we were able to report to the House in good time.

I would like also to thank all the officials of the Parliament and the Chief Officer of the Parliamentary Council, Bank of Jamaica officials and the other officials, Financial Services Commission, Jamaica Deposit Insurance Corporation and indeed the whole panoply of financial institutions in the public

sector, as well as those of the private sector, the Bankers Association, the Building Societies Association, the Association of Credit Unions and all of them. This Act truly has been a collective endeavour involving all elements of the financial sector, public and private and the - my appreciation, that of the Ministry of Finance and of the Parliament is due to them, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like at the outset also to emphasize the essential elements of the Bill. This Bill seeks to achieve multiple objectives. It seeks, first of all, to consolidate the prudential laws governing the operations of commercial banks, merchant banks and building societies. As a consequence, in this regard, Mr. Speaker, it will repeal the Banking Act - passage of this Bill will also cause the repeal of the Banking Act, the Financial Institutions Act and the Bank of Jamaica (Building Societies) Regulations. It will also repeal a number of provisions in the Building Societies Act where those areas are covered in this new Bill. It also seeks, Mr. Speaker, to move the framework for banking business closer to governing international standards and particularly the Basel Core Principles on Effective Banking Supervision. And it also, Mr. Speaker, thirdly, seeks to anticipate, one could say, developments that are on the horizon in relation to Jamaica's financial systems including, for example, matters relating to mobile banking and the like, which are on the horizon and where provision needs to be made.

In considering the Bill, it should be noted there are number of areas also which are substantially undisturbed and there'll be no material changes and, indeed, substantial segments of existing legislation have been incorporated into the provisions of this legislation including, for example, provisions relating to capital adequacy requirements, reserve requirements, cash reserves and liquid assets requirements, restricted activities, obligations regarding the publication of financial information, such as audited financial statements, loan/loss reserve requirements, *et cetera, et cetera,* processes regarding the changes of ownership.

Perhaps it is worthwhile emphasizing those areas where there are fundamentally new directions being charted by this Legislation. What is fundamentally new here are the arrangements provided for the exercise of banking supervision and the associated powers. The reforms on this front are driven mainly by the international standards in this area and essentially what it provides for is the independence of the financial regulator and to ensure that they are primarily independent of political direction and to ensure that supervisory decisions are not only taken on an impartial technical basis to the fullest extent possible, but that they are also done with the greatest level of accountability and transparency possible under the circumstances.

The vast majority of the supervisory decisions that previously rested with the Minister will be taken by the Supervisor independently and where the determination, for example, in the case of a bank restructuring of an entity that is no longer viable will impact on the country's fiscal

arrangements those decisions will, nevertheless, continue to remain written in the ambit of ministerial decision. However, the Supervisor who is the Governor of the Bank of Jamaica will take some key supervisory decisions not unilaterally, but as I said there is a greater provision for transparency and accountability and thus provision is made in the Act for the establishment of a Supervisory Committee, which will participate in those decisions exercised by the Supervisor and in many instances these decisions are, as was seen in the Act and will be seen in the Act, the remit of the Supervisory Committee rather than the Supervisor acting independently. And there is a clear distinction provided in the various clauses relevant to these provisions as to which decisions fall to which authority.

In turn there are limited number of matters that can be appealed to a Supervisory Appeals Committee,, which I should emphasize, Mr. Speaker, will be made up wholly of non-Bank of Jamaica persons, which will now assume the appellate role previously exercised by the Minister under existing law. None of these measures, of course, changes the fact that decisions of the Supervisor like the decisions of all other public authorities may be challenged in the courts on judicial review.

Finally, on the question of supervisory autonomy, the law proposes changes to the Bank of Jamaica Act, which serve to alter the mode of appointment of the Supervisor of banks or financial institutions. He or she will now be appointed by the Governor-General-in-council and for a period for not less than seven years. The Deputy Supervisor of Banks will be appointed by the Bank's Board on the Supervisor's recommendation for a term of not less than five years. However, the law is much more than the issues of supervisory autonomy, represents a significant strengthening of the supervisory framework of the banks, merchant banks and building societies. Key improvements include a more developed framework for consolidate supervision of financial groups, which includes requirement in certain cases for the establishment of financial holding companies.

There's an additional requirement that requires licensees to pay more attention to counterparty risk exposures and there are considerable and detailed provisions in this regard. This means that whereas previous licensees had to consider risks arising from their loans and investment activities, they now have to consider other types of exposures that can arise, for example, from the extension of guarantees and other transactions or commitments as well as to consider linkages that might exist between different parties and linkages that they might have with their clients and their customers.

Another item worthy of note is the issue of prudential liquidity requirement. While our laws in the past specified important capital requirements, the recent global crisis has underscored that temporary illiquidity even in the case of well capitalized institution can lead to the distress of a financial entity. These requirements will be more fully developed in regulations and will add an additional layer of protection for licensees, deposit taking customers and help maintain financial system

stability. The law also imposes greater governance requirements for the Boards and the management of licensees.

The Bill also, provides, Mr. Speaker, for a more robust system for enforcement, both with respect to non-licensees operating in breach of the Act as well as it relates to licensees in breach. So, in addition to expanding the range of criminal offences and increasing the attendant sanctions, the Act expands significantly, the regime for voluntary fixed penalties both in respect of the range of offences to which the penalties apply as well to the size of the penalties themselves. Under these provisions the party opting to pay the fixed penalty will incur higher penalties than existed had they faced a Court. On top of that new enforcement powers of restraint orders, coercion orders and restitution orders as previously developed in the Securities Act have also been incorporated in this Bill. That also speaks to the issue of prompt corrective action or intervention powers. The Bill proposes that in certain cases under the level of supervisory discretion that may be exercised should be - the Bill sets out, Mr. Speaker, the level of supervisory discretion that may be exercised should the conditions under which the licensees operating deteriorate, and particularly in relation to capital adequacy.

The court testing scheme for taking temporary management of a financial institution has been retained in the Act. However, the law proposes to tighten these provisions so that intervention is mandated indeed, becomes compulsory for the Supervisor once the regulated capital levels of the licensee falls below a certain threshold. This removes supervisory discretion on the matter and ensures that Supervisory forbearance or miscalculation cannot delay the necessary intervention to the nation's detriment. This not only accords with the general learning of the global community subsequent to 2008 and the global meltdown, but it takes account of our own experiences of financial system crisis, which has cost us considerably as a country and so this represents an important set of provisions that should be observed and, indeed supported as we consider this Legislation.

Another important reform is the establishment of a regime that will facilitate the offer of certain banking services through agents that will be required to meet eligibility criteria. This framework is critical to the issue of financial inclusion and bringing more people into the financial services arena both as customers and agents. Deposit taking institutions will be permitted to enter into agency arrangements whereby these agents will be permitted to offer limited financial services on behalf of a licensee. This will significantly expand the geographical reach of Jamaican deposit taking institutions and improve the competition to provide banking services as well as leverage key emerging technologies, such as mobile financial services.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I think it's worthy to note that this Legislation provides for a code of conduct on consumer-related matters which will, among other things, cover key areas

which will protect the consumer of banking services. It will provide an obligation on the part of financial institutions, for example, to provide customers with reasonable notice of fees, charge, terms and conditions and changes thereto. It will ensure that customers have access to their information at a reasonable cost - information relating to their own accounts at a reasonable cost. It will require standardization of the information with regards to the description and expression of lending rates to allow for meaningful comparability. Simply put, that the banks will be required - banks and other financial institutions to provide their customers in an easily understood language information regarding the charges and various fees that will apply to the various services and to provide easily understandable comparisons with the fees of other institutions.

We have to kind of remove the obfuscation and remove the density of language and often confusion surrounding the provision of banking documents and information to customers.

It will be required that this information be provided in clear language with key terms being brought to the customer's attention. It will require also that financial institutions, as well as the supervisor or the Bank of Jamaica, provide - establish effective mechanisms to resolve customer complaints and to resolve and to establish reporting on record-keeping obligations on the part of these institutions as it applies to their customers.

(Applause)

The Code will establish also the minimum standards that will apply for banking services and aggrieved parties, who will now have a forum to pursue their claims for breaches of the code. The Supervisory Committee will administer the application of the Code when it is issued and will have the power to issue the directions to enforce the provisions of the Code. And, there will be sanctions, Mr. Speaker, for breaches of the provisions of the Code, which can be applied to the financial institutions. So it's not just going to be a voluntary code, it will be an enforceable code with sanctions that will assist in protecting customers of the financial institutions.

There are other key reforms in the Bill that have not been mentioned in relation to the supervisor's powers to object to the appointment of Auditor or Auditors where eligibility criteria are not met. There are requirements for sharing information with the Regulator, there are measures regarding fit and proper requirements for key employees, among others.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill was exhaustively considered in Committee and the Report to the Parliament sets out in great detail, in a section from page 57 of the Report to page 161 of the Report, detailed provisions regarding amendments that were moved in Committee. Sorry, page 72 to page 161, detailed amendments agreed to in Committee for recommendation to this House.

I don't propose, since I assume whether electronically or not, whether by electronic means or not, all Members of the House....

Dr. DAVIES: Studied.

Dr. PHILLIPS: …have studied all the provisions that have been made. I would just mention that this Bill provides for the enactment to come into force on a date to be appointed by the Minister, and this is designed to allow the essential regulations which need to be promulgated simultaneous with the Act to be in place, when the Act is being promulgated.

There are a number of other provisions - amendments that were moved in Committee and they are all stated here, and so I won't belabor them.

There is, Mr. Speaker also, I should indicate that in Committee, I will move an amendment which relate primarily to the provision of an Eleventh Schedule which for purposes of completeness, the Bill having Ten Schedules, lists consequential amendments which will flow to definitions in other Acts consequent upon this Act being promulgated. And that is done to ensure that there is harmony between all the other Acts governing- all the definitions utilized in other Acts regarding the financial sector, so that there can be no dispute in the Courts or lack of clarity in the Courts regarding the effective definitions to be followed.

Mr. Speaker, this is far-reaching legislation, it has been carefully considered by the Committee. There was, I would dare say, an atmosphere of collegiality and of zeal, and zeal expressed in the Committee including from the more enlightened Members....

Mr. JACKSON: On that side.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...on both sides.

Mr. JACKSON: No, that's a given on this side.

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: And so, Mr. Speaker, I commend acceptance of the Report of the Committee to this House.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the Minister has correctly noted that this is by no means a controversial Bill, but in fact is a necessary Bill that has been contemplated for a number of years, and so, the final product is at hand.

And, Mr. Speaker, before I make a few comments on the Bill and I know that we went through the issue yesterday of when a Bill is tabled and when it ought to be considered, and indeed, we don't need to go through it today, except....

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: (Laughter) .....except to say, Mr. Speaker, that I think that it is very important that Members of this House, all of us, understand that we, we have an entitlement in this House for due deliberation on the Bills that are presented here and there is no - cannot be any accepted notion of exclusivity in the consideration of the Bill. That is to say, for instance, we cannot assume that simply because we have a Joint Select Committee, then it means that in terms of the formal deliberations in the House itself, that we should give license to by passing due process and rushing legislation through the main House.

Members on both sides need to understand, that all of us have the right to participate in the deliberations of all Bills that

are presented. We don't have to be Ministers, we don't have to be shadow Ministers, but indeed, backbenchers and every Member of this House has a right to be given the time, to look at what has been presented, look at the Bill itself and to look at the work of the Joint Select Committee, look at their recommendations and then to be able to participate appropriately.

It cannot be, therefore, a presumption that Members of the House do not have an entitlement to have this necessary time. By customary practice to review the proposed legislation and allow an opportunity for Members, every Member to participate in the debate, especially on important pieces of legislation as what we have here today.

And so I put it just formally on the table, Mr. Speaker that I think that this Honourable House should not allow the excuse of the IMF or any other institution, whether local or foreign to impose deadlines that cause us to trample upon the due process of Parliament.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. SHAW: Very important. We must not do it. And, any attempt that this should be done, should be firmly resisted and led by the Speaker of the House himself. We must not allow any acts of disrespect to Parliament. No act whatsoever of disrespect, because even when Committees do their work, there should still be - after the Report is tabled, the Standing Orders will settle the issue of tabling whether it is electronically tabled or hard copy tabled that is to be settled by the order of the Speaker. And we know that already but once it is tabled, I still believe, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps Standing Orders should perhaps consider - the Standing Orders Committee should perhaps consider placing a timeframe from tabling legislation to when it is actually taken, and I think that's important. It shouldn't be tabled one day and - taken the same day or taken the following day in the interest of expedition that has to be the exception, Mr. Speaker, rather than the rule.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister has given a very careful explanation of some of the important features of this new Bill. And, I myself must indicate that I was not able to participate in all of the sessions and...

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SHAW: I don't recall asking you to comment?

(Laughter by all)

Mr. SHAW: (Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: It's a public document.

Mr. SHAW: (Laughter) It's a public document. Okay. (Laughter) That is why, that's why I am pre-empting you then. And I did explain to the Minister that a series of circumstances, including personal circumstances, precluded my ability to participate in a more fulsome way.

At least, in one of the sessions that I participated, I am grateful that the Minister accepted the position that we put forward, that on the road to greater autonomy and independence of the Central Bank, that it was not sufficient that instead of the Minister appointing the Governor of the Bank of Jamaica, that it simply now would move to being a recommendation by the Minister to the Governor-General, the name of the Governor

of the Bank to be appointed. And we made the point that that would still, in effect, be an appointment by the Minister.

And, I want to thank the Minister for accepting the view that the preferable adaptation was to have the Governor General appoint the Governor of the Bank of Jamaica on the advice of the Cabinet, and hence, it has been put into the Report that the Governor-General will appoint the Governor of the Bank of Jamaica in council, which of course, indicates that it is on the advice of the Cabinet.

And I think that that - I think is an important first step towards this independence of the Central Bank, and the Governor of the Central Bank, in terms of the appointment. I think that further down the road, as we build greater maturity we must not exclude Parliament from the process where a Governor is nominated, is named, is proposed by the Minister, and that the Parliamentary Committee that the Governor...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Government Members)

Mr. SHAW: ...the nominee is called upon to appear before a Parliamentary Committee, so that we can ask questions. Because to the extent that you are going to give the Governor independence - and the Central Bank, independence, and you are giving them tenure - in this case, I'll proposed here, seven years appointment with the option to renew that appointment - that in those circumstances, we should consider a greater role for Parliament. So, that is not here now, but it is something, Mr. Speaker, that I think we should consider for down the line.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister mentioned the question of the Code of Conduct, and I just want to speak briefly about that, because my own concern relates in particular to - we are dealing with section 132, and it speaks to the supervisory rules and Codes of Conduct. And the Minister specifically referred to, among other things, the issue of bank charges.

Now, the issue of bank charges is something that we all know is now before the Parliamentary Committee on Economy, I believe, and Production. And so, that is a matter that is being examined. The Member from the Republic of Portmore, spark country...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Jackson)

Mr. SHAW: ...who himself had moved a motion in Parliament, all of this is now the subject of a separate consideration by the Parliamentary Committee.

My own view, I want to make it very explicit, Mr. Speaker. I want to put it on the Table that I have great concerns about bank charges.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. SHAW: Bank charges - I have concerns about bank charges - and, I mean, I had put it on the Table; I had stated, as I did in my presentation in the Budget Debate because, among the reasons I am concerned about it, is that, we have seen that for every dollar collected by banks as fees and commissions, only 20 to 30 cents of that dollar

constitutes the actual cost of providing the service. So, the service costs only 20 to 30 per cent of what is actually charged.

And so, my question is, if there is no effective regulation brought to this particular sector, we could very well see where the actual cost could become even lower. That is to say, the charges get higher but the cost of delivering the service is even lower. And where does it end? It becomes like a feeding tree - a never ending feeding tree that, okay, we lost some money on this debt exchange, so let's put on some more bank charges. We lost some more money and not enough business over here, so let us slap on some more bank charges. Where is it going to end?

And, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, I must tell you, I am not as confident as the Minister is, that this Code of Conduct to be administered by the Supervisor, that that Code of Conduct is going to, in itself, be the magic that is going to reign in the propensity of commercial banks, and other institutions, to charge left, right, and centre. I am not confident that a mere Code of Conduct is going to do it. I believe that bank charges should be regulated, Mr. Speaker, and not just by a loose arrangement, in terms of a Code of Conduct. And I have said it; I said it at the Bank of Jamaica's session that I was at.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that there needs to be a regulated relationship between the cost of providing a particular service and what is actually charged for that service, some kind of stricture should be put on. A financial institution should not, in my view, have an unbridled privilege to impose arbitrarily high charges which bear no relationship to the actual cost of delivering that service. (Applause) They shouldn't have that privilege.

And I believe that that should be addressed, either... it should be addressed, Minister, either in the law or in the Regulations. It should be addressed more frontally. It should be addressed more directly, not in a circuitous way, talking about Code of Conduct, but in a direct way, either by the law or by regulations. (Applause) And if this is not necessarily being done now, then at least at the time of the Report of the Committee that is considering it. Let us look at how we can join together to bring more order to this business of bank charges.

(Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: Fitz, you not clapping?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: I think a threshold should be set; a threshold should be set which should not be exceeded by the institution, and cap it somewhere, either where it is now or vary it. But after careful study, it must be capped. And every attempt to impose yet another charge, there must be a formal justifiable - there must be a formal system to justify the imposition of these charges. It mustn't be a free-for-all at all. It can't be and should not be allowed.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, the truth is that since the financial sector collapse to which the Minister referred - because a lot of things have emanated from that collapse - a lot of things. New laws have had to be promulgated to improve best practices. Lots of things emerged. But, one of the things that also emerged is the understandably cautious

approach of lending institutions, towards lending money, to whom they lend money, and so on. And that continues to haunt us to this day, which is why we have been hobbling along at a one per cent rate of growth for far too long, on average - annual average growth of only one per cent for far too long.

I believe the time has come - and perhaps this Bill could be a part of that point of departure - where we need to begin to encourage financial institutions to start lending money for productive activities again. We need to start lending money to people who are willing to invest and go and produce. (Applause) When I went to the National Arena at the Expo show recently - Honourable Prime Minister was the guest speaker - a lot of innovation was there. I was really inspired by that.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Inspired by the Prime Minister also.

Mr. SHAW: I am always inspired by her. But, I was inspired at the Arena by lots of new things that are being created. In Manchester, for instance...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Dr. Davies)

Mr. SHAW: In Manchester, for instance, there is a young lady who is producing - Prime Minister, you probably went to the booth - where this young lady is producing wine...

The PRIME MINISTER: Yes.

Mr. SHAW: ...by combining honey with sorrel. And Dr. Henry Lowe will tell you that sorrel has been determined to be one of those products that is high in antioxidants.

(*Sotto voce* by Mr. Chuck)

Mr. SHAW: White rum and what?

Mr. CLARKE: Cashew juice.

Mr. SHAW: Cashew juice. Yes, but I will stick with the scientific advisors right now. (Laughs) But he is my friend because he - we went to a function together to look at Irish potatoes - is it yesterday? And the Minister came by my home and we had coffee... (Laughter) ...but it was too early for cashew and other things. But the truth is, there are lots of good ideas out there, and the common complaint as I walked around that arena, '*but we can't get any money to borrow*,' can't get any money to borrow.

A MEMBER: Accessing credit.

Mr. SHAW: And so, what we find, the Bank of Jamaica has just recently done a survey which revealed that while there is an increased demand for inventory and working capital loans, the lenders are being unresponsive; they are being unresponsive. In consequence, when you look at the profile of loans right now, the last report shows loans... of $468 Billion in loans last year, 63 per cent of those loans were for household and personal loans. They are not for the productive side of the economy, Prime Minister.

And that is why we are hobbling along at one per cent growth rate. Thirty-seven (37) per cent was for business. Only 16 per cent of that 37 per cent was for micro, small and medium-sized businesses. And if you want growth, micro, small and medium-sized businesses is a big part of where we have to go. A lot of those cottage industries - people with the little projects that might only require a half or quarter of this room here, but getting on with some work, employing six people, and

ten people, getting something done, if they don't have access to credit, we are going to have a difficulty.

Then, in addition to that, there are other worrying signs. We have seen where this category of household and personal loans, they are paying interest rates of between 20 and 25 per cent, and that is in the formal commercial banking system. If you have gone now into the business of micro finance, then you are not talking about interest rate of 20 and 25 per cent anymore, you are talking about interest rates of 50 per cent and 60 per cent. And the truth is, those kinds of interest rates, Mr. Speaker, are only for people who can buy - turnover overnight and sell, and pay back the money on a weekly basis because they are paying one or two per cent interest rate per week? So, that can't work if we want to return to being a productive society.

And then I am concerned, Minister, that this year we are seeing a worrying trend of a tendency to go back to an elevated interest rate scenario. We are trending in the wrong direction, and I know that I have heard you speak about interest rates and that was one of my mantras when I was Minister because I remember telling the private sector and the securities dealers and the commercial bankers that there is a creature known as single digit interest rates, and I am proud that to this day, since I left as Minister, we still have mortgage rates at less than ten per cent. I am proud of that, but there are some worrying signs.

Business loans, which at the end of December last year were averaging 13.2 per cent. Business loans are now averaging 15.4 per cent going in the wrong direction. So there are two things: There is the issue of being able to borrow the money and there is the issue, Minister, of getting it at a rate that can allow our business people to be competitive.

Indeed, on the Government side of things it is to be noted that immediately after the National Debt Exchange the 90 day Treasury Bill rate was at 5.25 per cent, right after the National Debt Exchange. By the 22nd of May, we have seen where the 90 day Treasury Bill rate has gone up to 8.21 per cent. That's almost a 300 basis point increase, three per cent (3%) increase in the 90 day Treasury Bill rate, and that is part of what is sending the signal to the private banking system and hence you see an edging up of the interest rates beginning to take place.

Dr. DAVIES: It's the first.

(Inaudible comment)

Mr. SHAW: Yes. And so I think the Government, the Minister, the Cabinet, everybody has to look at these issues and understand that the investment strategy that we have can't be based on a single programme of devaluation, Madam Prime Minister, it can't be based on devaluation alone. Devaluation alone is not going to work. That's the truth. Devaluation as a strategy, I believe in Jamaica has now reached its point of diminishing return. And why do I say that? Devaluation is supposed to discourage imports and encourage export, but devaluation without private sector credit to support the innovative and risk-taking among us who are willing to go and take chances and employ people and get capital and go into merchandising and

packaging and all of the other things that come with that type of innovation, if they don't get that support and they don't get the credit devaluation as a strategy to promote export is not going to work.

Indeed, we have seen the last reported trade figures shows that while imports have declined by 25 per cent, Mr. Speaker, exports, instead of increasing, exports have actually declined by 34 per cent. So, Mr. Speaker, what we have is a situation where there is no relationship where imports are declining and exports are increasing. Imports are declining but exports are declining at a faster rate than the decline of imports, and why is that so? Because we have to accept that in our economy we continue to be highly import dependent.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. SHAW: Yes, but we are wrapping up now, but the Bill is part of a greater need.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. SHAW: Yes, all right. Yes, it's okay. I am making my point and you should be taking notes and not arguing with me.

(Laughter)

Mr. DAVIES: You sound like Comrade Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: So, Mr. Speaker, I am simply making the point that devaluation as a strategy has reached its point of diminishing return. As a matter of fact, the Bank of Jamaica had this to say in a recent report.

> *"The relatively weak domestic economic environment coupled with the pace of depreciation served to curtail overall borrowing by businesses and consumers."*

So, the environment coupled with depreciation has not only depressed imports, it has worsened, worse than that depressed exports worse than how it has depressed imports and now the very Bank of Jamaica is telling us that all of this, the weak domestic economic environment coupled with the pace of depreciation serve to curtail overall borrowing by businesses and consumers.

So, where do we go from here? I think we have to look at every opportunity to see how we can encourage lending institutions to start takings risks again. Start going back to core business. We used to hear a few years ago, Mr. Speaker, about the commercial banks setting up special windows and having special funds and special interest rates for special things. You don't hear a lot about these funds any more. Where are they? What has happened to them? We need more innovation from commercial banks. They can't just be coming to slap on more and more charges to make sure that they make their 10, 11, 12, 13 billion dollars in profit, and gone off and most of which is gone back, repatriated abroad anyway. We need to get some kind of - we need to find a way to encourage these institutions to start helping to be a part of the growth planned for us to grow our way out of the difficulties that we have in Jamaica.

(Inaudible comment by Opposition Member)

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, so even as we pass this Bill, even as we pass this Bill today let us look at the larger opportunity that we have that we must find a

way to encourage our people to be more productive and the financing and credit architecture must be supportive of that initiative.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Jackson.

Mr. JACKSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to join in support of the legislation before us. As was indicated by the Minister, it's a very important piece of legislation which essentially seeks to simplify or make easier the regulation of our deposit-taking institutions namely commercial banks, merchant banks and building societies.

In addition to the other important functions he outlined, one of which I want to underscore which I think should not go unnoticed, is that while the restructuring of the oversight moves much of the function from the Minister and places it in the Supervisory Committee, it allows for collective decision-making and critical issues, banking issues there but at the same time provide for execution of those decisions by the supervisor, and that should help to minimize the level of bureaucracy in terms of decision-making and execution of decisions.

Mr. Speaker, there are three sections of the Bill that I wish to make reference to that is before us, and I do that to avoid going over much of what have been said that I am in full agreement of. But generally to say too, Mr. Speaker, this Bill underscores the importance of regulation in the financial sector, and I say that, Mr. Speaker, because in more recent times I hear some grumbling as if once you seek to regulate you are impeding private business and entrepreneurship and I believe that's a red herring.

We have witnessed here in Jamaica in the 1990s what has happened. It wasn't because of regulation but it was because the absence of strong regulations and we saw what happened subsequent to the reforms that took place after what happened in the 1990s, that our financial institutions were able to survive some of the most trying circumstances locally and internationally, and again we saw that in particular in the 2008 period henceforth. That, Mr. Speaker, underscore the importance of having regulations.

Suffice it to say, the regulations by the Bank of Jamaica is about ensuring solvency of our institutions, of the banking institutions. This bit of legislation goes a bit further in dealing with issues regarding the public and customers, depositors and specifically section 132 that the Member from North East Manchester also followed up on the Minister on. The Code of Conduct, which already been outlined, speaks to the whole question of fees, speaks to the whole question of notices to depositors, notices to customers of financial institutions. And, Mr. Speaker, this is not something that we should take lightly, because it cannot be that the role of Government is only about the solvency of the institutions protecting - well, the licensees are expected to protect the interest of the shareholders of the institutions. There will only be the Government who will have the responsibility to look out for the depositors and to protect them, and in that regard that provision under

the Code of Conduct is of paramount importance.

I want to go a little bit further from my colleague from North East Manchester about capping fees, *et cetera*. And let me make it clear, Mr. Speaker, I am not against banking fees generally. I am specifically concerned about and against banks, financial institutions charging customers, depositors for using their own money. That's my critical bone of contention. Once the moneys are placed in the institutions which have been earned and placed for safekeeping in the banks, wherein those licensed financial institutions have the opportunity to earn from depositor's money. It can't be that when you are accessing your own money there is a levy that is placed on you when there is a benefit already accruing to the institutions for the use of the money. We are not talking about spreads. How much you pay them for in interest charges as against what you charge for loans for which you earn your money. You are talking about levies on the use of your own money. Not borrowed money from the institutions but your own money.

Mr. Speaker, I might not be as sophisticated about banking as many others, but what I grow up knowing is that you put your money in the bank and you are supposed to feel that it is safe and you can use it when you want to. Why is it that, given that the banks have the opportunity, the privilege, not a right - when a licence is granted to financial institutions it's not a right that they have to a licence, it's a privilege given to them by the State - there should be some minimum level of service provided to those depositors. The banks must determine what is the cost of providing the services to determine what interest they are going to pay to the depositors who put their money in it. So your real estate cost, your personnel cost, your light bill and all other expenses, ought to be determined so that you know what interest you are going to pay, so that the ordinary person will have greater predictability of what they have in the bank and what they can expect to get out.

And in that regard, Mr. Speaker, I am recommending that when we get to that point in the provisions in the regulations, that all deposit-taking institutions are required to provide a minimum level of service in the taking of those monies, whether it is three or four withdrawals per month, whatever is determined, at no charge, so no fee or regulation of fees comes into place, a minimum level of service. You can access information on your account because you already placed it with the institutions to benefit from.

Mr. Speaker, for the public service, many of us in the public service have to file Integrity Report, not just parliamentarians. I am advised that many financial institutions charge fees to access information to satisfy statutory requirements, right, statutory requirements. It's not an option of each person to file a return; you are required by law, as a public servant, to file these reports. And there is a foisted fee, a foisted fee...

Mr. Derrick SMITH: Insurance companies, too.

Mr. JACKSON: ...on depositors, to get information to satisfy statutory requirement.

As I have said elsewhere and I will say it again, Mr. Speaker, we, as a State, have imposed the need to use financial services; whether at Customs - I know, for example, there are some levels of transactions in the Customs Department over and above - you can't use cash, you have to use some other financial instrument, credit card, debit card or Manager's Cheque. And because you cannot use cash, because we already have a limit of a million dollars ($1M), it can't be that between the banks - however few they are - you are left with whatever fee they impose. We have to look at these obligations that are placed on the depositors in that regard. But suffice it for section 132 for the time being.

Another section that is of concern to me, Mr. Speaker, is the question of unclaimed funds.

Mr. Speaker, the provisions in 126 of the Act provide for a 15-year period of dormancy that the institutions have to file a report to the Bank of Jamaica - and I won't go through the details of it, it's in the Act. But the essence of it is that the dormancy period is 15 years.

Mr. Speaker, what is happening now is that if you don't make any transaction oyer a month or so - some period – financial institutions every month debit - every year debit. No, they have the money in the bank, you know, your money, you know, not borrowed money, your money in the bank that form part of the pool of funds that they can invest in giving loans. And you know, I am not going in depth, but what the Member spoke about in terms of the focus on lending, the business of making money by other people making money, has become secondary.

Mr. SHAW: They focus on collecting instead.

Mr. JACKSON: So, for the dormant accounts, I made a little tabulation, and based on the fee structure provided in the survey by the Bank of Jamaica, if you have Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000) in an account, after that 15-year period you know what it amounts to? Zero. Zero dollars on every Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000) after 15 years, which is the period after which it would have to be turned over to the Ministry of Finance, through the Accountant General.

Mr. SHAW: Is that a savings account?

Mr. JACKSON: Once it's on deposit in the financial institution, the first Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000) you don't have it. Who are the beneficiaries from that deposit? The only beneficiary is the financial institution and the poor depositor gets nothing.

And guess what? I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I had a casual conversation with a banker friend of mine, and I raised this question. And you know what my friend's response to me was, 'but Fitz, what you expect? If we have the money for 15 years we must just turn it over to the Government?'

It is not a notion of mine, Mr. Speaker; it is a matter of fact. To the extent that the institutions can benefit from these funds, it cannot be the case that the small depositor, the little person who gets a little ten thousand or whatever the amount, it just evaporates.

Mr. Speaker, again, when I speak to others in the banking industry, small depositors are not the major income earners for banks, it's the medium and large depositors. Those small

depositors are called the "nuisance accounts". They really don't want to have them but they have to have them on the account. So they really don't want them because they are too small, they can't make money from them. Who is going to protect them?

Mr. CHARLES: You! You and I!

Mr. JACKSON: I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that to the extent that we extend a privilege, not a right, a privilege to a licensee to operate a bank, their banking service should be inclusive. That means everybody must be able to participate in the industry without being injured because you are small. If you are large, it's no problem. But if you are small then dog eat yu supper, your little is gone. That is one thing, Mr. Speaker, that I think we need to look at.

Mr. Speaker, I feel very strongly about it because I have seen many and encountered many small depositors put the money down, because you want to have something, and when you go you can't get anything. What kind of institution would set a policy with no regard for the impact on these people, and say it's business? There is an administrative cost that somebody has to pay and if you lose everything, so be it. We can't be that insensitive. And we, as a State cannot preside and witness that and just say it's business. Even if it occurs in other jurisdictions, if we are going to be the only one to do the right thing, let us do it. (Applause) Let others follow us doing what is right. So I take no comfort when I hear even in the Report to say, in other jurisdictions this happens. That's not sufficient for us to continue.

Mr. Speaker, taking care of the depositors' money must be a duty of care of paramount importance for all licensees in our financial sector. And so section 36 that speaks to duty of care should have an insulation against the diminishment of funds. You are responsible to care for the funds there, but your care for the funds must not in the end mean that if I don't make a withdrawal I lose what I have. So a non- diminishment provision ought to be considered, going forward. We can consider it when we go to Committee or we want to do it down the road.

But I feel very strongly, Mr. Speaker that we have to say to our small depositors that look, you are not going to be swallowed by the institutions in the financial sector.

Mr. SHAW: Very good! If you don't want to listen to me, listen to your colleague! Very good!

Mr. JACKSON: Mr. Speaker, I want a very strong banking sector. It is important for all of us Jamaicans, small, big, medium-sized. We know what happened in the 1990s - or what nearly happened. We know what it cost the country and every taxpayer. So I don't want them to fail, but I don't want them to prosper at the expense of the weak and defenseless.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, with these few words...

Dr. DAVIES: I support you up to that point.

Mr. SHAW: But important points!

Mr. JACKSON: ...I support the steps that we have taken, but we still have a journey to go. We have to convey to the public that we

are about looking for the interest of everybody.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Minister Davies.

Dr. DAVIES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I am going to be very brief because my Minister without Portfolio still has a major...

Mr. SHAW: Is that your new seat assignment?

Dr. DAVIES: ...a major presentation.

Mr. SHAW: Is that your new seat assignment?

Dr. DAVIES: Before I was rudely interrupted, I was about to ask you, Mr. Speaker….

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Good comeback!

Dr. DAVIES: As a matter of fact, I should have said very rudely interrupted.

Mr. Speaker - I have asked the Speaker may I be allowed to speak briefly from this...

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Mr. SHAW: Okay, gwaan, now.

Dr. DAVIES: Okay.

Mr. Speaker, there have been - all the contributors have - and the one following me I know will surpass us - have done very well in terms of speaking to this very important piece of legislation. It's been a long process and it's not yet finished, there is work to be done.

One of the benefits of the - one of the few positives from the crisis in the financial institution in the nineties, was the recognition that there was a great deal of work to be done in bringing the regulations and the regulatory activities over the financial sector up to the best practices.

You can recall we started by what was the Superintendent of Insurance - and this is no comment on the quality of the officials then. But literally, it was an institution which operated more as a name than anything else, there was no regulatory activity taking place, persons were active in the sector without any oversight by regulatory activity. And so the creation of the Financial Services Commission was a major first step.

In terms of additional steps, way to go, we need to explore issues, Mr. Speaker, such that we eliminate totally what they call regulatory arbitrage, by having different standards established in different parts of the sector. And I am not at the point of saying this is an absolute necessity, but we need to be at a situation where we license an entity to carry out activities in the financial sector, because there is no benefit from being licensed under one act as opposed to another.

So, one possibility is down the road we will be coming with an omnibus Financial Services Act, which deals with whatever you are doing, because handling people's money is a very awesome responsibility, and there should be no scope for arbitrage because you are licensed by one institution as opposed to another.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition Spokesman on Finance spoke about reaching to the point where Parliament, as opposed to presently the individual Minister, propose the Cabinet and

the Governor-General, but Parliament, all whatever the number is - 63 persons - having a say in some of these decisions.

And one of the fallouts of public distrust or even the manner in which Parliament operates more along partisan lines is that there is a growing feeling - and which we have in a sense set out to institutionalize - that certain decisions should be taken out of the hands of politicians. And we have an interesting thing - and I have no problem supporting the present move - whereby the Governor-General, who is the Queen's representative, is involved in being the person appointing several officials in key positions.

Dr. DAVIES: And it would seem to me this is without Parliament in that there has to be no consultation with the Opposition and it could be a situation when it was 32/28, an Opposition with a narrow majority - with a minority would have no say in some of these appointments. And I would think that we must seek and the Parliament, all of us have that obligation to start to remove this question mark from the minds of the public and the media that we as Parliament have no real say in that and it applies to non-Cabinet Members on here and it applies to the Opposition that some of the most important appointments could be made with no say from the point of view of a Parliament, the people's representative, and so this is something which we need to move towards, and I want us to reflect on that as we put together the advance in this Legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance had whispered that he wish that the Opposition spokesman would comment on the Bill. But I heard the whisper. And he made a point about devaluation and I would like us because there is a growing, in a sense, congruence in terms of the extent to which devaluation and he made certain points, but there is an initial point which he may wish to make in that one of the difficulties is that them that got, and you are worried about those who needed to borrow, but those who have the funds are increasingly taking the decision to convert, which is exacerbating the very problem you to which you spoke.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the actual Bill…

Mr. SHAW: Oh.

Dr. DAVIES: Yes, and this is a substantive point. It is something you may want to try from time to time. What is important as we proceed and there is a section on it, that's section 140, called transitional arrangements, and it's good that we look specifically at it. It says essentially any existing deposit-taking institution which before the commencement date has entered into any transaction which did not convene any of the repealed enactments but which is incompatible with sections 48 to 53. So they made an arrangement perfectly okay with the existing laws and then the question is, how do you deal with that? It says within three months after the commencement date they have to submit to the supervisor a statement giving the particulars of the transaction as in operation at that date and also to submit a programme to the supervisor indicating how the

incompatibility will be rectified.

Now one of interesting things it says that there should be agreement between the existing bank or merchant bank or a building society and the supervisor. So they are going to agree on a reasonable thing (Inaudible) or in default of agreement as may be determined by the supervisor. I suspect there is no legal way to state it otherwise. But it is very important, Mr. Speaker, that there is judgement or reasonable judgement by the Supervisor, because an institution in good faith made an agreement, we are enacting laws which now make that agreement incompatible with the new laws. It is very important that we seek to avoid the default decision and seek to come to a compromise between supervisor and the entity. And so I do not know, Mr. Speaker, how much authority the Minister has in that regard and it may be nothing but moral suasion, but I think it's very important that we seek to have those agreements being a mutual consent than an imposition by the supervisor against a protesting licensee.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's a very important piece of legislation and I am very, very pleased that it's proceeding with more or less full support from all Members of the Parliament.

Thank you.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Phillips.

Mr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I too rise in support of this Report on the amendments to the Banking Services Act. You know, it was good to see the Member from North East Manchester making recommendation about the appointment of the Governor and the strengthening of that appointment, seeing the challenges that he had encountered when he was Minister.

Mr. SHAW: What challenge was that?

Dr. DAVIES: Him say is not him.

Mr. PHILLIPS: But, Mr. Speaker, we need to note in the Act itself Section 134 which speaks to where it strengthens - where the section that in the banking sector the consumers will never face the days as we have seen in the past with irresponsible behaviour from bankers without any severe penalties. I think the Act itself will give some comfort to the consumers where irresponsible actions from bankers from board members, down to employees and accountants where severe penalties now will be brought onto their irresponsible behaviours in keep and care of the public's funds. With this in place I don't think we should mitigate from challenges we had in the nineties when we had the issue where the Government had to step in with FINSAC. But the significant part for me, Mr. Speaker, would be the section to do with section 132 as many of the speakers, the speakers before me have touched on. Why, Mr. Speaker, is that before there was a voluntary Code of Conduct which was proposed, not only by the Consumer Affairs Commission but also by the Bankers Association of Jamaica, and why it is critical that this Act now brings an enforceable code of conduct is that when the voluntary Code of Conduct was introduced out of the twelve DTI

surveyed only five adopted some aspects of it and seven did not even adopt any part of it. The consumers never had anywhere to carry a complaint.

The Consumer Affairs Commission, there is no regulation that gives them authority to listen to the complaints of the consumers. In the new Act and in the amendments here the Consumer Affairs Commission will be named as that authority that will hear the complaints of the consumers. Because it is beyond me, Mr. Speaker, that when a consumer complained before this new Act the consumer himself would have to go to the same bank that he is complaining about to rectify or to get redress for the ills that he has felt. As responsible legislators it is our responsibility that when we are bringing legislation like these that we do protect the consumers because we have seen in the past that when these financial institutions fail it is no one else but the consumer that gets affected by their irresponsible actions. So, Mr. Speaker, we should not just fly over that aspect of the protection of the consumers, but also in this Act we need to also ensure that the supervisor let the consumers know of the redress that they have with aspects of this Act.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I want to - I do support this Act and the amendments and, you know, it is interesting to see the Opposition spokesman as the Member before me said not mention much about the act but another debate on different aspects of it.

Mr. SHAW: A last lick that?

Mr. PHILLIPS: You are my neighbour. I feel free I can give you a last lick. So I too do support the amendments to the Banking Services Act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Dem have last lick and *dem* have big lick.

Mr. SHAW: People don't stone green mango, you know.

Dr. DAVIES: Orange.

Mr. SHAW: Ripe Number 11.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, much has been said and a lot of it helpful. I am mindful that my colleague Minister in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing is to make his presentation so I shall be brief in my reply.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Charles)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I accept the point for Parliament to give due deliberation to Bills and that the opportunity be provided, but I think we also need to recognize that along with this right for due consideration there is an obligation to give consideration in a timely fashion and we also tend to have a predilection...

Dr. DAVIES: Good word.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...to delay things inordinately. Sometimes we have plans underway and sometimes they remain plans for years on end. We have commitments to pass legislation which we never fulfill. With the rights, go obligations and I think that's as much as I will say on that.

Another preliminary point has been raised before I go to some - and I want to agree with the Opposition spokesman on Finance and the Minister of Transport, Works and Housing,

there is a role for Parliament, not only in relation to the critical appointment but to provide critical oversight for certain offices of State. But if I am to be frank, Mr. Speaker, if we are to exercise these responsibilities we have to behave better in the Parliament. We have to be able, especially when we are dealing with something as critical as the financial system stability or when we had to deal ironically, when we had to deal with the matter of the electoral reform and appointing these officials, that the only way we could have got at the time some modicum of stability in those arrangements was to take critical decisions out of the remit of the Parliament.

We've come a long way since then, but there is further to go yet for the Parliament to recognize that the survival of the State and its good governance requires the suspension of the quest for partisan advantage in relation to some critical issues that must be discussed. (Applause) Even - I think we've had - we've been treated to some of the risk here this afternoon, in consideration both of energy and the PetroCaribé Fund, where we've allowed a certain excess of partisan consideration to carry us to the brink of destroying some important national initiatives.

Mr. D. SMITH: When was that?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Today.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. Derrick Smith)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Today.

A MEMBER: Don't spoil up the thing.

Dr. PHILLIPS: All right, and don't comment at this point.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. Derrick Smith)

Dr. PHILLIPS: (Laughs) Now, Mr. Speaker, now Mr. Speaker, there is an - the issue has been raised by the Member from St. Catherine South, otherwise called in error, the republic of Portmore, but that's an error, it's very much part of the sovereign territory of Jamaica.

Now about consumer oversight, the point was made - consumer protection, the point was also made by the Opposition spokesperson. I would make two observations, first of all, what is provided for in the appropriate section is for the establishment of the power of the supervisor in relation to the establishment of a code of conduct and in relationship to the powers of supervision in relation to this code and the specification of the code. So that, what we are concerned with here today is to grant that power to establish it. I want to suggest that we accord the supervisor the opportunity to define the code in ways that can take account of these concerns that have correctly and legitimately been raised.

But there's a second consideration which I think which I think we have to be - for good order we need not to conflate the processes. There is a parliamentary committee that is deliberating, and I would expect from that committee, specific proposals to come forward. And I think they have had hearings; have had the opportunity to give much more exhaustive consideration on the specific matter of consumer protection than was given

in these deliberations or than is intended. This is not - this about that, but it is about much more. And so I want to propose that those issues be allowed to rest until that report has been received and considered and that it should, I expect, find its way into the regulations or certainly into the lap of the regulator so that proper consideration and inclusion, should it necessary, be contemplated for promulgation in a code of conduct.

I won't, because it is neither the time nor the place, go through the whole deliberation about the interest rate regime and those other things. I think there is - there will be opportunity for us to have that debate on matters wide-ranging at a point in time, and they are legitimate matters by no means. And there is no doubt that we need to consider ways of getting higher and greater levels of growth; there is no doubt that we need to consider ways of ensuring a greater flow of credit to the productive sector; there is no doubt that there is scope for a consideration of ways in which the public sector can act to incentivize the flow of these funds; there's no doubt that issues - relevant issues arise in this regard, but this Bill is really about simply providing the regulatory framework for the financial institutions.

I want to - in relation to the points raised by the Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, while it doesn't strictly answer the question, there is provision in the Bill for a committee, and it is in statute, that there is a Regulatory Oversight Committee involving all the regulatory agencies, financial services, deposit insurance, Bank of Jamaica who are constituted to meet. There is also legislation on financial sector stability which will come subsequently, and there is a requirement in this Legislation for information sharing regarding any regulatory initiatives being taken by one sector which has imperative for the other. All of this should go some way, if not all the way, to minimize this effect of regulatory arbitrage - a delightful term - on it.

And I take the point in relation to the transitional arrangements though like you, I'm not certain that there is a - there's anything other than ensuring good order. I just point out that the provision relates specifically to Clauses 48 to 53 and there is - it's only one of those really would suggest the risk of a major problem, though it will require good sense to resolve all of this.

The point was raised by the Member from North West Manchester who expressed the same concerns about 132, and I think it's a valid set of concerns, as I said, but, Mr. Speaker, all told, I think we all recognize that a lot of work has gone into this, this has been some time in the making and it is important that we take this now. I therefore move, Mr. Speaker, that the Report of the Committee be adopted.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Report be adopted.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Report adopted.

The House will now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider the Bill clause by clause.

COMMITTEE STAGE

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker...

Dr. BAUGH: Chairman.

Dr. PHILLIPS: …Chairman. All these Manchester people.

Dr. BAUGH: You can't do without them; you have one down there too.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, but I am one. Mr. Chairman, I...

The CHAIRMAN: You have a number of amendments; how do you propose to proceed?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Chairman, what I have is amendments here which have been circulated, which add a new Clause 144 and a new 11th Schedule.

The CHAIRMAN: Well could you explain how we're going to jump from...

Dr. PHILLIPS: Oh, the amendments in the Report - I would want to propose with the amendments in the Report, Mr. Chairman, given the detailed consideration that has been given by Members that we take them *en bloc.* They've been deliberated on over and over and considered in extenso by the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and all the Deputies and I think there's not much to be gained by us here going through them further. But we crave your wise consideration and advice on this matter, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. DAVIES: And his compassion.

The CHAIRMAN: So you're recommending that we put the amendments tabled in the Report *en bloc?*

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: We need to sort out the adjustments because the - in the Bill you stop at Clause 140 and you added a Clause, 144 so we need to...

Dr. PHILLIPS: There were consequential amendments to what you have just accepted, Mr. Chairman, that carry us up to Clause 143, new clauses added and Clause, 142 and 143 as renumbered.

The CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Dr. PHILLIPS: So I'm proposing now, Mr. Chairman, this - so there is just one today which are amendments moved in the House. And as I indicated, and again, in keeping with what Minister Davies said, where what we - to prevent regulatory arbitrage or worse, confusion, we're seeking to, on advise of Chief Parliamentary Counsel, to ensure that the definitions utilized in all the various bits of legislation including financial services, the financial securities all of those, in fact, accord with the definitions utilized in this Act. So the Insurance Act, the Companies Act and all the others are going to be amended in accordance with this.

So there's a new 11th Schedule which sets out consequential amendment of enactments of the various laws as far as the definitions are concerned. So I'm submitting this set of amendments...

The CHAIRMAN: At 11th Schedule.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Eleventh Schedule, and a new Clause 44 - 144 that gives effect to this 11th Schedule.

The CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Dr. PHILLIPS: So, Mr. Speaker, what we have, I am going to submit to the Clerk the provisions that set out 139 through 144 and beyond just to accord with what was in the Bill before us. Madam Clerk, this is for the records, and this you have. (Documents passed to the Clerk)

The CHAIRMAN: The first thing I will do is put the Clauses as amended.

Motion put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I will now go through the Bill by parts.

Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: Clauses 140, 141, 142, 143 and 144.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendments to the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Schedules.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: The Title and the Enacting Clause put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage with 268 amendments.

Motion put to the Committee and agreed to.

RESUMPTION

The SPEAKER: I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage with 268 amendments.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Bill be read a third time.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be read a third time.

Motion put to the House and agreed to.

Bill entitled:

"AN Act to repeal the Banking Act and the Financial Institutions Act to amend the Bank of Jamaica Act and the Building Societies Act to make new provisions with regard to the supervision of banks and financial holding companies and other financial institutions and for connected matters,"

read a third time and passed.

(Applause)

SECTORAL DEBATE

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, we will continue the Sectoral Debate. We will begin with the Minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, Honourable Dr. Morais Guy Member of Parliament St. Mary Central.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Dr. Guy.

Dr. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, thank the Members of this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, as I rise to make my contribution to the Sectoral Debate, I recognize that my presence here would not be possible without the input and support of many persons including that of my family and my constituents.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the bedrock of my life is my family. I want to recognize in a very special

way my wife Nadine and my children Kimberly (Applause) both of who are here today, Kimberly, and my son Morais who unfortunately is away. For them, Mr. Speaker, I live, breathe and survive and I salute them especially my wife for bearing with my absence from home in service of representing the people. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in recognizing that my presence here would not be possible here without the support of my constituents, I want to thank them for their continued confidence in me and I commit to them to do my utmost to do an even better job as their representative in this Honourable House. (Applause)

To the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, for her confidence in me, her support and guidance both in governance and in the political sphere, I want to thank you Prime Minister.

(Applause)

To my political family, my three councillors, the members of my constituency committee and all the workers in the constituency, my supporters and my friends some of whom are here today, I want to say respect and my sincerest gratitude... (Applause) ...for your support, generosity and friendship.

The people of Central St. Mary, Mr. Speaker, have in some areas benefited from better access to traveling by roads. Work has been done over the past year on the Port Maria to Islington, Islington to Whitehall, Nutfield to Robins Bay and Robins Bay to Orange Hill sections. A new 30-Million bridge has been erected in Robins Bay, relieving the residents and commuters alike of the fear of travelling on the old structure.

Work continues to be done on the Palmetto Grove to Pear Tree Grove section and that access will be improved shortly with the construction of a gabion wall under the JEEP Programme. (Applause) Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, like many speakers before me and no doubt for others who will contribute later in this Debate, there is unadulterated pride in indicating the contribution to and by education in the constituency. I will not make much weather of the significant contribution to tertiary education, but today, Mr. Speaker, what I would like to highlight are two areas. There is a general recognition that Government and the Ministry of Education is not able to do all that is required to bring education in the optimum desired manner to our students, as a consequence community has to be involved.

I want to salute the efforts of one particular alumnus in this regard, a past student of the Water Valley Primary School who having heard of the poor performance in the Grade 4 results of his school decided that he was going to single-handedly engage in a partnership with the school to effect a positive change. Through his efforts and resources, Mr. Speaker, he was able to transform the Reading Programme at the school through the provisions of the resources to hire a remedial reading specialist. Mr. Speaker, the school has moved from a 50 per cent mastery in English in 2010 to 75 per cent in 2013. (Applause) This has been achieved through simple but effective means and this partnership has not

only involved teachers and students, but parents also who have become ingrained into the programme. In fact, Mr. Speaker, some of these parents have themselves voluntarily agreed to do remedial education in an effort to help their children.

I extend my sincerest appreciation to individual like these and I commend such an approach to the development of the intellectual capacity of our children and our country. (Applause) But perhaps, Mr. Speaker, time for a close first is the efforts of a team at the Islington High School who under the leadership of the just demitting principal Mrs. Vinetta Clarke and the new energies of the current contract principal Colonel Lieutenant EV Johnson have decided that they will not wait on the Ministry of Education, strapped for resources as it is .to invest much effort to move the school from a double to a single shift; and have embarked on the construction of some classrooms made of concrete floor and wooden sides sufficient enough in numbers to allow for the conversion of the entire school to a single shift. (Applause)

This vision, Mr. Speaker, was actualized through community help, the school board, the staff, the PTA and contributions from CDF. But what gives me the greatest pride, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the siding of the building and the roof laying were done by the very same students from the same school both girls and boys under the guidance of one local tradesman. Mr. Speaker, they are in the Gallery today, and I want to salute them and their teachers and their principal for the work they have done. (Applause) Take a bow.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this project has engendered so much pride in the community of students that recently I went to a community meeting in the area and heard many participants, that is adults, remarking on how this project has even transformed the behaviour of the students at the institutions, how these very students seem to have found a new lease on life and their street behaviour has improved immensely.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, that speaks volumes to the potential of our students and I am advised that the PM kissed all of them. (Applause) What can be achieved when we invite them to be involved in the decision-making.

Coupled with this infrastructural transformation is the process of transforming the offerings of the school. Currently, a partnership with HEART Trust/NTA is being pursued to introduce TVET courses at the school for students and for the community, which can benefit after school hours. (Applause) This is exciting, Mr. Speaker, and again I commend this approach to education.

Mr. Speaker, sections of the constituency await the expansion of the water supply in the Eastern part of the parish...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear, hear!

Dr. GUY: ...which will bring more of that precious commodity to our people. The lack of water is retarding development of three housing developments in the constituency.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Oh, no!

Dr. GUY: I must add though, Mr. Speaker that we are heartened by the Minister’s pronouncement yesterday and

anxiously anticipate the commencement of construction. (Applause)

Let me conclude this section by thanking and congratulating all who have contributed in some way, however small: the police, the firemen, the nurses and doctors and other public servants, the farmers and the taxi operators in making this constituency become a hospitable and inviting place and one that gives its inhabitants a peace of mind.

Mr. Speaker, this Administration, under the stewardship of the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller is even more fervent in the national endeavour to provide our people with the fundamental necessity of shelter. The delivery of housing solutions is even more pivotal at this time as we move to raise the standard of living for all Jamaicans from Negril in Westmoreland to Hampton Court in St. Thomas, from the plains of Clarendon to Runaway Bay in St. Ann. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, for her continued confidence in me thus having me serve in a most critical portfolio within the Administration, I again wish to express my thanks to you Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, it is oftentimes said that the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing is the face of the Government due to its critical role in a number of major infrastructural projects. As the Minister with responsibility for Housing, I serve with two other colleagues within the Ministry's political directorate in the form of Ministers Davies and Azan who share the commitment to effecting policies, plans and programmes with the greatest degree of alacrity. (Applause)

Thanks also, Mr. Speaker, to the Ministry's hardworking and on-the-ball Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Audrey Sewell. (Applause) The Permanent Secretary is supported in the housing portfolio by an equally devoted and responsive Chief Technical Director, Mrs. Doreen Prendergast. (Applause) Special acknowledgement also goes out to the Project Director for the Jamaica Emergency Employment Programme (JEEP), Mrs. Lucille Brodber, (Applause) for her exemplary management of the Secretariat, and for her continued collaboration with the housing portfolio in getting hundreds of units built. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. GUY: I also salute the team of directors, managers and staff who remain enthusiastic and, Mr. Speaker, who have remained here this evening to listen, (Applause) enthusiastic in their pledge to bring quality service in the area of housing.

I must also place on record my gratitude to the members of my office support staff who all played a significant part in keeping the ship afloat: my assistants, secretaries, office attendant, security officers and driver. As a Ministry with several core Government agencies under its watch, special appreciation is extended to the Boards of the Housing Agency of Jamaica, the Jamaica Mortgage Bank, the Architects Registration Board and the Rent Assessment Board. They continue to espouse my vision and that of the Administration to transform in respect to their areas of remit and for that I laud their service.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear, hear!

Dr. GUY: To the members of other Boards, which fall under this Ministry's portfolio, once again on behalf of the Ministry I say thanks for your continued dedication. (Applause)

And to you, Mr. Speaker, for your sage direction of the proceedings of this House, I want to commend you, as well as the Deputy Speaker.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes.

Dr. GUY: And, Deputy Speaker, even under trying circumstances at times, you are able as well as the Speaker to restore order and civility to the House.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

To my colleague Members of Parliament, on both sides of the House - even you hot and cold - I want to thank you for your support, guidance and friendship. Madam House Clerk and your team, I laud your professionalism and guidance on parliamentary matters. (Applause) And to the Opposition Spokesman on Housing, let me commend him in his absence for your reasoned presentation in the recent Budget Debate. You know, when the Spokesman was speaking, Mr. Speaker, I listened to one particular enlightening presentation that he made as it relates to reverse mortgages and I knew that he was reading a literature that was enlightening and I commend him to read some more this particular document on page [6 to 7] of the PNP's Manifesto, because we have it there as part of the programme that we're going to do.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, as Minister with responsibility for Housing, I have received hundreds of letters from ordinary Jamaicans seeking assistance with home ownership and repairs; I have given a listening ear to home owners who have been occupying their houses without titles for decades; I have walked the streets and lanes of several informal settlements with Members of Parliament seeking intervention on behalf of their constituents; and I have been witness to the tears of those who literally have nowhere to call home.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Good speech, good speech.

Dr. GUY: I have also, Mr. Speaker, witnessed the tears of joy of persons living informally on property for years who have now received their titles. Mr. Speaker, while the plight of the people are real and the concerns of their political representatives are real, let me assure you that the resolve of this Administration in delivering housing solutions is also real. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, during the 2014/15 fiscal year, the dreams of many Jamaicans will become reality, their aspirations will be achieved and many will own a much desired, tangible asset - their own house. With collaboration among several stakeholders: the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, the Housing Agency of Jamaica, the National Housing Trust, the Jamaica Mortgage Bank, and yes, the Ministry of Agriculture, Minister Clarke, and through the creation of an enabling environment for construction as well as facilitation with private developers, we are poised to deliver thousands of housing units and serviced lots. Mr. Speaker, this

Administration is providing the solutions. (Applause)

This year, Mr. Speaker, our priority area remains largely the same with an expanded and accelerated emphasis on efficacy, as the Ministry stands committed to the 2030 Vision for housing which states that all households should have access to affordable, appropriate and legal housing options in liveable, inclusive and aesthetically pleasing communities. (Applause) Key to this vision, Mr. Speaker, are our land titling programme, the promotion of joint venture housing initiatives in the form of public/private partnerships, reducing mortgage deposit payments, providing housing solutions for low income to lower income earners and the indigent; reducing the number of informal settlers and settlements across the island and the advancement of our urban renewal agenda. Mr. Speaker, we will be taking housing programmes and services to the hills of St. Ann, to the plains of St. Catherine and to the shoreline communities of St. Elizabeth. Mr. Speaker, let me also reiterate the direction of this Government in ensuring that we do not just build and facilitate the construction of houses rather we strive to foster the growth of communities.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Transport, Works & Housing is a Ministry on the move. In respect of the housing portfolio, despite admittedly a number of challenges, several objectives were realized over the last fiscal year. Today, as a result of the Ministry's intervention and support, hundreds now turn the keys to their own homes; hundreds have acquired titles to the lands which they have occupied for years and hundreds have seen upgrading works being carried out on their communities' infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, for the 2014/15 fiscal year, the work of the housing portfolio will be amplified. Allow me now to outline some of the activities that the core Ministry, our agencies and our housing partners will undertake over the current year.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, the National Housing Trust continues - *yuh* soon hear that - to be the largest investor in Jamaica's housing sector with expenditure on housing construction and mortgage financing of some $22 Billion during the last fiscal year. As a result, some 7,500 mortgage loans were provided to teachers, members of the security forces, domestic helpers, labourers and a host of other contributors.

(Cross talk)

A further $1.6 [Billion] was allocated to fund private developments under its Interim Finance Programme. These developments include: Jacaranda and Heathfield in St. Catherine, Holland Estate and Stonybrook Vista in Trelawny, King's Manor in St. Andrew. Mr. Speaker, this financial year, despite the economic challenges, the NHT will be disbursing over $22.4 Billion on construction and mortgage financing activities so that more of our people can have a place to call their home. (Applause) During the fiscal year, that desire will be realized for many Jamaicans as the NHT plans to complete some 2,160 housing solutions for the year. Mr.

Speaker, this is an administration in providing the solutions, (sic)

There is no secret, Mr. Speaker that the Housing Agency of Jamaica has had its share of hurdles in recent times. However, the entity is currently repositioning itself to play an even greater role in facilitating home ownership for our people. With a vision of contributing to an improved standard of living through social transformation and the provision of affordable shelter solutions with security of tenure, Jamaicans can expect more from the Agency during the year. Over the next twelve months, the HAJ will commence the delivery of hundreds of housing solutions in communities such as Vernon Drive in St. James and Luana Gardens in St. Elizabeth. That Agency, Mr. Speaker, will also have a renewed look at the project in Grange Pen, St. James during this fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, while work will commence in those communities, another 1,500 other Jamaicans will have units or lots turned over to them before the end of the fiscal year. (Applause)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear, hear!

Dr. GUY: The solutions to be delivered include:

- Whitehall Phase 3 in Westmoreland of 575 solutions
- Boscobel in St. Mary

Yes, you did.

- Luana Gardens in St. Elizabeth; and
- Belle Air Phase 3 in St. Ann of 760 solutions

Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that one of the projects previously mentioned is a new Greenfield project that has been added to the Agency's portfolio. I speak of the Vernon Drive project in St. James which will see the provision of just under a hundred two-bedroom units for middle income earners. This public/private partnership initiative is estimated to cost some $720 Million. Again, Mr. Speaker, this Administration is providing the solutions, one community at a time. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Working, working, working.

Dr. GUY: Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the Shooters Hill Project in St. Catherine is poised to commence once the result of an environmental impact assessment study is concluded. Preliminary house designs have already been reviewed by the Housing Agency of Jamaica. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, working in tandem with other Government Ministries and Agencies, the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing has a part to play in community re-development and growth management. It has to be acknowledged that though many persons are living in dwellings, particularly in our urban areas, many of these dwellings are in a state of disrepair. Additionally, lands within some existing developments are underutilized despite being suitable for housing purposes. However, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry has intervened in a number of these cases and hundreds have and will continue to benefit from our efforts to transform their communities.

Under our Infill Housing Programme, which seeks to upgrade existing housing

schemes and projects, 55 housing solutions were provided last year at a cost of approximately $31 Million. These developments took place in Manningsville and Gazeland both in St. Elizabeth.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: (Applause) Good place.

Dr. GUY: Oh, you're here.

(Laughter)

Plans for other sites have also been finalized in Llandilo, Westmoreland and in Albion Heights in St. James.

Mr. McKENZIE: So, you have a problem with Kingston. What happen to....

(Laughter)

Dr. GUY: For this fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, we will be beefing up our efforts with respect to the Infill Programmes as the Ministry will be rolling out another 143 lots to house Jamaicans. The targeted areas are:

- Gazeland St. Elizabeth;
- Chippenham Park, St. Ann;
- Fairy Hill, Portland;
- Bromley, St. Ann; and
- Lee Park, Westmoreland.

Urban renewal remains a priority for our Administration, Mr. Speaker. Steps are being taken to redevelop Government tenements which have fallen into a state of disrepair. (Applause) The aim is to improve and generate low income housing remedies and to provide security of tenure. In this pursuit, a technical assistance grant has been conditionally approved by the CDB. Once funding is in place, the first phase of a technical agreement between the Ministry and the Caribbean Development Bank will be implemented at a cost of some US$146, 000 to be offset between the CDB and the Government of Jamaica.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Dr. GUY: Phase 1 will see the engagement of a consultant to, among other things, undertake a feasibility study of urban and community renewal initiatives in Downtown Kingston. Already, the Ministry has commenced a land identification process in the Kingston Urban Centre area to facilitate the further implementation of its plan under the Urban Renewal Programme.

I must point out, Mr. Speaker, that using its own resources, the Ministry during the last year completed the construction of 18 units under Phase 2 of the Albion Tenement Improvement and Upgrading Project in St. James at a cost of $47 [Million].

Dr. CHANG: That's finished.

Dr. GUY: Yes, we just finished. Another 30 units were completed under that time at Phase 1 at a cost of $63 Million. This year also, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry will be furthering proposals for the planning of over 200 housing units at White Wing in St. Andrew. (Applause) Another 24 units, another 24 units on land designated for Block 46 in Denham Town.

A Government Member: Where is Denham Town?

(Heckling by both sides)

Mr. McKENZIE: Denham Town. All right.

(Laughter)

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, this Administration is providing these solutions.

Further, Mr. Speaker, over the past year, the Ministry played a lead role.

Mr. McKENZIE: 'Cyaan be 24 house'.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, over the past year, the Ministry played a lead role in pulling all the agencies involved in Kingston Inner-City Renewal Programme under one umbrella. This was done having recognized that interventions have been proposed in an *ad hoc* manner in the past. Working with the Urban Development Corporation's Master Plan, the Ministry has brought the NHT, the UDC, the HAJ and the KSAC to the table and the review is ongoing. The plan, Mr. Speaker, when finalized and signed off on, will see the rebuilding and regentrification of the City, one block at a time. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, squatting has been a perennial issue for years now. The Ministry is mindful of the attendant consequences of squatting, and as such, is making an effort to address it. In attaining this objective, though tedious, the Ministry has begun preliminary preparation for the National Squatter Management Policy and Implementation Plan. Already....

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Dr. GUY: (Chuckles) ...we have procured the services of a consultant to undertake comprehensive secondary research that will aid in the formulation of the policy and implementation plan. The consultant who commenced work in February of this year, has now provided an Inception Report, which is critical to the analytic study to inform the overall policy.

In embracing the use of technology, Mr. Speaker, to tackle the issue of squatting, work on the development of a national geo-database on squatting is ongoing with design phase completed. This will assist our squatter management unit to be better able to identify, monitor and contain incidents of squatting in a more practical and expedient manner. The geo-database, which is projected to be in use later this year, will have features that can produce data on location, settlement history, land size, ownership, demographics, social and physical information and environmental impact.

We are moving to classify informal settlements to better determine the best approach with regard to monitoring. Site visits have been conducted to over 25 settlements across the parishes of Hanover, Kingston, St. Andrew, Westmoreland, St. Thomas and Trelawny. Classification will be done on a three-tier model based on, among other things, proximity to physical features, the presence of infrastructure, planning and zoning violations and the degree of social organization. For this fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, the unit will be targeting over 40 settlements in St. James, Trelawny, St. Mary and St. Ann. (Applause) Even in the area of squatting, Mr. Speaker, we are providing the solutions.

I should also inform the House, Mr. Speaker that the Squatter Management Unit has been working closely with other stakeholders. One such stakeholder is the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM). Both ODPEM and the Unit have collaborated

through the establishment of a Steering Committee on slope stability in communities in St. Andrew and Portland, and through these efforts, several informal settlers have become regularized. Plans are afoot to bolster the work of the Unit by assigning at least one monitoring officer at each of the Ministry's regional offices in St. Ann, St. James, Westmoreland and Clarendon.

While work continues on the policy side with regard to squatter management, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry has been carrying out a number of infrastructure projects to upgrade and regularize some of these settlements. Over the last financial year, we completed 32 housing solutions at Albany Esher in St. Mary and at 21 August Town Road in St. Andrew. Incremental upgrading works with respect to the acquisition of land, planning and pegging have been carried out on a 292 lot subdivision at Galleon Beach in St. Elizabeth. Come this year, we will commence and complete projects that will result in another 8 housing solutions in Bounty Hall, Trelawny and 17 commercial lots in Vanzie Lands also in Trelawny. (Applause)

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, under the Local Improvements (Community Amenities) Act (LICA), thousands of Jamaicans stand to benefit from upgrades as well. Over the next year, we will endeavour to start and complete infrastructural work for 35 lots At Cremona, St. Catherine. Mr. Speaker, again, this Administration is providing the solutions. (Applause)

Still working in the interest of uplifting our people, Mr. Speaker, Cabinet has agreed to the compulsory acquisition of two properties in Portmore Lane, St. Catherine, that were declared under LICA to facilitate the regularization of 105 occupants. (Applause) Cabinet has also given its approval for the acquisition of some 17 acres of LICA declared lands at Paradise Park in Westmoreland to regularize the occupancy of 60 residents. (Applause) This thrust, Mr. Speaker, will continue in earnest as the Ministry will be pursuing more acquisition with the aim of regularizing a combined 330 residents. The areas to see intervention include:

- 81 St. Johns Road in St. Catherine
- 12 Whitehall Avenue, St. Andrew
- 10 acres at Cloisters in St. Ann's Bay
- 10 acres at Darlington Drive in Old Harbour, St. Catherine
- 30 acres at Orange Valley in Salt Marsh, Trelawny.

(Applause) Mr. Speaker, the challenges are many, but this Administration is providing the solutions. (Applause)

But while we acquire, Mr. Speaker, we are also divesting. Through divestment, the Ministry has managed to raise much needed revenue to carry out a number of projects, including the continuation of our Housing Fund Programmes. As many already know, substantial parcels of lands are vested in the name of the Minister proceeds from the sale of properties are then remitted to the Housing Fund.

Last year, over 300 properties were divested which yielded revenue in the region of $150 Million. This year, we are anticipating that with all hurdles removed, we will be able

to market significantly more than last year's figures with a projection of over 1,000 lots.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I'd ask for sufficient time to allow the Member to complete his speech.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently for him to complete his presentation?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Guy.

(Applause)

Mr. WARMINGTON: …so much money and you don't talk about Burkesfield. So much money to do so many projects, and you not talking about Burkesfield.

Dr. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Members of this Honourable House.

Mr. WARMINGTON: The Housing Scheme in Old Harbour.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, still on the matter of the informal communities.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Warmington)

Dr. GUY: The Government of Jamaica is further strengthening its capacity to address the related issues through engagement with partners at an international level. Member, you should listen to this.

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, Burkesfield.

Dr. GUY: I speak of Jamaica's involvement in the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme

Mr. WARMINGTON: You inherited that.

Dr. GUY: …which is a project.... Yes, inherited, of course.

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, no, from me.

Dr. GUY: ...from the United Nations. This is why I am asking you to listen. (*Sotto voce* comment) The United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN Habitat).

Mr. WARMINGTON: Remember that's President, you know, and that's why he came here when he was President.

Dr. GUY: The PSUP aims to advance the living conditions in urban areas, thus contributing to Millennium Development Goal 7 Target 11, which speaks to significantly improving the lives of millions of informal settlers across the globe by 2020.

Having joined the efforts of 33 other communities, Jamaica has completed Phase 1 of the Programme, which encompasses the rapid profiling of our cities and towns.

A new MOU has been signed for Phase 2 with UN Habitat, which will see us proceeding with action-planning and programme document formulation. Phase 2 is to be implemented in three urban centres: Montego Bay, Old Harbour, Old Harbour Bay and May Pen.

A MEMBER: And Annotto Bay.

Dr. GUY: Another....

Mr. WARMINGTON: I was President when I signed those.

A Government MEMBER: Come now, come, come, come.

(Heckling)

Dr. GUY: A total of US$125,000 has been provided by UN Habitat to facilitate the second Phase.

(The Speaker gavels)

Dr. PHILLIPS: They say you are disturbing the House.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Warmington)

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, I seek your protection from the Member.

(Laughter)

Mr. McKENZIE: You don't need no protection!

The SPEAKER: I was hoping you wouldn't need it.

Dr. GUY: I have you.

Mr. McKENZIE: Yeah man.

Dr. GUY: All right.

Mr. Speaker, this Administration is aware that there is a need for emergency housing in many instances. (Laughter) With that realization, while the development of shelter solutions cannot come overnight, we are moving post-haste to put roofs over the heads of the most vulnerable. (Applause) From this acknowledgement, emerged the Jamaica Emergency Housing Programme, which is a collaboration among the Ministry's Jamaica Emergency Employment Programme (JEEP), the National Housing Trust and Food for the Poor.

Under this initiative, some 9,000 units are to be constructed over a five-year period. Annually, this should result in 1,200 wooden and 600 concrete units. To date, 1,342 wooden units have been built. The concrete units are being built and sold under the NHT's First Step Housing Programme.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, the wooden units have been distributed - were to have been distributed equally in all constituencies across the country.

Mr. McKENZIE: No *sah.*

Dr. GUY: However, Mr. Speaker, following Hurricane Sandy's passage in 2012 the Government responded to the plight of those who completely lost their homes. (Applause) Our response came in the form of an alteration to the Emergency Housing Programme to address the immediate concerns of those rendered homeless, due to Sandy's impact.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. GUY: Consequently, to date, some 435 units have been built for hurricane victims.

Mr. CHARLES: What year was that?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: (Inaudible) ...you never hear it?

Dr. GUY: He didn't hear... These units were handed over to residents - Mr. Speaker... Mr. Speaker, I wish the Honourable Members to listen to this particular point.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. CHARLES: Give some praise nuh!

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. DAVIES: Ask Vaz and Robertson... Pearnel, you out of touch.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker... Mr. Speaker... these units have been handed over to residents in a non-partisan manner...

A MEMBER: Yes.

Dr. GUY: ...in the three most ravaged parishes... (Applause) ...113 in St. Mary, 141 in St. Thomas, and 181 in Portland. (Applause) Let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, that work under the Emergency Housing Programme will continue. However, with the

reduction in funding from PetroCaribé, the allocation this year, has been adjusted to 10 units per constituency.

Mr. McKENZIE: So what happen to the additional 20 that was coming to... (Inaudible)

Dr. GUY: As it relates to the First Step Housing Programme, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry's partnership with the NHT, JEEP, and Food for the Poor continues, and we will be incorporating Small Contractors Programmes into this initiative. This move, Mr. Speaker, is not only aimed at job creation, but it is also geared to ensure that the little man can get a share of the pie as well. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing is not just impacting lives in the form of providing units and lots for Jamaicans. We are also providing solutions in the form of documentation. I speak of our ongoing titling programme, Mr. Speaker, which has been opening social and economic opportunities for persons from Duanvale in Trelawny to Gravel Heights in St. Catherine, to Donaldson in St. Thomas. (Applause) Our Community Development Officers are constantly out there in many of these communities, going from door to door, and sensitizing and preparing residents for the new dispensation of land ownership.

Mr. Speaker, Cabinet has given instructions for the ramping up of this titling programme.

A MEMBER: What else?

Dr. GUY: But you get most of them already.

Mr. Speaker, Cabinet has given instructions for the ramping up of this titling programme, and has mandated the Ministry to make this effort. Consequently, we have engaged in a series of meetings with several State bodies. These include:

- the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change which oversees the LAMP Programme,
- the Housing Agency of Jamaica,
- the National Land Agency,
- the Administrator General's Department.

This Task Force, Mr. Speaker, has been directed to seek solutions which will facilitate the expeditious release and transfer of thousands of titles.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) House Leader, the time is now approaching 7:20.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House be allowed to sit beyond 7:20, so that the business of the House can be completed.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House does sit beyond 7:20.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Guy.

Dr. GUY: Our Estimates, Mr. Speaker, are not among the miniseries, departments, and agencies. There are approximately 50,000 titles that are to be transferred and delivered to purchasers and beneficiaries.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

(Applause)

Dr. GUY: This project, Mr. Speaker, will

have a significant impact and the economic activities and development of the country. (Applause)

The possession of a title represents an improvement in status for the beneficiaries and is indicative of our commitment to raising their standard of living.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. GUY: The collective goal is that of prosperity and growth. And, Mr. Speaker, as this Government pushes to legally put ownership of the land and the resources in the hands of its citizens. Though down from our projected number, this goal was achieved for almost 2,000 Jamaicans last year. Thanks to the efforts of the Ministry and the Housing Agency of Jamaica.

On the part of the core Ministry, after splintering more than 1,750 titles last year, the titles of the 513 properties were placed in the hands of their occupants. Among the beneficiaries were residents from Seaview Gardens and Arnett Gardens in St. Ann, (sic) St. Andrew, and Ebony Park in Clarendon. And, as you know, Mr. Speaker, 50 mortgage clients of the Ministry also benefitted, under our Jubilee "50 for 50" housing initiative, which saw writing off of their mortgage balances and presenting them with their titles. (Applause)

This year, Mr. Speaker, from the projected 635 titles to be splintered, the Ministry will deliver approximately 430 to occupants. And those, along with last year's numbers will see over 1,700 titles being delivered this year.

Let me use this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to inform the House that a number of sub-division surveys will be carried out to facilitate the procurement of land titles for the following areas: Arnett Gardens Scheme 8 and 9, which were strata lots; Windsor Heights, St. Catherine; Kidd Lane, St. Andrew; Fullersfield, Westmoreland; 311 to 315 and 62 Molynes Road; 33, 35, 37 and 37½ Waltham Park Road.

(*Sotto voce* comment/Applause)

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, the Housing Agency of Jamaica...

Mr. WARMINGTON: All the PNP garrisons...

Dr. GUY: ...stemming from a policy directive, has been carrying out its own titling programme which seeks to improve the legal document to Operation PRIDE beneficiaries and those occupied selected brownfield sites. In carrying out their mandate, over 1,340 titles were issued during the 2013/2014 fiscal year. Communities that benefit include: Elgin Town and Bulls Bay in Hanover; Mount Edgecombe Phase IV and Mammee Bay in St. Ann, Norwood, Retirement and Barrett Hall, St. James; Burkesfield, Breaton Meadows and Portmore Villas in St. Catherine.

And this year, Mr. Speaker, the Housing Agency of Jamaica will intensify its efforts by more than doubling the number of titles distributed last year. We will be distributing titles to recipients in communities all across the country. And among some communities include: Boscobel and Wentworth in St. Mary; Whitehouse, Galloway and Egypt in Westmoreland; Beverley Flats, Gravel Heights and Dunbeholden in St. Catherine...

A MEMBER: Yes, yes, finally.

(Applause)

Dr. GUY: ...Flankers, Pitfour, Meadowsvale and Lilliput in St. James; Dumphries and Donaldson, in St. Thomas; Fonthill and Lower Works in St. Elizabeth; (Applause) Oakglades, Windward Court, Mandela Terrace, Bedward Gardens, St. Benedict Heights in St. Andrew.

Mr. Speaker, under this initiative, by the close of the current fiscal year, over 3,000 Jamaicans are expected to receive their titles in hand. Let me reiterate that this Administration is providing the solutions. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Working, working, working.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Sleeping, sleeping, sleeping.

Dr. GUY: Of critical importance, Mr. Speaker, the provision of shelter solutions for our people is the Ministry's policy and legislative agenda which gives the blueprint for how we systematically address our housing shortfall. A major aspect of that programme, Mr. Speaker, is the Draft National Housing Policy and Implementation Plan.

In a bid to fast-track the review of the policy - proposed policy a steering committee was established in January of this year. It comprised a number of entities whose input is essential to having an effective policy. Five review sessions have been held thus far and it is anticipated that the final document will be presented to Cabinet before the end of the current fiscal year.

When approved, Mr. Speaker, the National Housing Policy and Implementation Plan should give strategic direction to enable the Government to achieve its vision to providing access to affordable housing for all Jamaicans by the year 2030.

Mr. Speaker, the Jamaica Mortgage Bank maintains significant relevance in the Government's capacity to facilitate the financing and subsequent delivery of housing solutions. This relevance is evidenced in the over 1,500 housing units, financed by the JMMB over the past 10 years. Many developers have turned to the bank interim financing to bridge funding gaps for a host of developments. The Bank is endeavouring to make ownership even more accessible to Jamaicans by proposing legislative changes as well.

And on that matter, Mr. Speaker, last year in my contribution to the Sectoral Debate, I gave this Honourable House, as well as the people of Jamaica, a commitment with respect to the Mortgage Insurance Act. Following Cabinet's approval last year, I outlined the Ministry's plan to amend the Act. The amendment would allow for the increase the per centum of the appraised value of the property on which mortgage indemnity insurance can be granted from 90 to 97 per cent. Currently, the Act provides for 90 per centum of the appraised value, or any part thereof.

The proposed increase in the percentage of the purchase price that can be insured under this Act, would allow for mortgage companies to use a higher loan to value ratio in their underwriting. Homeowners will be able to access larger mortgage loans which will

therefore reduce the substantial amount that is required as a deposit.

This, Mr. Speaker, will particularly benefit a wide array of persons in the workforce with stable jobs, who qualify for mortgages, but who do not have enough savings to cover the deposit. The proposed Bill was reviewed by the Legislation Subcommittee of Cabinet in April of this year. Cabinet has given its approval to the changes.

Mr. Speaker, with that said, and following on my commitments last year, today I will table in this Honourable House, a Bill to amend the Mortgage Insurance Act. Promise made, promise delivered. (Applause)

Special thanks to our Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Audrey Sewell; our Chief Technical Director for Housing, Mrs. Doreen Prendergast and the Acting Senior Director for Housing Policy, Ms. Paula Parkes, the Legislation Revision Committee of the Ministry, our Legal Unit, and the Chief Parliamentary Counsel in this regard. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. GUY: I thank them nonetheless.

Mr. CHARLES: You can't do without them; you wouldn't have a speech.

(Laughter)

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker…. Thanks for the compliment, Pearnel.

Mr. Speaker, in this Ministry, the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, responsibilities among Ministers are not straight-jacketed. Our stewardship overlaps in many portfolios. As a result, while my primary duties see me overseeing the housing portfolio, I have also been tasked with leading the change and the charge in a number of transport-related areas. Chief among these is the Island Traffic Authority of whose activities I now speak.

Mr. Speaker, the ITA has sometimes been characterized by the perception of corruption. Accounts have been given about negative experiences, where people conduct businesses at our depots. Well, Mr. Speaker, let me state that the Island Traffic Authority is in the midst of a major transformation and modernization process. Several steps have been taken to give new life to its operations and to aggressively treat with the negative image. It makes no sense to skirt around the problem, Mr. Speaker, rather, we have opted to deal with them decisively and comprehensively.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. GUY: Over the last fiscal year, some $38 Million was spent to upgrade the infrastructure at five depots across the island. These included that in Montego Bay, Spanish Town Road and Swallowfield. As part of that upgrading programme, the motorists of St. Ann now have a brand new depot building in St. Ann's Bay of which we, and they, can all be proud. Coming this year, renovation works will be on in earnest at the depots in Spanish Town, Port Antonio, Savanna la Mar and Port Maria.

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: Where Manchester?

Dr. GUY: This is being complemented by the training of all new and existing certifying officers in accordance with a standardized training programme in collaboration with HEART Trust/NTA. Mr.

Speaker, no more lip service, this Administration is providing the solutions. (Applause)

In continuing with our trust to move the ITA into the 21st century, with regard to upholding the integrity of its operations, equipment and processes, a vehicle inspection enhancement initiative has been put in place. Already, Mr. Speaker, commercial intrusion alarm systems, including armed response services, have been installed at four examination depots. Additionally, it is planned that close-circuit televisions are to be utilized at those depots. These two systems will help to eliminate a number of irregularities.

Still on the modernization drive, and in an effort to safeguard the process, Mr. Speaker, there are plans to automate the testing of applicants for drivers licence within this financial year, as we hope to do away with the written aspect of the driving test. What this means, Mr. Speaker, is that when you go to the driving depot for your driving test you will not have to use the traditional pencils and paper but will input your answers into a computer. Testing of the programme will take place at one of our Corporate Area depots with plans to expand it across the island. Furthermore, in an effort to address documentation challenges at our depots, the Ministry's Information Management Department is currently partnering with eGov Services Limited on an Automated Motor Vehicle System, (AMVS). This will allow for the automation of vehicle fitness information. The pilot project will initially be tested at four depots: Spanish Town, Harbour View, Swallowfield and Spanish Town Road. Upon successfully completing the pilot there will be a roll-out of the system at all depots islandwide. At that stage, paper-written certificates of fitness will be a thing of the past, Mr. Speaker. That's innovation at work. (Applause) That's ITA in the transformative mode, Mr. Speaker. No more empty promises, no more plans on paper, no more piped dreams, we are working again, Mr. Speaker, this Administration is finding the solution. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, you no doubt would be aware that earlier this year, following discussions with the All-Island Truckers Association, private stakeholders, the Island Traffic Authority and the Ministry, a decision was taken to amend the relevant regulations to allow for a temporary increase in the axle weight load limit. This we feel, Mr. Speaker, will bring equity for players in the system until all four permanent weight stations are up and running, as currently there is only one permanent weight station in the eastern end of the island.

Mr. Speaker, the truckers made an appeal to the Ministry and we listened and we acted, and this move demonstrates the Administration's willingness to sit at the table with all concerned and to take steps to enact remedial actions where warranted. Mr. Speaker, this is how this Administration operates. On other trucking matters, Mr. Speaker, we continue to engage the stakeholders in the transportation system, with

regular consultations, as we seek to address some of the issues and concerns affecting the sector.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing has been moving to tackle issues at our IT A examination depots, but we are not just leaving it there. We are also taking steps to address what happens on our roads once those vehicles leave our depots. As such, several initiatives have been implemented with regard to treating with the number of road fatalities and crashes over the years. Notwithstanding, it has been widely accepted that major changes are needed to the decades-old Road Traffic Act of 1938. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, upon taking office in 2012, the Administration gave an undertaking to complete the comprehensive review of the Act with the intention of bringing it in line with the realities of 2014 and beyond. Among the proposed changes encompassed in a brand new Bill are: Increased traffic penalties for breach of the Road Code; mandatory training and certification of motor vehicle driving instructors; a longer period for holding a learner's permit with new conditions attached, Mr. Speaker, and curtailing the use of electronic hand-held devices while driving, as well as increased powers for the Island Traffic Authority.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, we promised to have a new Bill before the end of the fiscal year, however, we were delayed by the heavy workload of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel primarily due to the priority placed on our economic reform Bills. This year we have fulfilled that promise. Following Cabinet's approval this week, Mr. Speaker, today, I will table the fully revised Road Traffic Bill for debate and passage in the House of Parliament. (Applause) This Government, Mr. Speaker, is not just talking, we are working.

A Government MEMBER: Yes.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, with two major Bills being tabled within the first quarter of the fiscal year by the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, it is again evident that this Administration is providing the solutions. (Applause)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Announce the completion of Burkesfield if you are working, working, working. Announce the completion.

Dr. GUY: Let me place on record, Mr. Speaker, my gratitude as well as that of Ministers Davies and Azan for the noteworthy effort on the part of all those who had an input in making this Bill see the light of day. This reform was stagnant for some ten years, Mr. Speaker. From the Ministry's perspective let me thank our Permanent Secretary; the Chief Technical Director for Transport and Works, Dr. Janine Dawkins; Director of Transport Policy, Ms. Valerie Simpson; Director of the ITA, Mr. Ludlow Powell; Senior Policy Officer, Ms. Joan Wynter, and other members of the Legislation Revision Committee. Outside the Ministry let me express my gratitude to the Members of Cabinet Legislative Sub-committee, chaired by colleague Minister Senator Mark Golding; the Solicitor General; the Chief Parliamentary Counsel; representatives from the Jamaica Constabulary Force and Tax Administration. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, challenging though the times may be, this Administration, through this Ministry is cognizant of the mandate that it has been given by the people of Jamaica. A mandate to ensure that in providing decent and affordable housing solutions for our citizens we are also in good stead to meet the objectives with regard to housing as outlined in Vision 2030.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, my presentation this afternoon outlines the vision we have for housing our people. Through a collective approach the Administration holds steadfast to overcoming the impediments to even greater progress as we embrace change and accelerate development. As this is done, we at the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing will always keep at the forefront of our activities, the accepted and correct view that we are servants of the people working in their interest and working to transform the social and infrastructural architecture of this country. (Applause) We intend to house this nation, Mr. Speaker, in providing solutions. We are preparing for the future, a bright future for this generation and for those to follow.

May God bless Jamaica, Mr. Speaker, and may God bless the people of Jamaica.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I ask for recommittal of Notices of Motions Given Orally.

The SPEAKER: The question is for recommittal of Item, Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY
(Recommital)

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Guy.

Dr. GUY: I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House, I will move to introduce and have read a first time,

Bill shortly entitled:

"The Road Traffic Act, 2014" and

Bill shortly entitled:

"The Mortgage Insurance (Amendment) Act, 2014".

The SPEAKER: Mr. Silvera, I see your hand up.

Mr. SILVERA: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, permission to speak from a seat rather than my own, sir.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Mr. SILVERA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to outline something which I have noticed and I think that both sides of the House could take this into consideration.

During the Sectoral Debates what we are having is that, Members of Parliament have invited persons from parts of their constituency. Just like today we have seen where Member Green -

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, you don't call names.

Mr. SILVERA: Oh. Members from Central St. Mary and South East St. Mary have invited their guests here and my suggestion, Mr. Speaker, is that, if we could take these constituencies or Members of Parliament who are presenting, at an earlier stage, like in the beginning, and then we take the Public Business, what it will allow is that, for these persons who are travelling from far will have an opportunity to go home and we can stay here because we are elected to debate and to participate in the public's business. I am just asking that the House should consider this, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: We are not opening a debate here now, you know.

A Government MEMBER: Concur.

Mr. CHARLES: I want to concur. (Applause) I think it is only fair, particularly for us who are deep rural representatives, when people travel for the whole day and come here, particularly young children –

MEMBERS: Yes. Yes.

Mr. CHARLES: Right? That the House, whoever is arranging, should see to it that presentations are made in time that these people can get back to their homes, and also when we have officials sitting here for four hours, before things happen. I am going to ask you; I am in support of the situation, that the Speaker and the Clerk or whoever it is, look at it, along with the Leader of House Business, that this can be done. Full support of it.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Charles.

House Leader.

(Applause)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ARSCOTT: Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, it is not proposed to do any further business today. The House therefore stands adjourned until Tuesday, the 10th of June.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do adjourn to Tuesday, the 10th of June, 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) House stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at approximately 7:43 p.m. until Tuesday, the 10th of June.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015

TUESDAY, June 10, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:43 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development

DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM McNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern

MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Julian Robinson

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, there is a Statement but we are just trying to get enough copies, so we will return to it shortly.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 104**
  17th Meeting for the Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) of the Caribbean Community 24th Meeting of the Community of Ministers of George Town, Guyana, 20th - 21st May, 2014
- **Ministry Paper Nos. 105 - 107**
  Cabinet Agenda Issues for May 12 - May 19 and May 26, 2014
- Office of the Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial years 1999-2000 and 2012-2013
- The Provisional Collection of Tax Act, (Minimum Business Tax) Confirmation Resolution, 2014 under the Provisional Collection of Tax Act

BILLS BROUGHT FROM THE SENATE

The Clerk read the following message from the President of the Senate:

"To the Honourable House of Representatives:

I have the honour to advise the Honourable House of Representatives that on the 6th day June 2014, a Bill shortly entitled: the "Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment) Act 2014" was passed in the Senate without amendment.

Signed: Floyd E. Morris
President of the Senate

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House he will move the Provisional Collection of Tax Act, the Provisional Collection of Tax (Minimum Business Tax) Confirmation Resolution, 2014

Whereas by virtue of subsection (1) of Section 3 of the Provisional Collection of Tax Act (hereinafter referred to as the Act) the Minister may, by order, provide for the variation, renewal or imposition of any tax;

And Whereas under the above provision the Minister made the Provisional Collection of Tax (Minimum Business Tax) Order, 2014, which was published in the Jamaican Gazette Supplement Proclamations Rules and Regulations as Legal Notice No. 23 on the 31st day of March 2014;

And Whereas subsection (4) of section 3 of the Act provides that every order made under subsection (1) of that section shall cease to have effect until it is confirmed with or without modification by resolution of the House of Representatives within the next 30 days on which the House sits after the date of publication of the Order in the Gazette;

And Whereas it is desirable that the Provisional Collection Tax (Minimum Business Tax) Order, 2014 should be confirmed:

Now Therefore, Be it Resolved that this Honourable House of Representatives as follows:

1) This Resolution may be cited as the Provisional Collection Tax (Minimum Business Tax) (Confirmation) Resolution;
2) The Provisional Collection of Tax (Minimum Business Tax) Order, 2014 hereinafter referred to as the Order is hereby confirmed subject to modifications set out in the Schedule hereto.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

Whereas pursuant to Section 40 of the Sexual Offences Act, said Act must be reviewed within five years of its date of commencement;

And Whereas there is concern as a result of trends in violence towards women, children, the disabled and the elderly;

Be it Resolved that this Honourable House of Representatives appoints a Special Select Committee comprising the following Members:

Mr. Raymond Pryce
Miss Denise Daley
Dr. Dayton Campbell
Mr. Fitz Jackson
Dr. Lynvale Bloomfield
Mr. Delroy Chuck
Mrs. Marisa Dalrymple-Philibert and
Miss Olivia Grange

to sit jointly with a similar Committee appointed by the Senate to complete the required statutory review of the Sexual Offences Act; **two**, to consider and review existing legislation which purport to, among other things, protect women, children, disabled and the elderly from violence and abuse being the Sexual Offences Act, the Offences Against the Person Act, the Domestic Violence Act and the Child Care and Protection Act with particular emphasis on the offences and punishments under these legislations with regard to the factor of pregnancy in the murder of women, the assault of women, children and the elderly, sexually

offences against women, children and the elderly such other violent crimes against women, children, the disabled and the elderly as may be deemed to be necessary for the review; **three**, to make recommendations for legislative amendment, including but not restricted to the stated legislation under review for the better administration of justice and the effective protection of these special groups as the Committee deems necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today I will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. MAIR: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Mair.

Mr. MAIR: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days. I will be asking the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and the Minister of Transport, Works and Housing the following question:

Question 1:

Can the Minister advise, based on the report on the mandatory review of the Access to Information Act done by a Joint Select Committee, and tabled and approved by the House of Representatives in 2011, when the Bill amending the said Act will be tabled in Parliament?

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to find out from the Honourable House Leader, there are at least three sets of questions that I have tabled and I have noticed none of these questions have been listed and the dates have passed in terms of the response to the question. I am not waiting until no budget, Sectoral Debate.

Mr. SHAW: Slackness. You should be answering the questions, what you are arguing about.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Shut your mouth!

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I think the Member is not aware that questions do not carry over into new legislative year, so unless the questions were done in this legislative year...

Mr. McKENZIE: These questions were tabled in...

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Member should be aware that when a Member is on his feet…

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, just to advise the...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Apologize first.

Mr. McKENZIE: For what, sitting?

Mr. WARMINGTON: Oh, shut up!

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, just to advise the House Leader that those questions were tabled after the commencement of the new parliamentary year.

The SPEAKER: We will sort that out for the next sitting. We will check that out.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Wheatley.

Dr. WHEATLEY: I beg to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days, I will ask the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining the following questions:

Question 1:

Will the Minister confirm the existence of an Aggregate Spectrum Cap Policy of 2013, and advise the House of its purpose?

Question 2:

Will the Minister indicate whether the content of the Aggregate Spectrum Cap Policy of 2013 has been made publicly available, and if so, where is this information available?

Question 3:

Will the Minister advise of the specific limitations on spectrum imposed on Telecommunications providers by the Aggregate Spectrum Cap Policy of 2013?

Question 4:

Can the Minister indicate whether there have been any changes to the Aggregate Spectrum Cap Policy of 2013?

Question 5:

If the answer to Part 3 is in the affirmative, will the Minister state exactly what changes were made and when said changes were made?

Question 6:

If the answer to Part 3 is in the affirmative, will the Minister advise the House as to why these changes were made?

Question 7:

If the answer to Part 3 is in the affirmative, can the Minister indicate whether these changes have been made publicly available in the form of an amended policy, and if so, where is it available?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg for the recommittal of item Statements by Ministers.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow for the recommittal of item Statements by Ministers.

Put to the House and agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS (Recommitted)

BAUXITE/ALUMINA

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I have two short Statements relating to the same sector, so I am hoping I can do them and receive questions on them both.

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the Honourable House that an agreement has been finalized resulting in the sale of the Jamaica Bauxite Mining Limited's 7% interest in West Indies Alumina Company Limited, WINDALCO, to the United Company Rusal Alumina Jamaica, UC Rusal. The purchase price is US$11 Million. The parties acknowledged that the amount of debt owed by the Government to UC Rusal as of the end of April 2014 stands at $21,152,868.

The parties agreed that the purchase price shall be credited against the debt and no actual payment will be made by the purchaser. And, secondly, the remaining amount of US$10,152,668 which comprised the debt after the application of the purchase price shall be settled by the Jamaica Bauxite Mining Company.

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

(HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House, entered and took her seat.)

(HON. COLIN ALFRED A FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

(MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central, entered and took her seat.)

(HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, North, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for Public Service, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, the status of Jamaica's 7% holding in the company and the Government's debt service obligations have been the subject of considerable attention by successive administrations. The truth is that the cost of production per tonne of alumina at WINDALCO has been significantly higher than the price of alumina and over time this debt led to accumulative amounts of $23 Million. This situation has become untenable and the sale agreement will save the country some $3 Million *per annum.*

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the Government of Jamaica has executed a further bauxite levy concession agreement with UC Rusal for an additional two years of relief from bauxite levy for the WINDALCO's Ewarton plant for the period October 1, 2013 to September 1, 2015. As the Honourable House is aware, a number of factors have negatively impacted our local bauxite/alumina industry. The global financial situation and decreases in the world's market price for alumina in 2008 and in 2009 adversely affected the local bauxite/alumina industry and caused WINDALCO to take the decision to temporarily cease its operations and closed its Ewarton plant and it also further closed, since that time until now, the Kirkvine operations; their operations at Alpart are also closed as at that time.

The parties entered into a bauxite levy concession agreement dated the 2nd of October last year, whereby the GOJ provided certain concessions to the WINDALCO's Ewarton Plant. UC Rusal has applied for an extension

of that waiver, claiming that the situation demanded it and that it would be critical to the further opening of the Plant beyond October last year.

The further bauxite levy concession agreement allows for the relief from the bauxite levy for the Ewarton Plant for an additional two years and during the period of relief, a number of measures are to be undertaken.

Firstly, they're to commence construction of a coal-fired electricity generating plant within this period, which would provide finally a solution to the company's high energy cost and improve its competitiveness.

They are to submit quarterly reports detailing the performance of the WINDALCO Plant, against agreed work plan of efficiency, and such a plan now exists in this agreement, which relates to improvements in the Plants.

The further bauxite levy concession agreement provides for UC Rusal to commence construction of a coal-fired steam generating plant at the Ewarton Refinery Plant prior to expiration of the package. The Company has agreed to provide the Jamaica Bauxite Institute with copies of the following documents in relation to the implementation of the project.

Firstly, a feasibility study to be completed by the end of July this year; an environmental impact assessment by the end of December this year; financing term sheet by the 31st of March 2015; construction contract by the 30th of June 2015; and the fixed financing commitment confirmation by June 30, 2015. UC Rusal agrees to submit quarterly reports detailing the progress.

In relation to the termination of this agreement, the agreement is terminated if there's a substantial change in the price of alumina or oil on the world market. And secondly, failure to perform the contracted inputs such as the energy plant, as I have mentioned. Once this further bauxite levy concession agreement is terminated, the full levy relief package shall immediately cease and the levy that has been waived will become payable immediately.

(MR. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Samuda.

Mr. SAMUDA: And Minister, we have obviously no objection or any difficulty with accepting the need to dispose of the 7% shares that we had. Regrettably we're getting a lower price today than we could've gotten before, but time has overtaken us and the bauxite industry has not rebounded in the manner that we had, I supposed, hoped, since its depression in '08/'09. So that is a positive as indicated in your statement, you said it's saving us some US$3 Million *per annum*, and that's something that we must all appreciate.

The point however, Mr. Speaker, is Minister, you speak a lot about Ewarton, and I can understand why because that's the earliest starter of the Plants involved. What I'd like to

focus on is, what indication have they given you in respect of particularly the Kirkvine Plant?

And I speak of that with certain knowledge of the impact that both ALPART and itself and Kirkvine had on Christiana, Mandeville and other surrounding areas, they were totally dependent on those Plants and their closure has impacted negatively on those communities.

Can you indicate to this Honourable House in some specific detail, what are the plans for the reopening or the change of use, especially in the area of the Kirkvine Plant, and I'd like while you're doing that, while you're doing that, address the question of supplies of bauxite necessary to serve Kirkvine? Because it's uneconomical to drag all the way from wherever the deposits are good, to Kirkvine, in order to make it viable.

And it seems now obvious, that Kirkvine is almost a thing of the past - not almost, it appears from all indications that it is a thing of the past. And it's no point us pipe dreaming that it's one day going to come back into full production. Could you give some indication in your discussions with them, if they have indicated to you something specific about that? I've a couple more questions so I'll leave you with that now.

Mr. PAULWELL: Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I had mentioned to the House during my Sectoral presentation, that I was scheduled to meet with Rusal during the latter part of the month of May. I had indicated to the House that I was entirely dissatisfied with the progress or lack thereof, in relation to both Kirkvine and ALPART, which have been closed for five years.

The Opposition Spokesperson on Finance has disputed a claim I had made about the request that they claimed that they'd made for a similar concession as we're doing with Ewarton. And I will give him - in the face of absence of proof, I will not repeat that today. But what we're seeing - and just to link everything - what we're seeing with Ewarton is that that Plant would've been closed today; we'd have had those people unemployed today, had it not been for this agreement that we're extending

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. PAULWELL: No, no, no, no. The concession was negotiated in 2012. It was effected last in 2012 by this Administration.

Mr. SHAW: No, no.

Mr. PAULWELL: I'm telling you, and I will sit and allow you to...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. PAULWELL: Yes, well I'm telling you about the removal of the need to pay the levy, that is what we're talking about, and that was effected in 2012 and that is what we're extending today.

Now we did meet with Rusal at the end of May and we stated the Government's position. We went further, there were certain points put to them and we indicated to Rusal that if we do not receive a satisfactory response by the end of June - and they've promised to be back in Jamaica by the end of June - then the Cabinet decision that has authorized me - and we now have a decision authorized in me - to

deal with the reserves that that decision will be effected.

So they are aware that if by the end of June there isn't a changed situation, that is, they have to indicate definitively, especially in relation to ALPART, an energy solution, I am prepared to concede that Kirkvine might be a changed situation because of the fact that it has been closed for so long. But in any event, those reserves are there and there are sufficient reserves at Kirkvine, but the equipment has been idle. There are some ideas as to how that could be done, but come the end of June we will have to take a decision.

The value to Rusal is embodied in the reserves, the licenses that they have to lease - to mine bauxite, and there is a changed situation in the world environment. So two years ago nobody was interested in Jamaica's bauxite. With what has happened in Indonesia, we're seeing a totally different attitude towards bauxite. Our position is that we do not intend to allow for the exportation of raw bauxite without a commitment to either restart Plants that are closed or to build new refineries. And come the end of June we will be able to report further to the country.

(MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. SAMUDA: But, Minister, you announced recently in the House that the - a Chinese interest has signed an MOU to look at the possibility of expanding and building alumina plant. But in the interim - I believe the timeframe is 20 years they'll be able to export or whatever, to export raw bauxite. The truth - in light of the fact that alumina can be produced at ALPART, and as you say they're reserves, what makes it so much more attractive with the Discovery Bay Plant that the Chinese have an interest in, and the ALPART Plant, why is it that they would be willing to enter into construction of an alumina plant when there's an alumina - at least one viable alumina plant sitting idle and has been for five years? And in light of the fact that there is no proper reserves to serve the Kirkvine Works Plant, what real future is there in that Plant and should action not be taken from now to create some facility that would earn us revenue rather than to constantly live in a state of hope?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Member has raised the issue in relation to ALPART and Kirkvine. Just to remind the House, those Plants are owned, not by the Government of Jamaica, but by a company that operates in Jamaica. I have to be very careful how I speak about that company and its ownership, it has certain rights, so I can't at this stage, before any determination is made on the future of the company in Jamaica, to be linking that to any other business that might be interested in Jamaica at this time. All I will say is that the Jamaican marketplace has improved tremendously, and it's not only one company that is seeking to look at Jamaica now, there are some other companies.

You would be aware, for example, that we recently entered into an arrangement for CAP and it reflects the change in the environment,

whereby there are other producers now seeing the opportunities in Jamaica.

Mr. SAMUDA: You know, Minister, there is a point of view widely held, that to enter into an agreement to build an alumina plant on the North Coast in the middle of the tourism area, is inimical to the interest of the development of tourism. The Minister of Tourism hasn't even listened to what I've said...

Mr. JACKSON: He knows what you usually say.

Mr. SAMUDA: ...he's preoccupied with talking about a health centre in Westmoreland. But the point is...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Very important.

A MEMBER: What yuh have against the man building a health centre?

Mr. SAMUDA: ...what I'm saying is that, is it not worthwhile negotiating with the people who have existing Plants that pose no threat to the tourism sector, and although it has old equipment it can be refurbished and put into service a lot sooner than the construction of a new one?

And although you have no control over it, but what effort are you making to engage the process between perspective buyers and the existing owners to see what can be done to bring relief to the people of St. Elizabeth, who without which, they are in economic difficulties? Because ALPART was extremely important to the communities of St. Elizabeth; and of course, you say nothing of Kirkvine for Mandeville. So have you gone that route at all? Have you explored that possibility? Have you engaged Rusal in that possibility along with the perspective Chinese investors?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is undeniable that the closure of ALPART has created tremendous hardship for that area – communities like Nain and so on, and we have been moving on the promise that it will be reopened in a timely way. I think, Mr. Speaker, it might be more appropriate to address the question of the Member after we've concluded the next round of negotiations with Rusal, because at that time the issue as to their own future in Jamaica will have to be dealt with. And it is true that the ALPART reserves are very attractive, very attractive.

Mr. SAMUDA: Just finally. You mentioned $23 Million as the accumulated debt. We recall the Minister of Finance indicating to us that it was $33 Million, not $23 Million. Are you sure that - probably the former Minister of Finance with his knowledge of the subject and his proximity to the Minister of Finance could help us. He said 33.

(MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. PAULWELL: That was in relation to another issue, it has nothing to do with our shares in Rusal, it has to do with arrangement with JBM and Glencore and that is what we are seeking to resolve.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister.

Minister, you just spoke to how important and precious the reserves of ALPART. In your discussion with UC RUSAL, what has finalized with regard to the reserves for Kirkvine, because there is a feeling that the reserves at Kirkvine, for that to be properly utilized then they would almost have to gut that plant and bring in new and up-to-date equipment to maximize the type, based on the type of reserves that we have there. Was that an issue and what was the finalization of that situation?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Member was a former Minister of Mining so he is aware of some of the technical issues. And it is true that the quality of the reserves at Kirkvine is different from the higher quality that exists at ALPART. And one of the issues that we have to deal with is that though you have the reserves, how feasible it is for that plant that has been shut for five years to be reopened and to be able to utilize that lower quality to bauxite. It is a matter that will be reported on as soon as I complete discussions at the end of June.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to clarify an issue. You mentioned the question of the levy in 2012; I want to make it clear that in order for the reopening of Ewarton to take place in 2009 or 2010 whichever year it was, we had to make significant confessions in relation to the levy. I just want to make that clear. So you might wish to check your records on that; we don't want to mislead the House. We had to make concessions in order to get Ewarton to reopen - RUSAL to reopen the Ewarton Plant.

But I wanted - if the Minister. Minister I really find your explanation concerning ALPART and WINDALCO at Kirkvine to be very vague. And is it that you are backing off of any timeline for reopening, because you have in the past mentioned a timeline for the reopening of both. So I am just trying to find out where we are so let's just - let me just place on the Table that in the past you have mentioned timeline, I don't want to get into a debate about the specific dates now but you have mentioned timelines in the past, whether it is 2015/2016 you have mentioned timelines. Then in subsequent dispatches you have threatened to revoke mining licences. And now your answer to the Member from North Central St. Andrew is that you will enter into a new round of negotiations. What is on your mind exactly? What is your expectation coming out of those negotiations? Do you expect that Kirkvine and Alpart will be reopened sometime in the near or not too distant future?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, RUSAL has in the two plants that they operate licenses that are valuable because of the reserves; those reserves are allocated by the Government. We are disappointed that, unlike the Ewarton situation where we have now a signed agreement, apart from verbal indication that 2016 is when we are trying to reopen, I have not been able to get it reduced in writing in a contract form and that is the reason why the meetings that are scheduled for this month are important because we have to make a determination at the end of June whether, we continue with

those mining leases or we give effect to an authorization that I now have to proceed. And it will mean whether - it will mean that - it could mean that the reserves could be made available to other players who are interested but a definitive position will be arrived at, at the end of June this year.

Mr. SHAW: Minister, it is now an open secret that the plant at Kirkvine is being scrapped literally, and I want to know whether you have made any determination, whether that scrapping that is taking place some of it is going to Ewarton, some of it is going to Guyana, whether you have made any determination as to whether the scrapping that is taking place, will lead to a replacement with new equipment at Kirkvine, or in fact, it is a confirmation of the terminal nature of what is happening there.

UC RUSAL

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we have put the allegation to RUSAL which they have continually denied. I myself did a tour of the plant and I was assured by the team who are still present, they do have people employed there that there is no scrapping that will make the plant dysfunctional if they were to try resuscitate it. The meeting that we are having, at end of this month, is to determine once and for all about the viability of Kirkvine. There is no question about the viability of ALPART; I think everybody agrees that ALPART has a tremendous future. The issue of Kirkvine will be dealt with. And I can let you know that there are views as to some alternative arrangements that could be accommodated at Kirkvine and those we are pursuing for this month.

Mr. MAIR: Mr. Speaker, through you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, you mentioned that the shares, the Government shares were sold for $11 Million US dollars to US RUSAL could you advise what was the - by which process those shares were priced?

Mr. PAULWELL: The former Government had a valuation done, in fact, there was an offer made to the former Government by a Chinese company, and I think it wasn't accepted at the time because of negative comments that were made on the process.

In 2011, a valuation was done of $10.8 Million; the OCG then, disputed the basis of the valuation and recommended that another valuation be done. That valuation cost us about J$18 Million and it came out with a reserve price of US$11.2 Million. The price that we are agreed on now US$11 Million, so it is not too far away from that but a lot of time has passed and the debt has mounted.

Mr. MAIR: So that valuator was appointed and paid by the Government of Jamaica?

Mr. PAULWELL: Yes, it was subsequent to the OCG's recommendation.

Mr. MAIR: Thank you Minister.

On your second statement you mentioned - you have done so before but you mentioned once again that UC RUSAL intends to build a coal-powered plant, question. First of all, are you guaranteed that it is going to be a new plant? That is number one.

And two, is it still going to be the 100 megawatt plant that was mentioned in the beginning or is UC RUSAL looking at the possibility of building a bigger plant and that they would look at the possibility of selling cheaper electricity into the national grid.

And, third, who will be setting the minimal environmental standards for this Coal Plant to come.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I could deal with the environmental issue first because there are rules and regulations governing the use of coal as is the situation with any fuel and those standards will be rigidly enforced by NEPA. And that is the reason why I have indicated that they have to do an Environmental Impact Assessment by the end of this year, and we expect that it is going to be modern coal technology that will be utilized.

Mr. Speaker, I had mentioned in my Budget presentation that for bauxite alumina to succeed going forward, the energy paradigm has to be changed and it is going to have to be a greater reliance on coal because of the steam that you need for the operation of the refinery, and that such technology will have to abide by international standards. And it will have to be a new plant that is my understanding, and I think they are still committing to 100 megawatts. They won't need to use 100 megawatts so they will be in decisions with the OUR and the JPSCo in relation to the amount that they will be selling to the grid and at what price.

Mr. MAIR: Minister, you mentioned that an Environmental Impact Assessment will be done, which I assume NEPA will ensure whatever the report says is enforced, whatever is recommended.

Question, who will select the organization or company that will do that Environmental Impact Assessment and who will pay them?

Mr. PAULWELL: UC RUSAL

Mr. MAIR: Don't you think it is a little bit of a conflict of interest that the person who is going to be installing a Coal Plant, and we want to stipulate environmental standards to protect the Jamaican people, don't you find it a little bit wrong that the person who is going to build the plant, who is going to appoint and pay the company, who is going to set the environmental standards?

Mr. PAULWELL: No, I disagree entirely. Firstly, the Terms of Reference are determined not by the company, but by NEPA and it is the practice in every case that the developer is responsible for contracting the services of a consultant to do the work, and to make the submission to NEPA, and to do all the other things such as the public meetings that they will have to do and so on, I don't think anybody else could incur that cost other than the company that is responsible.

Mr. MAIR: Minister, may I say I disagree probably because, you know, who pays the piper pays. Why would a company who is contracted by UC RUSAL not put in place conditions that would be friendly towards that investor who is going to pay their Bill? I think what should really occur - I'm asking if you think that what should happen is that a fee should be charged to UC RUSAL and it is the Government, through a process

that could be established, selects and appoints a company to do the EIA?

Mr. PAULWELL: That would be changing the rules governing how we do these projects and I don't think it is reasonable do that, especially as I mentioned before, the NEPA actively supervises the process. They are engaged. They are involved and I don't think it could be otherwise, internationally and locally, that is the practice and I don't propose that we change those rules now.

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Henry.

Mr. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, seeing that the questions have been opened up a bit, I'm going to be addressing the matter on a kind of policy approach. UC RUSAL is a Russian company. The greatest stride made in energy at a minimum cost that is continuous is known to be achieved by Russia through its mobile nuclear plants. I'm asking you, therefore, Minister, because you'd have to be guided by policy because in all of the discussions I hear on energy relate to buying energy, which is at a fluctuating cost when the only fixed cost is nuclear energy. But if, of course, in your environmental approach and in the other areas that you've discussed, am I to understand - despite all the issues around nuclear power - am I understand, as other developed countries move back to nuclear, that you are ruling out totally the possibility of a mobile nuclear plant, which can be moved at any point in time, which would then generate enough energy for the specific need of this industry, therefore it will be an interim thing as you have to deal with the issues of environment or the fear? That is an inherent fear, which I don't share.

But I would love to know why we're locking down to coal, LNG, the various other forms of energy, all of which are in the hands of other suppliers and control the price. Therefore, you're 12.8 cents that I hear being talked about, I don't think will be achieved. So is it a policy of the Government that nuclear energy is a definite no, no, or is the possibility that we say to UC RUSAL - just as you've developed your mobile nuclear plants, which are now being used in the North Pole to open up whole new areas for search for gas, *et cetera* that we could look at a small mobile nuclear plant that is offshore and that can be used to generate the needed energy if for nothing else than for this industry?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Member should be aware that, indeed, nuclear is one of those fuels that we have listed in our national energy policy that both sides agreed in 2011. So nuclear is an option that we will pursue. However, Mr. Speaker, the technology has not developed to the point as yet where mobile compact nuclear systems are commercially viable. We anticipate that it will happen and as soon as it has happened, I would propose that we consider it, but I don't think we're there at this point.

Mr. HENRY: With respect, Mr. Minister, I'll do my further research and I think you should do your further research, because that does not apply right now to the use of mobile nuclear plants of which Russia is making

greater strides to the world. Unless, of course, your Ukraine issues and others impact on your decision to make that position clear?

Mr. PAULWELL: I am prepared to be so educated.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE HOUSE FIRST OBTAINED

The SPEAKER: Dr. Guy.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, I now move to introduce and have read a first time the Bills shortly entitled: the Road Traffic Act, 2014 and the Mortgage Insurance (Amendment) Act, 2014.

Bill shortly entitled:

"The Road Act, 2014"

read a first time;

Bill shortly entitled:

"The Mortgage Insurance (Amendment) Act, 2014"

read a first time.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of second reading of the Bills.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I now move for the suspension of Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion...

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

...notice of which I gave earlier.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of Standing Orders to take the motion, notice of which was given by the Minister earlier.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we are seeking to appoint this Joint Select Committee to deal with the Sexual Offences Act. I have already indicated the names of the Members. I so move.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Committee be so appointed as outlined by the Minister.

Put to the House and agreed to.

SECTORAL DEBATE

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we intend to continue with the debates this afternoon, the Sectoral Debates. We have three presenters: the Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, the Opposition Spokesperson on ICT and the Member of Parliament for St. Mary, South East, in that order.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Crawford.

(Cross-talk)

Mr. SILVERA: Andrew, why don't you stay and listen to the debate? Where *yuh* going?

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, no! Who *yuh* calling, Andrew?

(Cross talk)

A Government MEMBER: Who yuh pointing on? Where *yuh* pointing?

(Cross talk)

Mr. WARMINGTON: The Member from South West St. Mary.

The SPEAKER: Has done what?

Mr. WARMIGNTON: ...and have some respect.

The SPEAKER: What is the offence he has...

Mr. WARMINGTON: He was shouting to the Leader of the Opposition, "Andrew, don't leave... "

(Inaudible comment follows)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Where were you during the press conference yesterday?

Mr. JACKSON: He's being affectionate… refer to him as Andrew.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I would not demean myself, to lower myself to respond to that... (Inaudible)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Where were you during the press conference?

Mr. WARMINGTON: I would never lower myself to dignify you with an answer.

(Laugher/Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Members, we are...

(Cross talk)

Mr. Crawford.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CRAWFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, first of all, ask for permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Mr. SHAW: Why you change your seat anyway?

Mr. CRAWFORD: Thank you, sir.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw, come on, man.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: You need to give us some soap so we both look clean.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately my mother could not be here today, but I know she is watching on the television and earlier today....

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes.

Mr. CRAWFORD: ...earlier today, Mr. Speaker, she called me and she prayed for God to control my mind and my mouth. (Laughter/Applause) So in an effort to make her prayers come true, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Members of that side please to behave themselves so that not to draw my tongue.

(Laughter) (Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to make this my third contribution to the Sectoral Debate. I thank the Honourable Prime Minister for her confidence in my ability to carry out the duties of State Minister for Tourism and Entertainment. I accept this responsibility with humility and a resolve to do my utmost to help realize the awesome potential of these two sectors.

Mr. Speaker, as I prepare to report on my stewardship of the Entertainment portfolio, I thank my lead Minister, the Honourable Dr. Wykeham McNeill... (Applause) ....who has been my guide and mentor. My thanks also to the Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Jennifer Griffith, whose experience has guided me as I have walked down what has been for me, a new and exciting highway. (Applause) I would like also to express my appreciation to the members of the Entertainment Advisory Board, chaired by Mr. Kingsley Cooper and

the entire team at the Ministry and its agencies for their support over the years. (Applause)

Entertainment by its very nature must work with several other ministries. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the ready collaboration of colleague Ministers with responsibility for National Security; Local Government; Industry, Investment and Commerce; Youth and Culture; Education; Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade; Finance and Planning and of course, Sports… (Applause) …as well Mr. Speaker, as the agencies, organizations and numerous individuals who contribute to the work of the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment.

My family continues to be a source of strength and support and I thank them for that. I thank my constituents in East Rural St. Andrew who have helped me as I try to make a difference in the constituency. (Applause) In particular, Mr. Speaker, I recognize Councillor Pat Morgan…. (Applause) ....but I express even greater pleasure in recognizing Councillor Oliver Clue, former Member of Parliament. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Councillor Clue has proven himself to be a bigger man than I and I am appreciative of his presence.

(Applause)

Mrs. SIMPSON-MILLER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, before I begin I'd like to once again express my unreserved apology to the Opposition for the term used at a recent political meeting....

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Don't repeat it! Don't repeat it!

(Laughter by Members)

Mr. CRAWFORD: And I will not repeat it .... not because of this fallacy, not because of this fallacy I hear banded about re tribalism and division politics, because that paintbrush has never and will never paint me, but instead, Mr. Speaker, because the term in its origin was used to belittle people much in the same way as the "N" word was used historically in the United States. So I categorically apologize to those in the House of Representatives, their supporters and Jamaicans at large.

(Applause by both sides)

I know you accept the apology.

(Inaudible comments by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I want to start my presentation by establishing the context and the context is what kind of country do we want. From this, Mr. Speaker, those policies, procedures and promises should flow. Mr. Speaker, conversations within this House have often focused on economic growth. This indeed is a dangerous premise as the economy can grow yet the people are left behind. There is a difference, Mr. Speaker, between growth and development, where growth is the progress of the economy and development is the progress of the people. Mr. Speaker, it is in my mind the right thing to do to move away from simply the discussion and growth which guarantees only the owners of capital benefit and transition to our focus and development which is people progress. Mr. Speaker, while the economy can progress and leave the people behind, it is almost impossible for the people to progress and leave the economy behind.

Mr. Speaker, my experience has proven to me that education, health, environmental protection, infrastructural development, housing and economic opportunities are the facilitators of people progress in their presence and inhibitors of people progress in their absence.

Mr. Speaker, I quickly ask to put this context in my ultimate responsibility in this House as the people's representative of East Rural St. Andrew.

By now, most people within this House will know that I am an advocate for education, not because of what I have heard, not because of what I have read but because of what I've experienced. Mr. Speaker, if it is true that knowledge is power and education is the acquisition of knowledge, then it should be accepted that education is the root of power.

Since my campaign, Mr. Speaker, because of this knowledge that education is the root of power, it has been our objective in the constituency to engage upon the 3-2-1 project, which aims to have one profession per household in 25 years with subsidiary objectives of three CXCs per household in the first 10 years and two A Levels per household 10 years thereafter. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, to achieve the goal of three CXCs per household in 10 years we started with literacy. Mr. Speaker, last year we spent $2.5 Million on our literacy classes held in two locations due to the size of the constituency.

Mr. Speaker, added to having a contracted person, we hired 12 JEEP teachers and I am very grateful to the Ministry of Education and the Minister for having sourced these teachers on our behalf. (Applause) We also utilized seven volunteers from the University. Again, Mr. Speaker, I....

Mr. SAMUDA: Which University.

Mr. CRAWFORD: …of the West Indies and UTech.

Mr. SAMUDA: Talk to me man don't read.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, any student that is given assistance, Mr. Speaker, any student that is given assistance with their tertiary education, they must volunteer…

Mr. SAMUDA: When him talk in his constituency him don't read.

Mr. CRAWFORD: (Chuckles) ....they must volunteer for an education programme. Mr. Speaker, we tried this last year and the improvements were massive. It is with this reason that I have great hope in the cohort going up this year and their true belief that there will be a change over time. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I ask permission to read just a short part of a letter I received from parents called Mr. Rodney Gordon and his wife Hilary Gordon. They said,

> "Our son, Brandon Gordon, currently attends one of the preparatory school in Kingston, he's in Grade 4. Based on his 2013 end-of-term Report we recognized that although he is a smart child, the scores received in the various subject areas were below expectation. His overall average on his last Report Card was 35%". We learned about the Education Support Programme being conducted at

St. Martin De Porres in Gordon Town from a friend and thought it may be worthwhile to check it out. We subsequently met a Specialist Coordinator. Since commencing the programme about three weeks ago, we have seen drastic improvements in his numeracy and literacy skills. Prior to the programme, Brandon struggled with English and would get low marks in his test despite him being able to speak the language well. Since he started the programme, he now boasts about his test results at school, since he's now getting test grades exceeding 90%.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is letters like these that cause me to continue on route to progress.

Mr. Speaker, my own observation of my nieces and nephews prove that Dora, Diego and Barney have been great contributors to their education. To this extent, we bought projectors for our schools and have one hour Barney and Dora sessions after school. Mr. Speaker, we are also using the Churches, where we are engaging the churches by the purchase of NIV, the new English version Bible to ensure that Sabbath School and Sunday school is not only exposing the gospel, but teaching them the light of knowledge through literacy. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker....

Mr. PICKERSGILL: NIV man, he never said...

Mr. CRAWFORD: No, the NIV. Mr. Speaker, the importance of the parent in the early childhood development of literacy cannot be overstated, and it is therefore the aim of a programme we term Veranda Basic to target mothers once per week. Mr. Speaker, this programme is a follow up to a programme which started for GSAT called Mommy and Me, where both the mother and the child attended the GSAT classes and the mother studied as if she was to take the test. This has been, Mr. Speaker, a great success in Harbour View where we have started at the Harbour View Primary.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CRAWFORD: For GSAT, Mr. Speaker, to achieve the three CXCs we have also focused on GSAT. This focus on GSAT might not be seen as a direct link, however, Mr. Speaker, if this is to be a house of truth, we should accept that there are some schools that a child has a greater probability to achieve CXCs than others. I beg, Mr. Speaker, just to elaborate with an example.

In my seven years at the University of the West Indies as a Lecturer, we thought that the definition of satisfaction was where the actual is greater than the expected. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, if one expected to receive $500,000 and received $100,000, that person would have been disappointed. On the contrary, if one expected $100,000 and received $500,000, that person would have been highly satisfied. It is this explanation of satisfaction that explains why we are so celebratory when students from some schools pass three subjects. And this sir, is because we expected them to pass none.

It is therefore our objective why we work as a Government to improve all schools. And I

think that the Minister of Education deserve a table pound for the effort that he has been putting in place so far... (Applause) ....for what he has done so far.

It is our intention to ensure as much as possible that our children perform well in the GSAT and go to some of those traditional schools. We have confidence, however, Mr. Speaker, that in time all schools will be capable of boasting the capacity to ensure that there is a high probability for success.

Mr. Speaker, we have had over the year, over the last two years a spend of $11 Million on GSAT preparation activities such as camps, Saturday classes, Sunday schools, centralized Mock Exam and past paper pictures. And, Mr. Speaker, we don't send out everything to the media because we do things, not for PR but for people. But here is a graduation from our 21-day camp, funded in part by KFC. So much KFC was had that a child came to me and said, "Mr. Crawford, don't you are a millionaire?" I said, yes, baby. She said to her friend, "mi tell yuh, how else him would a buy so much KFC".

(Mr. Crawford held up photograph)

And, Mr. Speaker....

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Sir? Well, she had to eat for 21-day camp, understand. Yes, you can show....

(The photograph was handed to Members)

Mr. Speaker, we asked the Ministry of Education to consider setting standard exams, end-of-year exams for each year cohort as this will ensure that there is a greater accountability and consistency among schools. (Applause) What is a 70% at Tarrant Primary versus 70% at Vauxhall? Is it 70% of what the teacher taught or is it 70% of what the syllabus requires? And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, my experience in teaching shows that if there is not separation of powers, then the teacher will teach what he wants to teach and then grade what he wants to grade and we will only find out when it's too late that the child was not at the level that he was supposed to be.

For CXC, Mr. Speaker, we hosted over 180 hours on math prep sessions for persons doing CXC Mathematics. We videotaped and placed this on YouTube. No student would focus on.... Mr. Speaker, we videotaped this and placed it on YouTube so that students could have focused on the lesson instead of on taking notes, and that is something that I observed in my years of teaching, particularly in Mathematics, that many times while you are explaining they are writing, and so they are telling me to wait and not understanding the steps that were necessary.

To this extent, we called for no books other than work-books, videotape and therefore they could have reviewed based on the videotape. And with technology improvement, it is much cheaper for us now to try that, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, one young lady by the name of Jamila Richards commented on YouTube.

"Mr. Crawford, I am all the way in Portland and I just want to say thank you for your help. You taught me a lot and I am sure of a pass. If your kids don't pass,

something is wrong with them, because I am so far away and I watch your videos and understood. I went to the exam and used the logics, you know.

And, Mr. Speaker, logics is a term I always tell them, Mathematics is logics.

Thank you from my brother and I, we are very grateful and you're the best".

Another student on YouTube, Ruel Johnson said,

"Thank you, I passed, I know it! Big up yuh self, sir".

(Laughter)

And another, Kimola Goldbum.

"All my life I had to fight because I had no idea simultaneous equation was so easy", the struggle is over.

(Laughter)

This, Mr. Speaker, is not unusual as it is very often that I show up to schools on a Monday and teach Mathematics, not just schools in my own constituency. And because, Mr. Speaker, I realize that it is PR, that means you are doing work in politics. I had to start putting out some of the things that we have been doing.

(Mr. Crawford held up a magazine)

But here, Mr. Speaker, on a Monday I am teaching at Donald Quarrie. This is understandable because the Donald Quarrie High School is in my own constituency. However, Mr. Speaker, here I am teaching at the Excelsior High School. And here, I'm teaching at the Mona High School. And here I'm teaching at the Calabar High School, activity that I have never sent a press release, activities, that I have never walked with a PR team or a video camera … (Applause) …because, Mr. Speaker, we don't do these things for politics, we do these things for progress.

(Inaudible comment)

Mr. CRAWFORD: They are not the same, not the same.

There is the - Mr. Speaker, I like to tell the Member that there is a difference between the game of politics and the business of Government.

Mr. Speaker, again, this is not new. I read from a letter, a Gleaner article in 2008 where it says:

"They went through a lot of math, trust me, but they provided a lot of encouragement. They showed us around the Campus, told us what the University had to offer and the opportunities that we could take advantage of…"

Jackson told the Sunday Gleaner:

"…we got firsthand account of University life and that was what made me develop the vision. We all left saying we wanted to come here. At the time, it seemed impossible, but I knew I wanted to study here".

This, Mr. Speaker, is about a Camp I started in 2004, and this Jackson, is Timar Jackson, who is currently the Rhodes Scholar who said it was that Camp that made him want to come to the University. (Applause) Timar Jackson.

So, again, Mr. Speaker, this wasn't carried too much in the media. This wasn't featured on TV, but it was on the same Twitter that they made a big hullabaloo about shelling down London in the club. So sometimes is not

only old style politics, the problem might be new style media.

Mr. SHAW: So what really happened in London?

(Laughter)

Mr. CRAWFORD: We will tell you soon. I will tell you soon.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we also realized that the facilitation of a study environment is of great importance to the development of students and to their success. To this extent, Mr. Speaker, we have ventured on the development of 3-2-1 After School Centres in all of the divisions in East Rural St. Andrew.

Mr. Speaker, this man right beside me would not know the impact and influence that he has had on my life. It has been sufficient that it would not be against the rules for me to give him a gift on Sunday. I will, however, leave that to his true children.

(Laughter)

However, Mr. Speaker, one day he said to me, "Don't focus on the mediocrity of many, be transformational".

This is what I have done, Mr. Speaker, in the building of the first 3-2-1 Centre in in in....Bull Bay, Dallas Division.

(Laughter)

Yes, in the Dallas Division. Mr. Speaker, 52 computer labs.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

(Applause)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Study Gazebos, a Literacy Centre. And if you look below, Mr. Speaker, it was a derelict building from 1983. This was...

(Inaudible comment)

Mr. CRAWFORD: No, it was a Government - it was a Community Centre. And we are thankful to the JEEP, because it was from the JEEP. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this will be fully solar, fully wireless, as you can see landscaped and all of this, Mr. Speaker, the students can't wait. We want to thank, of course, Mr. Adam Stewart who is helping with the solar equipment. (Applause)

(Mr. Crawford continues to show pictures)

The next, Mr. Speaker, which will start this month will be in Gordon Town, because I realize PR is what says you are doing things in politics. And this one, Mr. Speaker, is an old building that will go upstairs, again having a full computer lab, reading room and also classrooms.

Mr. SHAW: So, is only 'dem' one you 'waan' show!

(Laughter)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, you know, I'm very proud of you, you know, you always try to wrap your mind around complex issues, you are very ambitious.

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Hold on! Hold on! I have not accepted your apology yet, you know.

(Laughter)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the one that is currently completed was done in the Dallas Division, which I lost by 400 votes. The other one to be completed in the next

three months is to be done in Gordon Town, which I lost by 700 votes. Yet, Mr. Speaker, I hear of people bantering about, about tribalism. It says to me that I don't understand what is tribalism, because Harbour View that I won by 1,200 votes is not even in third place, but in fourth place to receive a center.

Mr. Speaker, what bothers me is that somehow, one term - one statement is to now define me. If one statement is to define me, I wonder why the statement made while down in North East, St. Elizabeth that says:

> "*if we are our brother's keeper, then Comrades should always facilitate Labourites and never fight them out from the work"*.

I wonder why this...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Yes, and it is on the tape - on the tape, but it doesn't really show. Also...

Dr. WHEATLEY: Careful of that tape argument, you know.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. CRAWFORD: It is all right. Also, Mr. Speaker, when I was in Manchester, I said - in Central Manchester - reversed unfairness is not fairness. I understand the cry that when they were in power, you received no work, but when we are in power we must do different. Didn't you see that they lost? Mr. Speaker, why did not that also define me? Mr. Speaker...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: True, true.

Mr. CRAWFORD: ...I am saying, at the end of the day, the truth shall set us all free.

(Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: Those are clean words.

(Applause)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, we also have adult programmes. Mr. Speaker, seven centres were established for night school. The night school was to focus on one subject per year for adults who were out of school. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, the first subject was Principles of Business...

Mr. CHARLES: That is expected of you. Your mother expects you to do that. You are a bright... that is expected of you.

Mr. CRAWFORD: ...to ensure while we are on the route to progress, that the man who owns the shop understands the cost - how to cost his goods; that the woman who owns their bars understands the concept of bad debt, so that the lady who do the hair, understands that she charges by the hour, and not by the head because some heads are going to take much more hours - like my head, yes, sir.

(Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, this night school for which we invested $750,000 was a follow-up to the NCTVET training and certification at Level I of not 100, not 200, not 500, but 1,000 persons between the ages of 18 and 40. I have not seen this on the news, Mr. Speaker, but I have not sent out a Press Release because it was not done for PR, it was done for people. Two point One Million, ($2.1M) was spent on the NCTVET Programme, and not only did the people receive lessons, they received lunch to ensure that there was no excuse to attend the classes.

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, it is education that is the difference to an eight year old eventually becoming Dr. Bennett, Head of Surgery, and not Miss B who is hoping for a job to clean the floors. Mr. Speaker, this is the weapon - education of mass destruction in the fight against poverty. This is the tool that will allow for every man and woman in this country to ensure that his child is better than himself or herself. It is only with the singularity of purpose of each adult ensuring that his child stands on his shoulders, will the country truly prosper. (Applause)

To this extent Mr. Speaker, like the Americans had a shared vision of the Manifest Destiny, and later the American Dream, I ask that this House accepts as the nation's goal - as the country's compass, the achievement of one degree per household. Let's empower at least one person to become the catalyst for change, the beacon of hope, and the financier of dreams in each family.

(Applause)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Norman Manley proud of him.

Mr. CRAWFORD: You see, Mr. Speaker, many times we focus on the macro, instead of on the micro, but it is better families that will lead to better communities, and better communities that will lead to better constituencies, and better constituencies will lead to better parishes, and better parishes will lead to a great country.

However, Mr. Speaker, I think that there are certain barriers to the success of this programme. The first is that education must be rebranded and remarketed as a *learn to earn.* I have never heard in any theory of motivation, not the goal-setting theory, not Maslow's theory - hierarchy of needs; not Equity theory that you do an act for an act. Instead, Mr. Speaker, you do an act for a goal. It is therefore in my mind, necessary that we reposition education as a *learn to earn.*

It means therefore, Mr. Speaker, if we repossession education as learn to earn, the affordability of tertiary level education is of great importance, as it is at this attainment and achievement that you will have the greatest earning potential. The learn to earn suggest that literacy: GSAT, CXC, and A Levels are simply gateway achievements to university access, as it is the Degree, as I said before, which gives an individual the greatest earning potential.

In this case, Mr. Speaker, education cannot be splintered into this or that, or this to say lower level, or higher level, or early childhood, but must be seen as a total system where the head bone is connected to the neck bone, and the neck bone is connected to the shoulder bone.

Mr. Speaker, it is from the concept of self efficacy, a central cog of the goal setting theory, which we suggests: If a person does not perceive the ability to achieve the ultimate goal, he will apply very little effort in the achievement of the subsidiary goals.

I beg this House therefore, Mr. Speaker, to stand against the concept of deregistration in universities. (Applause) At best, Mr. Speaker, this can be seen as unnecessary, as there is no

material benefit to the institution derived from deregistering a student three weeks before the exam.

You see Mr. Speaker, there are two types of costs: fixed costs and variable costs where the fixed costs move - where the variable cost moves with consumption, and the fixed cost remains constant, regardless.

Mr. Speaker, the level of variable cost for university education is very low. What would you do; pay half of a lecturer, or half of a room, or half of the maintenance? I ask any statistician, any accountant to explain to me what is the true benefit of the University deregistering a student.

Mr. Speaker, in lecturing at the University for seven years, I have never seen one student deregistered and returned - I have never seen one. And, Mr. Speaker, just in March at the Champs - the Boys and Girls Championships - I met a student deregistered in 2009 who told me that she was busy working Downtown as a counter attendant in a shop. That, Mr. Speaker, in my mind, must be unacceptable that a child, who by now, could have at least been in middle management, because of her inability to afford education, now, is an attendant at a wholesale.

Mr. SAMUDA: I agree with you; I agree with you.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the affordability of tertiary education is a major threat to the achievement of one Degree per household. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, while I applaud what we have done so far - and again I believe a table-pound is due to the Minister of Education for what has been done with the tertiary education Students' Loan. (Applause) I still believe, Minister, that we should consider a Tertiary Education Trust similar to what the NHT is, that will allow for student loan repayments to be extended over 25 years. (Applause) At current fees, the monthly pay back will be $4,800 per month.

Mr. SAMUDA: Can't exceed 10 per cent of the earnings; not more than 10 per cent. That is the Obama formula.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time be extended to allow him to finish his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended, sufficient for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Crawford.

(Applause)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, what I am suggesting here is that, at the point that I am ready for University, a child should be capable to use his mother's points, or, if the mother unfortunately, was never formally employed, to know that if they work for two years they can use their own points, and fund their education.

Mr. Speaker, many of - I hear many, and I challenge the view, that many of our students are migrating. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, most of my friends are still here in Jamaica. And at this time, I want to say a great thank you to my Tuesday crew; friends from the University who come to my house to help with the planning and the development of East Rural

St. Andrew, every Tuesday if not every other Tuesday. (Applause)

However, Mr. Speaker, I have never understood how, as a country, we curse migration and celebrate remittances. It is something that is very crazy to me, because it is those who have migrated who send remittances. And so, if you curse migration, you should equally curse remittance.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I move now to Health. Mr. Speaker, great interest in health for two main reasons. Good health is of great importance to people. It tops the United Nations Millennium Poll as the thing that most people value in life.

Secondly, significant evidence demonstrates the aggregate impact of health on growth and the levels of real GDP. Three key channels through which health affects economic performance. The first is: Health on Productivity. Healthy workers are more productive.

The second is: Health on Education. Healthy children learn more, but healthy parents can invest more in their children, and they put less stress on their children.

The third, of course, don't need any explanation - is Health and Saving. Without health costs, you can save more money.

Mr. Speaker, it is for this reason, that I applaud the efforts by the past Prime Minister, Mr. Bruce Golding, and those on that side, to achieve universal access to health care, which can only be achieved by having some persons accessing it for free. That's the reality when there is uneven distribution of income.

However, Mr. Speaker, there is a difference between universal and equal. And that is why I applaud the current Minister, Minister Fenton Ferguson, for saying he's planning to review the free health care. And, Mr. Speaker, let's not scoff at that; it takes great political cojones to even mention a change.

A MEMBER: What's that?

Mr. CRAWFORD: Political cojones. (Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Hold on, political what?

Mr. CRAWFORD: Cojones.

Mr. SHAW: Careful you know, careful; that's a new word?

Mr. CRAWFORD: I soon come back to you; I'll answer on the platform. Today is not your day.

Mr. Speaker, in a time of political manipulation of every word stated, for a Minister to say he's thinking of reviewing something for free, it takes bravery. However, Mr. Speaker... (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Cojones - political cojones, yes.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Well, Mr. Speaker - but yes, what I am saying, Members, is that I am confident that this particular Member is sufficiently brave as he has already established that with what he has done with public smoking - smoking in public places. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes, yes.

Mr. CRAWFORD: However, Mr. Speaker, I ask that in the review, the Minister

of Health considers the Quintile Health Card System. STATIN already divides the society into five quintiles of income: The first quintile being the richest 20 per cent; the second quintile, the second richest; with the fifth quintile being the poorest 20 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the fifth and the fourth quintiles be given free health care, and the third quintile have a co-payment of 40 per cent; the second quintile, a copayment of 60 per cent, and the third quintile a - and the first quintile a co-payment of 80 per cent. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, these co-payments could be further subsidized by using your health card for your cost-sharing. Mr. Speaker, what this means, is that there is not...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Yes, yes... but now you ensure that the poorest are protected. And, Mr. Speaker, this is just one thing for consideration as you look into the review of the current Free Health Care system to move from what was trying to achieve on the other side of universal access, to now quality access.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Wheatley)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I lend my endorsement to something said last year by the Member from St. Ann. I lend my endorsement to mobile health centres. Mr. Speaker, this will be particularly helpful in constituencies as large as East Rural St. Andrew.

Mr. SAMUDA: Have you ever heard of dental clinics? Have you ever heard of that?

Mr. CRAWFORD: Yes, I have heard of that.

Mr. SAMUDA: You know who put that here?

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mobile health centres - Mr. Speaker, this is of great importance in constituencies as large as East Rural St. Andrew with poor access to public transportation. These realities contribute to visits to clinics being only as a per needed basis. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, primary and preventative care are the starting points of our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, finally in health, I applaud the Minister for having done the Centres of Excellence - four so far. I, however, continue my lobby for one in Gordon Town, because there's very little capacity to attend to some of these other institutions.

Mr. Speaker, in communities as urban as Harbour View, we have communities without road, water or electricity, and this gets worse as we move up into the hills of Dallas, Gordon Town, Kintyre and Mavis Bank. Mr. Speaker, where roads once existed they are in extreme states of disrepair and these roads are somehow never on the list based on a matrix which considers greatly the number of persons served. It therefore causes a chicken and an egg story, because persons keep migrating from rural communities due to lack of infrastructure but infrastructure will never come because it serves very few people. To this extent, Mr. Speaker, I call for a consideration of a rural road maintenance fund. Mr. Speaker, this will give a reasonable chance for roads such as Gordon Town to Westphalia, for roads such as Papine to Halls Delight to be fixed.

Mr. SHAW: I am with you on that.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Yes, sir.

(Heckling) (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, it is the -

(Heckling)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I ask for just a little protection.

Mr. McKENZIE: You a ask fi protection?

Mr. CRAWFORD: I will answer you on the platform.

(Speaker gavels)

Mr. McKENZIE: You?

Mr. CRAWFORD: Not your day today.

Mr. Speaker, it is the unlikelihood of infrastructure repairs and implementation in many poor and rural communities regardless of the numbers served that drew my attention to the impacts of the marginalization of the elected. The marginalization of the elected has in my summation led to a shift from the masses to the holders of influence. Mr. Speaker, it is not unusual that I hear of Mr. So and So called about his road, and Ms. Dasa will never get through to the persons at these agencies. Mr. Speaker, it is the only politically elected whose self-interest is dependent on numbers which is the only advantage of the masses. To this extent, Mr. Speaker, I call for greater involvement of the politically elected in the selection of projects for it to be done in their constituencies.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CRAWFORD: They say I say what everybody is thinking.

Sir, on the issue of water. I beg to contradict the Member from North West St. Elizabeth's opinion that his constituency is being sabotaged, as I too have not heard the name of East Rural St. Andrew mentioned in that very long list of projects being implemented.

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Fix him, fix him.

(Heckling)

Mr. CRAWFORD: My brother I say to you, my brother I say to you that…

(Heckling)

….if the absence of a project on the list outlined meant that you were being sabotaged, it would also mean that I too am being sabotaged.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Victimization.

Mr. CRAWFORD: If that was the case we would definitely be in the same boat, however, I doubt that that is the case. So I lend you my confidence that our time will soon come and when it comes water will flow abundantly. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I borrow from the Honourable Member from Southeast St. Elizabeth, Richard Parchment, where in his speech he said water is not only life it is livelihood. This holds true for many communities dependent on agriculture and while we are at the home of the Hope River, with all the negatives it brings, only 30 per cent of the residents of East Rural St. Andrew have pipes and only 30 per cent of those pipes have water.

Mr. SHAW: You hear that?

(Heckling)

A MEMBER: That's an indictment. Serious indictment.

(Heckling)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, East Rural St. Andrew is highly affected and greatly affected by adverse weather. In fact, whenever there is a storm we have landslide in the hill, flood in the middle and storm surges on the flat. Mr. Speaker, we are very concerned about climate change. It is for this reason that we ask the Minister with responsibility for Climate Change to consider the funding or further funding of our pineapple project with the next JEEP cycle, as there is no better way to protect the environment other than to have persons earn from protective practices creating sustainable livelihoods.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the constituents of East Rural St. Andrew, I further call for a law mandating the buyback of plastic containers by the distributors of these products.

Mr. Speaker, in 1960 plastic was estimated to have contributed one per cent of total solid waste. Currently it contributes over 13 per cent. Plastic chokes the rainwater outlets contributing to land saturation, landslides and flood. As per available data from California base, Algalita Marine Research Foundation, plastic in the world's ocean weighs over 1 million tons. Mr. Speaker, I can't say “never”, but I seldom see a Guinness bottle or a Red Stripe bottle lying idle in a drain or a gully. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, if $2 was charged as an automatic buyback for plastic I believe that it would serve as a great level of income generation for the poorest Jamaicans but also become a boost for plastic recycling industry. (Applause) In 2004 JET estimated the use of 250 million plastic bottles discarded for the year.

Mr. Speaker, I remember when I was growing up my father will always end conversations by saying, "The only thing I can leave you is advice." Can that be reasonable for a man who was formally employed for 30 years? How would a father truly feel, knowing that on approaching death all he could truly claim he left was advice? Mr. Speaker, the tail of poverty is too long and it is lengthened by the delay of securing accommodation. To this extent, Mr. Speaker, with the knowledge and reality that very few, very poor will be truly able to access NHT housing, I call on this Parliament to consider the willing of benefits to NHT contributor's children. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, this I believe is of great necessity to move us out of poverty.

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Speaker, Vision 2030 slogan appropriately separates work and doing business. The business environment and the labour environment are indeed not synonymous. Economic environment is inclusive of both the business environment and the labour environment. The business environment, Mr. Speaker, has however somehow dwarfed the conversation about an

acceptable labour environment. Mr. Speaker, I have often heard about where we rank in doing business, I would love to see a ranking of how we rank for labour.

Mr. Speaker, while we work to make it easy for doing business it is equally important that we work on making it fair to work in Jamaica. Mr. Speaker, somehow innovation and efficiency has been dwarfed by the manipulation of labour to cut cost. Mr. Speaker, we see more and more a transition to contract work to avoid benefits. Mr. Speaker, even within this House most of us have health insurance, as small as it is, but discussion of politician remuneration is out of bounds. So as small as our health insurance is, our assistants on contract have none. That can't, Mr. Speaker, be the way to go.

Mr. Speaker, companies are laying off persons to rehire them on contracts. Further, Mr. Speaker, there is now a new normal in the workplace where two or three people's responsibility have been combined and given to one person and so what was to be a 40 hour workweek lasting from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., is now a workday that last from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. You see, Mr. Speaker, economic opportunity is not found only in entrepreneurship, it is found in the fair remuneration for effort as labour. (Applause) Therefore, Mr. Speaker, as technology continues to skew the demand and supply relationship within the labour market, there is greater need for Government protection of workers. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I therefore call on behalf of the Members and citizens of East Rural St. Andrew, for responsibility audits to be carried out by the Ministry of Labour, at optimum training, with optimum experience with the tools provided, what is reasonable to expect one person to complete as deliverable for a 40 hour workweek.

Mr. Speaker, I embrace technology but what I am saying…

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes, focus there, don't go…

Mr. CRAWFORD: I soon come to that. I will be there soon.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica has a fast growing population of persons over 65, however less than 15 per cent of Jamaicans have any pension arrangement at all. Decades of tax incentives and pension savings have failed to encourage Jamaicans to save for their retirement. Enticement obviously does not work, and, Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister is working very hard on this, the Minister of Labour, however I think that we should seriously consider, mandatory pension, a model under which no Jamaican can escape the promise of dignity in their old age. Mr. Speaker, this is of great importance.

Mr. Speaker, in the call for economic opportunity and an enabling economic environment, I stress that an enabling economic environment which considers industries for the poor. Mr. Speaker, there is a difference between welfare and opportunity, where welfare is for those that are most at-risk, however, Mr. Speaker, welfare is not the responsibility of the Government, permanent responsibility of the Government to the poor. The permanent responsibility of the

Government to the poor is to create an opportunity that they can escape poverty with the line of least resistance. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we feel that while welfare is for the most vulnerable there should be opportunities for the able. These are more appropriately termed low barrier industries.

Mr. Speaker, we must ask ourselves, do low investment industries receive equal attention, interest, policy and support and funding to ensure their success? Mr. Speaker, more and more there is an increased importance to low barrier industries as what was once termed the "invisible hand" in the market economy is becoming more invisible. Mr. Speaker, if we were to have equal factories as in the 1980s, with equal output as in the 1980s, it will need 30 per cent of the workers today. That is what we talk about when we talk about automation and mechanization.

To this extent, Mr. Speaker, demographics which were once producers of labour will now have to ensure that they have access to transition into entrepreneurs of low level industries, because there is just not the take up for labour that used to be. You with me?

A MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. CRAWFORD: All right, good. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I want us to consider things such as vending.

Mr. Speaker, many people when they are laid off, *et cetera*, they take to the streets to vend. Many persons feel that they are a nuisance, they dispose their garbage carelessly, reduce the attractiveness of cities, added to this, some storeowners perceive them as direct and unfair competition.

I am not against the concept of order and regulation, Mr. Speaker, however, I call on this House to consider the facilitation of vending. Research by eminent economist Narumol Nirathron in 2006, suggests that street vendors subsidized their customers by selling at razor-thin profit, working long hours supported by unpaid labour. Indeed, the research suggests that street vendors mainly catered to the poor as customers.

Mr. Speaker, instead of chasing them down and confiscating their goods I call on this House to form a committee to consider the facilitation of vending and discuss ideas such as designated streets on designated days, role-away carts, and specified areas for specified merchandise. (Applause) All of my people in Bull Bay sell in downtown, I have to talk for them too.

Mr. SHAW: That's what the Solidarity Programme was about, you know.

CRAFT

Mr. CRAWFORD: Another such low barrier industry, Mr. Speaker, is craft, for which I have direct responsibility. From henceforth, Mr. Speaker…

(Heckling)

Mr. SAMUDA: They must vend locally produced goods too instead of all imported goods.

Mr. CRAWFORD: From henceforth, Mr. Speaker, action speaks louder than words.

Mr. SHAW: You remember the Solidarity Programme that Mr. Seaga…

Mr. CRAWFORD: Craft hold the potential to generate significant earnings for Jamaica. Craft industry and the tourism sector are inextricably linked. Mr. Speaker, craft satisfies all motives of travel.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where they have the higher order needs, the lower order needs. Any person that travels for the lower order needs is not a tourist. If you travel for food, not the experience of food but because you were deprived of food, you are a nomad. If you travel in search of security you are not a tourist, you are a refugee, and, therefore, Mr. Speaker, only those who travel for higher order needs are tourists.

(Laughter)

For safety needs, for esteemed needs and for self-actualization needs.

Mr. Speaker, craft serves as memorabilia for the social needs. Mr. Speaker, craft serves as evidence for the esteemed need, and craft serves as a reminder for the self-actualization need. It is therefore, Mr. Speaker, a great opportunity for us to truly position our craft industry for great benefit.

In light of the potential of the sector, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry developed a Concept Paper for a National Craft Policy, which has been submitted and approved by Cabinet. Discussion at the Economic Development Committee of Cabinet led to the decision that the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment would proceed as the lead Ministry in the development of Craft Policy, which today, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say, is on its third draft.

Mr. Speaker, a critical component of the development of craft sector is the establishment of an effective administrative structure, one which will facilitate inclusion, and enable craft practitioners to say their own way. And I give a quick example, Mr. Speaker. I was touring a craft market and I was arguing that I did not believe that we should be selling elephants, as elephants were not a part of the Jamaican culture.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Jackass, then!

Mr. SHAW: Is that live elephants or craft elephants?

(Heckling)

Mr. CRAWFORD: A craft elephant.

However, Mr. Speaker, however...

(Laughter)

One second.

Mr. Speaker, I was promptly informed by the vendor that an elephant with the tusk turned up is a universal representation of good luck, and therefore a major seller in the market. As bright as I think I am, I cannot know the vending of craft better than the vendors of craft. And, therefore, we need to have a system that allows for vendors of craft to be major participants and facilitators in their own movement.

(Applause)

In my Sectoral presentation last year, I outlined that the Ministry intends to establish this single body.

Mr. Speaker, we are currently looking for a chairman of this single body, and as soon as we find one this could be done. Indeed, if

Member Robinson was not an elected Member of Parliament she could easily fit into the chairman of this craft authority. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the Members of this House that a craft council will be put in place with the mandate of ensuring the competitive viability of craft.

Mr. Speaker, one legitimate complaint of craft vendors is the inability to compete with the hotel gift shops and the in-bond stores. The hotel gift shops have the competitive advantage of proximity. After all, you are staying right there. They also have the competitive advantage of the control of information simply saying nothing else exists, while the in-bond shop has the competitive advantage of system-selling, also being capable to sell duty-free items. However, they also have the strength of cash which facilitates the payola system that has entrenched itself in the tourism industry.

MEMBERS: Very true!

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, to this extent, it is this Ministry that started for the first time the authentic Jamaica brand that can only be sold in the craft market, to ensure that their booklets in the planes and the rooms, suggesting to visitors that we have these crafts that can only be found by our craft vendors. (Applause)

We have also been actively campaigning for craft makers to come on board. Because you see, Mr. Speaker, I want to see the day - and quickly - where I no longer see craft markets and gift shops dominated by craft from China. We are spending all this money to attract visitors to Jamaica, and then serving as a subsidy to Chinese craft makers, as their craft dominate our local craft-retail sector.

Mr. Speaker, as soon as we achieve a critical mass of craft producers and artisans, we intend to move for a law to force imported craft to conspicuously and permanently bear the country of origin. Mr. Speaker, I call on all Members of Parliament present to prepare their constituents for the One-Craft-per-Community Project, where communities will produce craft from one based product, for instance, Mr. Speaker, alabaster...

Mr. SAMUDA: Kind of old fashioned.

Mr. CRAWFORD: ...out in Bull Bay, but still evidence, evidence.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CRAWFORD: As an old-fashioned man you should buy the stock, being that it's old-fashioned.

Mr. SAMUDA: Them not going buy it.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, Lignum Vitae wood from Old Harbour - and this is not from chop down tree, this is from fallen trees, all right.

A MEMBER: How you sure 'bout that?

Mr. CRAWFORD: It drop down after a time.

This, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SHAW: How you know that? It fall down after it chop down. (Laughter)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, let me explain, because you see, this shows the creativity of our people, none of whom were formally trained. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this depicts right here a mother and her child in the arms of the father. (Holding up a piece of craft item)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. CAMPBELL: Let me see it.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker - no, you can't keep this piece, this is for Thirty-five Thousand ($35,000).

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hold on, is US?

Mr. CRAWFORD: It depends on who. If it's you it's US. (Laughter)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Can you imagine that this came from just a block of wood? Even the hair is obvious. Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* comments/Applause)

Mr. CRAWFORD: So, Mr. Speaker, this is evidence that you don't have to be in Ocho Rios or Montego Bay, or Negril to benefit and participate in the tourism industry. And so we are going to now have this One Craft per Community.

(Applause)

Mr. SHAW: Bobby, Thirty-five Thousand Dollars ($35,000.00) fe dat?

(Inaudible comment from Mr. Warmington)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, Old Harbour - Yes, Warmy.

Mr. Speaker, under this Administration, with this team, diversification does not only mean the diversification of markets.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Dayton, this is for sale?

Mr. CRAWFORD: No, I bought this - everything is for sale at the right price. But they have many, I can arrange for a display outside of Parliament.

Mr. WARMINGTON: He is not buying anything, he just wants free issue.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, under this Administration with this team, diversification is not only diversification of markets, it is diversification of the product and the diversification of the beneficiaries. That is what the Minister meant last year when he said tourism for all. (Applause) To this extent, Mr. Speaker, we are focused on the campaign for community tourism.

There are two approaches to community tourism. There is the community as the attractor, which means that people come for the community, and there is community as an attraction, which means that people come for other reason but visit the community. It is the latter, Mr. Speaker, that I believe has the greatest potential for immediate development in Jamaica.

Dream with me for a minute, Members, about a 'Meet-the-People-Day' once per week, where hotels, by moral suasion, are encouraged not to have competing activities, let's say for a Thursday. This one day per week will help us...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CRAWFORD: One second, a soon your time. I will answer you on the platform.

Mr. Speaker, you will have a book listing categories of possibilities such as health, culture, topography, nature, sport and entertainment. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, if on a Thursday people could say, I am interested in health and so I want to go to Bath, from Ocho Rios; or, I am interested in music, and so I want to go to Trench Town on a tour; or, I am interested in nature and so I want to go up into Holeywell for a hike; or, I

am interested in the gastronomy, and so I want to go down to Border or Boston. And, if you want heritage and history - every Member of Parliament can highlight something that their members are capable to facilitate and sell. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, last year we had two million stopover visitors, over two million stopover visitors. If 50 per cent of these people were to take up the 'Meet-the-People-Day,' that will mean one million persons. If they spent Fifty Dollars ($50.00) on average, that will mean Fifty Million US Dollars (US$50M) that's Five Billion Jamaican Dollars (J$5B). We want it, Mr. Speaker, and we are going for it with the Tourism Policy.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Community Tourism Green Paper has been tabled in Parliament in February of this year, and we embarked on a series of island-wide conversations.

Mr. Speaker, Entertainment is also one of those industries with low barriers to entry that has provided entrepreneurship opportunities for the poor.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by acknowledging that the creative sector is one of the fastest growing. Mr. Speaker, I believe the lack of appreciation for entertainment and its economic potential leads to a misconception that it's merely aimed for recreation and that it's not a business. That's why, Mr. Speaker, many parents often find it hard to support their child if they decide to become an entertainer instead of a lawyer.

It is this perceived unimportance of entertainment, Mr. Speaker, that calls for if the Minister of Education visits all schools he is a good Minister, if the Minister of Health visits all clinics he is a good Minister, but if the Minister with responsibility for entertainment visits events he is an idler. What hypocrisy, Mr. Speaker! (Laughter) What lunacy!

Mr. SHAW: Shell dung...!

(Heckling)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I hear the laugh, Mr. Speaker, but if I was in the Ministry of Agriculture I would have been on all the farms. I only do what my responsibility suggests.

Mr. Speaker, I see some recent cartoons appropriately portraying me in my carnival suit. I only have one problem, Mr. Speaker, with those cartoons.

Mr. SHAW: Look like you dance better than Roger Clarke!

Mr. CRAWFORD: No, I am taking over after he retires.

Mr. Speaker, I have one problem, I have one problem with these cartoons. You see, Mr. Speaker, I am not only a soca warrior, I am a reggae ambassador, I am a dancehall ginnigog, I am a fashion guru, I am a drama king, I am a nerd for the spoken word; I am, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of State with responsibility for Entertainment. What I am not, however, is an arm-chair legislator.

Not only have I been to events, I have been to the studios in the depth of night, I have been to rehearsals, I have been to fittings, I have been to poetry readings, I have

been and will continue to be in the field. The mindset that perceives entertainment as being idle also leads to entertainment events being under-valued and viewed as a nuisance rather than a business.

Mr. Speaker, enforcement of the Noise Abatement Act is one of our greatest examples of social prejudice. Mr. Speaker, I have never seen Jazz and Blues locked off at 2:00 or 12:00, I have never seen Sumfest, I have never seen Sting. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that it is dependent on the level of investment and the connections of the promoter, because as soon as you put on a little thing in Rae Town or as soon as you put on a little round-robin or a dead yard, right now it's being locked off. So, Mr. Speaker, how can we scoff at the argument that there is one law for the rich and one law for the poor?

Mr. Speaker, the intent of the Noise Abatement Act, is to reduce night noise. More and more, Mr. Speaker, we see many persons moving out of reach and still there is a law that affects them negatively.

Further, Mr. Speaker, a nuisance must be resisted by the persons that are "being annoyed". More and more communities that are dependent on activities and events for economic opportunities are being negatively affected. It is to this extent, Mr. Speaker that we are now embarking on economic zones. And I was here last year and we spoke about multiple economic zones - sorry, entertainment zones, because entertainment is a great economic activity. But you see, Mr. Speaker, last year we spoke about multiple entertainment zones, and I must say that I am grateful to - where "Aunty B' come from.

Mr. SHAW: Central St. Catherine.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Central St. Catherine.

Ms. GRANGE: You can just say "Aunty", as usual.

Mr. CRAWFORD: "Aunty B', because you drew me aside and said, "you think outside the box but that one needs a little more thinking." So I put a little more thinking and I discard the box in totality. (Laughter) (Shows the Members a drawing) And now, Mr. Speaker, we are going to be using downtown Kingston, retrofitting the car parks so that they can become now venues, because this is a strong commercial area, not disturbing many places. Where you see the blue and the red areas, these are already car parks and we are currently doing noise and sound testing to see which ones are viable as 24-hour zones disturbing no one, right. (Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, these are the things...

Mr. SAMUDA: What about Gun Boat Beach?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, we are also looking, Mr. Speaker, on the Palisadoes as a zone. The Palisadoes, Mr. Speaker, is already zoned by NEPA.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Ms. HANNA: The Speaker needs to see.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Oh, Speaker waan see.

(Turns the drawing to the Speaker)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CRAWFORD: So, Mr. Speaker, for the first time we are embarking on entertainment zones.

Ms. GRANGE: It's not for the first time, it's a continuation.

(Applause)

Opposition MEMBERS: Aaaah! Aaahh!

(Heckling)

Mr. CRAWFORD: All right. All right. My apologies, Mr. Speaker. For the first time we are implementing entertainment zones.

Mr. Speaker, Cabinet approved the establishment of a National Registry of Entertainment Practitioners in February of this year. It is mandatory for all event promoters to register by July 31, 2014, as they will not be able to secure a place of amusement licence unless they are registered. Registration is free, Mr. Speaker, so I urge all entertainment practitioners to register so that they can access tools of trade, free movement and registration as certified and bona fide practitioners.

Mr. McKENZIE: You need to revisit that.

Mr. CRAWFORD: We will talk.

Mr. McKENZIE: You are watering down the powers of the local authority.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, Cabinet has also approved - one of the greatest supporters of the entertainment Ministry is the Minister of Local Government...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. CRAWFORD: No. All we are saying is the Local Government Ministry will continue; however, the persons who apply must be registered.

Mr. McKENZIE: The law must be amended.

Mr. CRAWFORD: We are in the process of amending the law.

Mr. Speaker, Cabinet has approved an event rating system and this system is intended to be the guide for entertainment practitioners and the public and what should be offered at public events.

Mr. Speaker, far too often we hear that the music sell off, yet in spite of it selling off...

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

(Cross talk)

Mr. WARMINGTON: You can't tell him no, that's his right.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker...

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: Hold on, Mr. McKenzie, the Member is on his feet.

Mr. McKENZIE: I am rising on a point of order. I need clarification, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: No, no, what is the point of order?

Mr. McKENZIE: The Minister, Mr. Speaker, raised in his presentation the requirements that being registered by the 31st of July in order to be eligible to gain a Place of Amusement Licence. The Minister needs to advise the House what is the position.

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr. McKENZIE: Places of Amusement Act, Mr. Speaker, does not require what the Minister has just mentioned. All the Minister needs to say is whether or not if the law has

been amended to facilitate it. The Minister can't make a statement like this and just leave it like that, Mr. Speaker. It needs some clarification.

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie, I have heard the Minister say they are in the process of amending the law.

Mr. McKENZIE: No, but, Mr. Speaker, how can this be achieved by the 31st of July.

(Cross talk)

How you mean come on.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Sit down!

Mr. SHAW: Bushman, keep quiet!

Mr. McKENZIE: You are a commoner.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: I know, but I instruct you, so sit down.

Mr. McKENZIE: Clarify it, Minister. Foolishness!

The SPEAKER: No point of order. Mr. Crawford, continue.

JAMAICA MUSICAL ART

Mr. CRAWFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, for too long we hear that the music sell off, yet in spite of it selling off we barely see the profits. Cabinet has offered the need to protect Jamaican musical art form and the country's cultural heritage. There has been a joint submission between the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, the Ministry of Tourism, Entertainment and the Ministry of Youth and Culture to have reggae inscribed on the UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. We have applied for trademark protection of our reggae, Mr. Speaker. Not that we are going to, not that we are thinking of, but for the first time we have applied and also applied for other authentic Jamaican musical art forms. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, events have proven to be a significant magnet for tourists starting with Reggae Sunsplash in 1978. In the tradition of using events as a magnet for stimulating tourism last year, I introduced twin concept of 90 Days of Summer and Reggae Month Kingston for February. This was to, Mr. Speaker assist with the variation in tourism demand. There is not only time variation but there is place variation; because while February is seen as the high season on the North Coast it is the low levels of occupancy in Kingston.

Reggae Month Kingston for February Project, Mr. Speaker, the first time Government has mounted a targeted overseas promotional programme centered around Reggae Month. We facilitated Korean media professionals Haha and Skull. Mr. Speaker, the inclusion of these Korean media professionals provide an opportunity for Jamaica to be exposed to the large market in Asia. The show has the largest market.

Mr. Speaker, I now move to the programme initially called 90 Days of Summer. Mr. Speaker, after market feedback we have rebranded it Jamrock Summer, 90 Days, 90 Ways to Experience Jamaica. And here, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Kamal Bankey who has been working very hard with his Committee in putting forward the Jamrock Summer 90

Days, 90 Ways. (Applause) He is here in the House as well, Mr. Speaker.

The launch of this project is set for July 16 in Montego Bay, this July 16 in Montego Bay. Intensive promotional programmes using a variety of media aimed at multiple markets to attract tourists to Jamaica. We have used a local company to manage the web and social media promotion. Jamrock Summer Committee is to embark on one of the largest underground promotional campaigns ever executed in the history of the nation, targeting specific hot spots for Jamaica centric travel. We will incorporate a college tour component that will target 14,000,000 undergraduate population of which 1,000,000 travels for Spring Break. Heavy use of social media that reward students sharing with their network. We will further unveil the Concentration Weeks and the full Jamrock Summer Package at the launch in July 16.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment intends to capitalize on the output of our artistes who tour the world. What, Mr. Speaker, is the aim of marketing? The aim of marketing is to move a person from attention and interest to desire and action, taking therefore our potential customers through the process to acting. Mr. Speaker, our artistes already have followers who have great interest in Jamaica. It is therefore our intention to use these artistes to move them to action.

Mr. Speaker, I now move close to the end of my presentation and speak to exposure. Mr. Speaker, the first time I made a presentation I spoke to Art in the Park, it was ridiculed; it was claimed to be another 'shell down', it was claimed to be a party. The first Arts in the Park featured the likes of Chronixx, Protoje, Nomads, Roots Underground and Tessanne Chin, and this is evident that the selection was on point. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the second staging of Arts in the Park decided to focus on the spoken word and has borne much fruit and is worth mentioning. This event that was ridiculed, that was stated to be another 'shell down' event, Mr. Speaker, invited two persons from Bristol showcasing the Jamaican poetry. Out of this, Mr. Speaker, Bristol has invited Jamaican poet laureate Professor Mervyn Morris at their Yardstick Festival and Bristol Festival of Literature. Four of the talents that were exposed have also been invited at the Yardstick Festival and Bristol Festival of Literature. (Applause) The Bristol Poetry Institute, a programme of the University of Bristol, has also invited Professor Morris to speak at their Annual Public Reading and Performance during October.

Another tangible outcome of Arts in the Park which was supposedly a 'shell down' event is a cultural collaboration between the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment and the City of Bristol called Jamaica Rising. Mr. Speaker, when we have the next staging of Arts in the Park it will showcase gospel music. And while I am not Sista Skully, I want that date to hurry up. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, speaking about poet laureate, last year in my contribution to the Sectoral Debate I outlined plans of naming a poet laureate of Jamaica. Thanks are in order to

Miss Justine Henzell who, as a member of the Board, ensures that she fought for that to be implemented.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that on the May 21, 2014 eminent academic and renowned poet Professor Mervyn Morris was invested as the Poet Laureate of Jamaica, and we are grateful for the joined-up government between us and the Ministry of Youth and Culture. (Applause) This is the first person to hold this distinguished title in over 60 years and the first government-invested poet laureate in our history. As poet laureate Professor Morris said he will help in the development of our art form and promote recognition of literary arts.

Mr. Speaker, last year I announced that we will be seeking to address the deficiency of entertainment venues by improving existing spaces. This would create access to venues for creative producers, promoters in particular for drama. I am pleased to announce that Jamaica College, St. Andrew High, Guys Hill High and Manchester High have been chosen for improvement for this year starting in September, and we are grateful for the collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Speaker, an additional benefit that will be addressed by the venue improvement is the limited sound and lighting expertise in Jamaica. Despite the increasing numbers of music studios and rising number of film makers, it is important to note that the Ministry of Education CSEC curriculum in Theater Arts, including drama, dance and stage craft - and before now, no school in Jamaica has ever been able to complete the stage craft component of CSEC. What we have done, Mr. Speaker, is to allow for a Jamaican student to complete CSEC Theater Art in stage craft for the first time. (Applause) And we are looking at four more schools, so something might be happening down in St. Elizabeth soon - B.B. Coke. I hear the Leader said Haile Selassie.

(THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. Speaker, finally the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment continues to break records by our historic achievements. Mr. Speaker, we have welcomed over 2,000,000 stop-over visitors for the first time; we secured airlifts out of Russia for the first time; Jamaica has been named Chairman of the Executive Council of the UN WTO for the first time; we have tabled the Timeshare Legislation for the first time; we have tabled the Community Tourism Legislation for the first time; we have tabled and established the Tourism Linkage Hub for the first time; we have named an official Poet Laureate for the first time; we have introduced an entertainment event rating system for the first time; we have established the authentic Jamaica Brand for craft vendors only for the first time; we have established a National Registry of Entertainment Practitioners for the first time; we are funding the improvement of performing arts venues in

schools for the first time; we have introduced the Arts in the Park initiative to Jamaica for the first time.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, these successes are the combination often referred to as Batman and Robin, because this combination is a winning combination. And on that note, I thank you. (Applause) (Referring to Dr. McNeill as Batman and himself as Robin)

(Cross talk)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker...

(The Speaker gavels)

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the recommittal of the item Notices of Motions Given Orally.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal of the item Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY
(Recommitted)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move to introduce and have read a fist time a Bill shortly entitled: "The General Consumption Tax (Amendment) Act, 2014".

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we revert to Public Business, the second speaker.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Wheatley.

(Applause)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this most important feature of our Westminster system of governance. The Sectoral Debate affords members an opportunity to bring key aspects of national life into sharp focus, and be the voice of those we have been elected to serve.

It is important, Mr. Speaker, that as responsible members of this Honourable House, we remain mindful of the fact that this exercise is more about the people, than we ourselves. Partisanship, cheerleading, point-scoring and empty rhetoric, should take a back seat to the real issues, Mr. Speaker.

A MEMBER: Yes, yes.

Dr. WHEATLEY: I am more concerned, Mr. Speaker, about our capacity to fix more roads across Jamaica, bring water to more homes, provide more job opportunities for our young people; moving them, Mr. Speaker, from poverty to prosperity, and from the perspective, Mr. Speaker, of my portfolio, enhance the application of ICT and reduce costs to consumers by promoting competition in the telecoms sector.

Mr. Speaker, focusing on the real issues and engaging in honest debate can only serve to enhance our democracy...

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...and solidify, Mr. Speaker, the platform for holding people accountable. That, Mr. Speaker, is what my presentation is about this afternoon; holding people accountable.

Mr. Speaker, I am starting with the man in the mirror. I'm starting by holding myself accountable.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Michael Jackson.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, I must first thank the great geometrician of the universe for guidance, protection and inspiration which keeps me fortified as I execute the work I was elected to do.

I thank my family and friends for being that pillar of support on which I can always depend.

Mr. Speaker, I must thank in a special way, my constituents - the hardworking men and women of South Central St. Catherine. (Applause) We are members of a family. Despite two years of hardship and sufferation, we have bonded together and remain steadfast in developing our constituency.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Dr. WHEATLEY: We have rehabilitated a number of roads and other infrastructure in the constituency...

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. McKENZIE: A misfortune why yuh deh yah.

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...facilitated socio-economic enablement, fostered a culture of community involvement through community-based organizations and increased educational opportunities for the young people in South Central St. Catherine.

(Applause)

Dr. WHEATLEY: This year, Mr. Speaker, we provided scholarships to a number of students in promoting e-learning through the Go-GSAT and Caribbean Exams platforms. This, Mr. Speaker, is what being accountable is about.

Let me also thank, Mr. Speaker, my three Councillors; Councillor Owen Palmer of the Homestead Division, Councillor Jennifer Hull of the Horizon Park Division, and Councillor Hawthrone Thompson of the Sydenham Division.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Where are they?

Dr. WHEATLEY: They're right there.

Mr. McKENZIE: Nuh worry bout - dem nuh PNP doh yuh nuh.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: They're Labourites?

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...the Leader of the Opposition has entrusted me with this responsibility; and let me thank him for the confidence he reposes in me. (Applause)

I must commend you, Mr. Speaker, on the effective manner in which you have been presiding. The Clerk, Assistant Clerk and other members of staff of the Houses of Parliament must also be commended for their professionalism and diligent effort.

Mr. Speaker, let me also specially recognize:

- Members of the Shadow Cabinet. I'm honoured to serve alongside them.
- My Parliamentary Colleagues on both sides.
- The Deputy Opposition Spokesman on Science, ICTs, Digital Society Development and the Environment - Councillor Duane Smith of the Chancery Hall Division.

- Stakeholders in my portfolio - the Telecoms Sector; the Environmental Advocates.
- My Constituency Executive and other support groups.
- My personal and support stafff especially my constituency staff, Mr. Speaker, Miss Sophia Deere, Miss Georgine Saunders, Ms. Winsome Blake, Mr. Vernon Campbell and Mr. Michael Marlyn. (Applause)
- Our financial partners in the constituency, Mr. Speaker.
- The various schools and community-based organizations that serve to enhance the social fabric of the constituency.
- The various agencies with whom I partner in uplifting the lives of the residents of South Central St. Catherine - the SDC, the National Works Agency, JSIF and others.

I truly appreciate their support over the years, Mr. Speaker, and have every confidence that we will continue working together as we bring hope, inspiration and upliftment to the lives of our Jamaican brothers and sisters. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to have oversight responsibility for sectors that are critical to national development and at the heart of everyday life. The sectors to which I refer, Mr. Speaker, all have key roles to play if we are to make that quantum leap forward as a nation, and before long, Mr. Speaker, make this country the place of choice to live, work, raise our families and do business.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes, good, phrase, good phrase.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, sound environmental management, the development of a digital society, the promotion of a knowledge-based economy and the harnessing of innovation through cutting-edge scientific applications, are examples of the ways in which we should be leveraging national resources for our economic prosperity. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. WHEATLEY: Let it be clear, Mr. Speaker, that if we, as a small developing country are to be brought into the development mainstream, integrate ourselves into the global economy through technology and match wits with the rest of the world, Science, ICTs, the Digital Society and the Environment will have to be at the forefront.

Mr. McKENZIE: Hear! Hear! Yuh hear dat Minister of everything?

Dr. WHEATLEY: These areas, Mr. Speaker, are not only key to national advancement, but will be integral going forward, in unleashing Jamaican talent, creating jobs for our people and generating wealth as a result of owning the technology behind innovative products and being in a position, Mr. Speaker, to assert intellectual property rights.

The portfolio I monitor, Mr. Speaker, has the enormous potential to spur backward and forward linkages; increase output at different levels of our economy and most importantly, Mr. Speaker, trigger that unlocking of national potential for which this country has been

yearning. Mr. Speaker, we take nothing away from the more traditional sectors such as:

- Agriculture
- Tourism
- Manufacturing
- Banking and
- Insurance

But it is quite clear, Mr. Speaker, that if we do not quickly transition from being mere consumers of products and services, to being innovators and producers of products and the technology underpinning them, we will not be making the kinds of strides we need to make to turn our fortunes as a country around. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Solid argument from a clean Labourite.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Let us for a moment, Mr. Speaker, think of the tremendous opportunities we will be providing for our young people if we own and develop more of the technology that is applied in the agro-processing.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Pickersgill)

Dr. WHEATLEY: The foreign exchange, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. McKENZIE: Ole man si dung an tap di nize.

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...we would retain if more of the software used in the financial services sector were produced right here in Jamaica.

The significant energy savings, Mr. Speaker, our manufacturers would realise if more of our people develop and deliver alternative energy solutions that are less costly than the ones now on the market.

Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, we on this side are about more action than talk...

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes!

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...after all, Mr. Speaker, we all agree that talk is cheap.

Mr. McKENZIE: Yah man.

Dr. WHEATLEY: And we have seen, Mr. Speaker, more talk, talk, talk, than actual work, work, work, have not taken us anywhere, Mr. Speaker, the last two years.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is as though Science, ICT, the Digital Society and the Environment have suffered from two missing years!

And so, Mr. Speaker, since assuming monitoring responsibility for this portfolio in November last year, I've made it my duty, Mr. Speaker, to set the wheels in motion and hit the ground running. I have made it my priority to get on with the work, because there is no time for delay.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side are not going to wait until we retake the reins of Government to do the people's work and concentrate our efforts on creating a better Jamaica. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Hear! Hear!

Dr. WHEATLEY: As the Prime Minister in waiting said, Mr. Speaker, we are being diligent, methodical and strategic in our thoughts and actions; doing the things that are required to ensure that upon assuming office as Government, Mr. Speaker, which I must say won't be too long from now...

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes!

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...we would have been so familiar with our portfolio

responsibilities, so on top of our game, Mr. Speaker, so poised for success, and so in touch with the concerns, needs and desires of the Jamaican people, that we will hit the ground running. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Hear! Hear! Proactive!

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, we will be a Government of success...

Mr. McKENZIE: Hear! Hear!

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...a Government that upholds procedure and principle; a Government that is fit-for-purpose, Mr. Speaker, and a Government that is led by an effective leader. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we're starting from now to demonstrate to the people of Jamaica that we have a blue-print for success and a roadmap for development. That roadmap, Mr. Speaker, sets out where we are going, but more importantly, it delineates how we are going to get there. Our blue-print, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. McKENZIE: Tek lick!

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...will enable us enable us to rescue this nation of ours and improve the lives of those we serve.

Mr. Speaker, in harnessing a culture of action rather than talk, we've assembled a technical support team, comprising patriotic Jamaicans; persons who are diligent, professional, knowledgeable and highly experienced. This technical support team partners with me as we immerse ourselves, Mr. Speaker, in the portfolio and build capacity within the ranks of the Parliamentary Opposition.

Mr. McKENZIE: Hear! Hear!

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, we meet regularly, engage in meaningful discussions, undertake robust research, critically analyze the policies and actions of the Government, and put solutions on the table.

Mr. Speaker, we are a solutions-oriented Opposition. We are not only in the business of objecting to things we are not in agreement with; we are in the business of putting solutions forward.

Let me salute the various ICT stakeholders, Mr. Speaker, as well as the many entrepreneurs, academics, scientists, and environmentalists with whom we have met. We are partners at the table; engaging in sector-improving dialogue, Mr. Speaker. Our relationships are predicated on mutual respect, shared interests, common concerns and the advancement of Jamaica and its people.

Mr. Speaker, I have already outlined the ultimate objective we should be seeking to attain as a country from a scientific perspective. We should be challenging ourselves and making the kind of investments that will see us achieving more as a country, where science and technology is concerned. Greater levels of research, Mr. Speaker, more strategic focus on training and development of our human resources, as well as a socio-cultural transformation which sees more of our people readily embracing science are needed at this time.

MARIJUANA/NATURAL MEDICINE

Mr. Speaker, while we have tremendous gaps to bridge, we must note that Jamaica is

not short of proponents, experts and entrepreneurs that have been making strides in the natural and applied sciences. There is no more compelling example of this, Mr. Speaker, than the advances we have made in the exploitation of indigenous plants and other resources occurring in our natural environment.

Distinguished Jamaican scholars like Professors Manley West, Errol Morrison, Peter Figueroa, Henry Lowe and Helen Asemota, have been leading the way in medicinal research, genetic engineering, epidemiological work and scientific entrepreneurship.

Truth be told, Mr. Speaker, from our grandparents and parents who extolled the virtues of cerasse, lemon grass, peppermint, ginger, guinea hen weed and moringa, as they looked to these herbs, Mr. Speaker, in applying remedies to various ailments, to the more sophisticated and innovative scientists...

Mr. McKENZIE: Marijuana.

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...our people, Mr. Speaker, have long recognized the value of these plant materials.

Mr. Speaker the gains we have secured in exploiting these resources, derived from our natural environment cannot be replicated can be replicated, Mr. Speaker, in other plants.

Marijuana more properly known as ganja is one such plant, Mr. Speaker, and at this time I wish to put the spotlight on it squarely.

Mr. Speaker, there can be no denying that marijuana use sparks considerable controversy as a result of socio, historic, cultural and other biases. Many are wary of the psychoactive effects. The Opposition, Mr. Speaker, believes that a referendum is the best way to decide whether to legalize ganja or not. But, Mr. Speaker, the Government cannot now.

While one cannot be certain as to which way the electorate would go in a referendum, Mr. Speaker, what we are certain of, is that now is the time for ganja reform. (Applause) First of all, Mr. Speaker, we need to move forth with as a country in decriminalizing the possession of small quantities of ganja. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour and Social Security came to this Honourable House with packages containing overseas farm work applications two weeks ago. He was quite clear, Mr. Speaker, in indicating that persons with criminal records need not apply. Now the question is, Mr. Speaker, how many of our constituents poor, unemployed, semi-skilled youths are not able to apply. Mr. Speaker, it is madness for us to be destroying the future of so many of our people, poor Jamaican youths in particular, Mr. Speaker, by giving them a criminal record for just one spliff. (Applause)

A MEMBER: The first time I agree with you.

Dr. WHEATLEY: You going to agree some more, man, don't worry yourself. Early days.

Mr. Speaker, we are urging Resident Magistrates to exercise greater discretion in our Courts as it relates to finger printing of persons especially, Mr. Speaker, first time offenders convicted of the possession of small quantities of ganja. (Applause)

What is required at this time, Mr. Speaker, is a more robust and aggressive programme of public education. We must spare no effort as a country and as responsible members of our communities in sensitizing our people to the risk associated with smoking. Let me be quite clear, Mr. Speaker, while the Opposition supports the decriminalization of the possession of small quantities of the herb, we discourage smoking as a practice. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the debate regarding the value of ganja and the significant medicinal properties is one that is already settled. Marijuana, Mr. Speaker, is a most valuable herb.

Mr. Speaker, there is considerable research being done on the medicinal properties of marijuana. The reservation among many has to do with its psychoactive effects

A MEMBER: Don't talk too much about medicine, you know.

Dr. WHEATLEY: However, Mr. Speaker, advances in research, and scientific breakthroughs have led Mr. Speaker, to the development of a non-psychoactive strain of the cannabis plant call Charlotte's Web. This particular strain, Mr. Speaker, is low in THC. THC, Mr. Speaker, is the psychoactive component of marijuana and it is high, Mr. Speaker, in CDB, the non-psychoactive component with considerable medicinal potential.

Mr. Speaker, this specialized strain of medical hemp has helped numerous pediatric patients suffered from epilepsy lead normal lives. Mr. Speaker, in Jamaica approximately ten in a thousand persons suffer from epilepsy.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at applying medicinal marijuana to the treatment of epilepsy, Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Minister of Health would welcome this; you will see a reduction in the strain on our health system, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we do not need to look abroad for examples of commendable and pioneering work in this area. Jamaica's very own the late Professor Manley West, engaged m academic work that highlighted enormous potential and value of the herb. His pioneering work, Mr. Speaker, saw the emergence of Canasol and Asmasol, potent drugs applied in the treatment of glaucoma and asthma respectively.

Medical literature, Mr. Speaker, supports the theory that the neuroprotective and anti-inflammatory properties of Cannabinoids may also have positive therapeutic benefits in both type one and type two diabetes. Multiple sclerosis and a wide array of other diseases that collectively have a profound impact on the physical and economic health of the Jamaican people.

Mr. Speaker, just to emphasize the seriousness of this, Mr. Speaker, approximately 15 per cent of our population suffers from diabetes. Mr. Speaker, our scientists and researchers have stood in the forefront of medical ganja, we were leading the way to ganja reform through medicinal applications at one point. We have fallen behind, Mr. Speaker, and are at risk of being

left out completely if we do not get our act together and get it together quickly.

We need as a matter of urgency, Mr. Speaker, to put in place a legal framework for the medicinal use of marijuana. This framework, Mr. Speaker, will regulate the production, harvesting, distribution and medicinal application of the plant as well as, Mr. Speaker, to establish protocols governing the relationship between the suppliers and users.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is the lone global location that is clearly identifiable with the brand 'ganja', many countries are now seeking to capitalize on the many benefits of legalization. Uruguay, Mr. Speaker, Ghana, Romania, Canada, Brazil and let us not forget, Mr. Speaker, that the vast majority of states in the United States of America have already acknowledge the economic and medicinal value of ganja.

Mr. Speaker, in jurisdictions where marijuana is legalized whether for medicinal or recreational purposes, the result including increased tax revenues, crimes and fines being replaced with jobs and revenues and interest and investment, Mr. Speaker, in bio-technological research.

Mr. Speaker, a legal framework can make what seems to be impossible quite possible. Others have managed to do it, why can't we. Mr. Speaker, it is fulltime we free up the herb for medicinal purposes.

(Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Free up the something,

ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT

Mr. WHEATELY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to focus attention at this time on the environment. Enlightened and responsible people take environmental management seriously, and actively seek ways to mitigate the effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister with responsibility for the Environment and Climate Change Portfolio in his contribution to the Sectoral Debate last week, spoke at length to the varying levels of multilateral support coming our way to treat with climate change. The truth is, Mr. Speaker, we got nothing beyond that from his presentation. We hear talk ever so often about joined-up Government. But we must ask, Mr. Speaker, shouldn't the joined-up Government in this instance between the Ministry of Local Government and the Environment be at work regarding the appropriate disposal of waste and the timely cleaning of drains and gullies. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, if there was true joined-up Government and action instead of mere talk the raging flood water unleashed in Montego Bay a few weeks ago would not have been as menacing as they were.

Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, our activities as inhabitants of the natural and built-environment, have increased the amount of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. Mr. Speaker, climate change is a real phenomenon, and the Opposition recognizes that the best and the most effective tool in the

battle against the effects of climate change is managing our environment in a more responsible way and it starts with the people themselves, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side understand that the change must begin with the Jamaican people, our attitude, mindset and action must change... (Applause) ...and in every way, Mr. Speaker, reflect greater sensitivity and care for the environment.

We must engage the ecosystem around us in a manner, Mr. Speaker that not only preserves its inhabitance but makes it more conducive to the growth and prosperity for generations to come. This, Mr. Speaker, is what sustainable development and environmental best practices are all about.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we expect to have heard from the Environment and Climate Change Minister on the volume of work that is being done to transform the mindset of our people because this, Mr. Speaker, is where rubber hits the road.

Mr. Speaker, on the question of mindset, there seems to be an air of antagonism if not downright hostility exhibited by the Government towards non-governmental organizations.

Mr. Speaker, we refer specifically to environmental interest in this instance. Those men and women who dedicated their lives to raising the profile of environmental advocacy here in Jamaica (Applause) and educating us, Mr. Speaker, for the ill-effects of poor environmental management.

Mr. Speaker, it is as though the Government is not sufficiently seized of the concerns these groups have, the legitimacy of those concerns and as a result, Mr. Speaker, is paralyzed in pursuing courses of action that reflect greater appreciation for their advocacy.

Mr. Speaker, the adversarial relationship between the Government and the environmentalist is not doing the country any good. This antagonistic relationship must end, Mr. Speaker. The Government must demonstrate through its actions that it recognizes that development can take place where there is as little adverse environmental impact as possible. (Applause)

Sustainable development, Mr. Speaker, is about balancing development interest with consideration for the environment. Mr. Speaker, we must challenge ourselves to re-consider how we are pursuing our development objectives, we must develop, but we must do so on a sustainable basis, Mr. Speaker.

GOAT ISLAND

Mr. Speaker, let me, for a few seconds reference the Goat Islands as case in point. The proposed development at Goat Islands for the construction of a transshipment port as part of a Logistic Hub has been fraught with controversy. The manner, Mr. Speaker, in which the Government has being proceeding in respect of this development raises more questions than answers. The Government's approach leaves much to be desired and illustrate precisely why antagonism and combativeness are characterizing the relationship between itself and key environmental interest. When you think about

it, Mr. Speaker, references to two little lizards as just one example, will not serve to improve the current relationship. (Applause) In fact, Mr. Speaker, it only makes things worse. That remark not only smacks of arrogance but it is highly unfortunate and downright offensive.

(Applause)

The Goat Islands proposal, Mr. Speaker, and the attendant negotiations have not been as transparent as they ought to be. We do not get a sense, Mr. Speaker, as citizens of this country, stakeholders in our right that we have been kept abreast in our own developments.

Mr. Speaker, we must be advised of the commitments the Government has already made to the Chinese and the extent of the environmental dislocation these commitments are likely to have. It is highly unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister has not been forthcoming in clarifying the Government's position on the environmental issues raised thus far.

Mr. Speaker, we have no assurance that the Government has exhausted all the options available and explored all the alternatives to sighting a transshipment port in an area designated as a biosphere reserve.

We remain resolute, Mr. Speaker in our stance that there must be full disclosure regarding the planned development of Goat Islands and the ongoing negotiations with the Chinese.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, our position is that the Government should proceed no further in relation to the proposed Goat Islands development until an independent and credible environmental impact assessment is carried out and made available for consideration. (Applause)

Opposition MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, we are insisting that the entity undertaking the environmental impact assessment should be different from the entity which conducted the environmental scoping study. This, Mr. Speaker, will enhance the integrity of the process.

Opposition MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

(Cross talk)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, just to support a point made by my colleague earlier, Mr. Speaker, we need to ensure that any entity, Mr. Speaker, which will be undertaking an environmental impact assessment is not contracted directly by the potential investor.

Mr. BARTLETT: That's right.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Such an entity, Mr. Speaker, should simply pay over the required resources to a regulatory agency, but not be involved in the process beyond that.

Mr. BARTLETT: That makes sense. That's transparency. Very simple.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that like me, many would wish to have heard something substantial from the Environment Minister on the question of a coal-fired energy plant. To the extent, Mr. Speaker, that the Government is inclined to facilitate the desire of the Chinese investors for a coal-fired facility at Goat Island, one wonders, Mr. Speaker, what's the Minister's reaction and contribution to those discussions were?

Mr. Speaker, we could debate this issue till the cows come home. My question in relation to this proposed coal-fired facility, Mr. Speaker at Goat Islands is simply this: how many of you, Members here in this Honourable House, how many of you are prepared to live within a three to five-mile radius of a coal-fired energy plant? How many of you would be prepared to countenance the smoke, smog and other nuisances associated with such a facility? That is the question I ask this Honourable House.

Mr. BARTLETT: That's the question, that's the question.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended enough to allow him to complete his presentation.

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Wheatley.

(Cross talk/Applause)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, reference is often made to the waste disposal facility at Riverton City as a landfill. The truth is, Mr. Speaker, what we have at Riverton City is a dump rather than a landfill. It is quite sad, Mr. Speaker, that the only time the Riverton [City] Dump comes up for public discussion is when there is an outbreak of fire and the overhang of the some nuisance for many days, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McKENZIE: Weeks!

Dr. WHEATLEY: Weeks. For too long, Mr. Speaker, the Dump has been operating without an environmental permit this, Mr. Speaker, in spite of concerns and complaints regarding adverse public health and environmental effects that are likely.

The press reported, Mr. Speaker, the Chief Executive Officer of the National Environment and Planning Agency as saying that his agency will not penalize the National Solid Waste Management Authority given the financial constraint under which it is operating. I want to ask, Mr. Speaker, the Chief Executive Officer of NEPA, does he allow the same level of latitude to other persons who are acting in contravention of the law as it relates to environmental issues? I say, Mr. Speaker, *wah* good *fi* goose, good *fi* gander.

(Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Hear, hear!

Mr. PRYCE: And *weh* fit alligator, fit crocodile.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, JET CEO, Diana McCaulay was quite correct in her response when she described the situation as totally unacceptable. After all, Mr. Speaker, NEPA has a responsibility to enforce environmental laws and should insist on timelines for the National Solid Waste Management Authority to comply.

We are alarmed, Mr. Speaker, that while we have been hearing so much from the Minister of Health about the danger of

cigarette smoking, we have not heard from him in a commensurate way on the threat to these children. Mr. Minister of Health, this is a public health matter. Again, I ask, where is joined-up Government at work?

Mr. PRYCE: Commensurate?

Dr. WHEATLEY: About the smoke. Controlling the smoke.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: Man, mind *yuh* teeth dem drop out, man. Stop disrespect the man hiss *yuh* teeth ... weh the man a sey.

Dr. WHEATLEY: From a perspective of responsible environmental management, Mr. Speaker, we propose the following:

1) The conversion of the Riverton City Dump into a green landfill, Mr. Speaker; a true landfill.
2) The development of a policy of waste separation.
3) The development, Mr. Speaker, of an Electronic-Waste Policy.

This, Mr. Speaker, is very important if you consider the number of electrical waste such as, television sets, radios, a/c units, refrigerators, batteries...

Mr. BARTLETT: Cables.

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...and cell phones, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. BARTLETT: Yes, yes.

Dr. WHEATLEY: And if you look at the fact that the consumption cycle is just that, just a cycle.

Mr. BARTLETT: Yes, yes.

Dr. WHEATLEY: It virtually never ends, Mr. Speaker, an e-Waste management framework will serve as a catalyst for new industry and new economic activities which will meaningfully incorporate persons now foraging from the dump.

Mr. BARTLETT: Yes, go to Cape Town and see how they do it.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, a breakwater system is being prescribed by the authorities as an erosion control agent to be applied in beach restoration and the protection of the Negril shoreline. I am sorry that the Minister of Tourism who is the Member of Parliament is not present in the House as we speak on this matter, because it is sad that the Minister of Tourism who has portfolio responsibility for that area and knowing that the Negril tourism product contributes 28 per cent of our tourism income and he himself being the Member of Parliament for that area is so silent on the matter. Something is wrong. Something is wrong there and we need to look into it. What is at the bottom of this? Why is the MP and the Minister so silent on this matter?

Mr. BARTLETT: Conspiracy of silence, yes. (Laughter)

Dr. WHEATLEY: A conspiracy of silence.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, the proposal to use ShoreLock has come [in] for considerable criticism and is staunchly opposed by environmental interests and Negril stakeholders as a result, Mr. Speaker, of its over its proposed use. The approach, Mr. Speaker, is tantamount to artificially creating something akin to beach rock. Hardening a shoreline can actually make erosion worse. So

even if the product does what it says, it may or may not solve the problem.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, the contentious Negril breakwater system is another example of how not to pursue public policy. It further illustrates, Mr. Speaker, why there is this apparent wedge between the Government and environmental interests, persons who are supposed to be its partners, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it cannot be that we have what are supposed to be consultations yet when all is said and done, the concerns and submissions made by those with whom you have consulted, especially, Mr. Speaker, when they are quite workable are not taken onboard, or in any way reflected in the decisions you have ultimately take. Mr. Speaker, beach nourishment is an option that should be given serious consideration. (Applause)

Opposition MEMBERS: Hear, hear! Solid point.

ICT

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, I want to now turn my attention to perhaps one of the most important economic sectors for Jamaica, ICT. Mr. Speaker, I listened to the presentations of my counterparts: Minister Paulwell and Minister Robinson last year with cautious optimism. There were a number of announcements made, Mr. Speaker. An ICT Road Map complete with objectives and timelines was presented. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today void of the optimism. That optimism, Mr. Speaker, is now replaced with concern and much disappointment.

Mr. Speaker let me be frank, direct and honest. Notwithstanding, a few areas of progress, one has no choice but to give the current Administration a failing grade when it comes to its stewardship of the ICT sector.

Opposition MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, let me bring to your attention the World Economic Forum's Annual Global Information Technology Report - GITR for short, Mr. Speaker. This Report analyses the latest developments in a country's ICT sector. It examines how these developments impact national development and benchmarks the country's performance by way of what is referred to as the Networked Readiness Index, the NRI. Mr. Speaker, since 2012 Jamaica's NRI has fallen 12 places from 74th to 86th. Mr. Speaker, if you look at our ranking compared to our Caribbean counterparts, we come out ahead only in front of Guyana, Haiti and Cuba. Mr. Speaker, Barbados is currently ranked at 55, while Puerto Rico is at an enviable 21. Mr. Speaker, between 2012 and 2014, two missing years where ICT in Jamaica is concerned, we have seen significant falloff in some very important areas. I'll list them, Mr. Speaker. We have seen a significant fall off as it relates to:

- National e-Participation
- Legal framework & laws relating to ICT
- Intellectual property protection
- Government's vision of ICT and its importance to future economic growth
- Government's success in ICT promotion

- Government's online service offerings
- Government's procurement of advanced technology; and last but not least, Mr. Speaker,
- Venture capital availability.

Mr. McKENZIE: *Yuh* have whole heap to respond to.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, having pointed out these areas above, I want to remind the House of the ICT Roadmap presented last year. I do this, Mr. Speaker, because I think it is important to hold the Ministers accountable by stating what their targets were and tie this to the current WEF rankings. The goals set out, Mr. Speaker, in the Roadmap were no doubt guided by some of the WEF indices, but none, Mr. Speaker, were actually achieved.

Mr. Speaker let me acknowledge the Government's continued roll-out of community hotspots; a very important component of our universal access services initiative. (Applause) Of note, Mr. Speaker, are the Digital Jam Conferences, Kingston Animation Festival, re-branding and relaunch of e-Gov Jamaica Limited, formerly Fiscal Services, the strengthening of our Cyber Crimes legislation, policies and establishment of the CIRT. Mr. Speaker, last but not least the start up of the Tablets in Schools initiative. All of these things, Mr. Speaker, I have highlighted were all part of the ICT Roadmap and were all slated for completion by the end of the last fiscal year.

But Mr. Speaker, let me now outline the major items in the ICT Roadmap that based on their own timelines the Ministers have failed to complete - and I pluralize the word "Minister" there, because I speaking to both ministers. I'm dealing with both of them one time. Mr. Speaker,

- They have failed to table and promulgate the ICT Act, Mr. Speaker;
- They have failed to table the Data Protection Act;
- They have failed to amend the outdated Electronic Transaction Act;
- They have failed to table the proposal for the creation of the Single ICT Regulator;

Mr. McKENZIE: So much things!

Dr. WHEATLEY: They have failed to appoint the Government's CIO;

- They have failed to complete the GOJ ICT assessment;
- They have failed to complete the Number Portability Implementation;
- They have failed to successfully auction 700 Mhz. Spectrum;
- They have failed to attract a new telecommunications operator;

Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McKENZIE: Minister of announcement, man.

Mr. HENRY: Why yuh didn't bring a dunce cap?

Mr. McKENZIE: Minister of announcement.

(Cross talk)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Clearly, Mr. Speaker, by all indications while we have heard many announcements, the Ministers have not been working, working, working. They have been doing a lot of talking, talking, talking and

sleeping, sleeping, sleeping. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that when Minister Robinson makes his contribution to the debate tomorrow, we will no doubt hear more announcements and promises...

Mr. CHUCK: Yuh hear that, Julian?

Dr. WHEATLEY: ...maybe even adjustments to his roadmap, to avoid the potholes encountered in the previous year.

Mr. McKENZIE: A *nuh* pothole *dem deh*, man.

Dr. WHEATLEY: But I say to you, Minister, in the parlance of a popular song from our era - because we're both young men, what we need now is "Action, not a bag a mouth".

Mr. McKENZIE Trust me.

Opposition MEMBER: All right.

(Cross talk)

Mr. PRYCE: ...need a new song.

Dr. WHEATLEY: I have to speak to the Minister of Entertainment about that.

Mr. McKENZIE: It has meaning, it has meaning.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, it comes as no surprise, when one considers these glaring failures that our current standing in the World Economic Forum's Global Information Technology Report is where it is.

Mr. Speaker, let me pause to emphasize the fact that this is not all about the numbers, there are many other factors, Mr. Speaker that we need to consider. These rankings, Mr. Speaker, are very important because many potential investors and multilateral partners use these rankings to determine the state of affairs in our economy as it relates to ICT. This, Mr. Speaker, will no doubt have an adverse effect on our economic reform plans, and of course, big ticket items like the Logistics Hub.

Mr. Speaker, I think that as a nation we can do better than this. The Government, Mr. Speaker, must ensure that we do better than this.

A MEMBER: Yes.

Dr. WHEATLEY: So, Mr. Speaker, permit me to provide some suggestions and possible solutions to the Government as we look for a way forward in this increasingly important sector.

Mr. McKENZIE: You know, the Government come like West Indies Cricket Team. (Laughter)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, we must improve our ICT legislative framework and we must, Mr. Speaker, review existing legislation to ensure relevance and where the legislation is lacking, Mr. Speaker, put the relevant legislation in place.

Mr. Speaker, the new ICT Act has been a long time coming. When the Jamaica Labour Party demitted office, Mr. Speaker, this Act had already been tabled for review. Two years later, still nothing, Mr. Speaker. It is totally unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, that in this day and age we continue to cling to the laws which do not capture and reflect the realities of the ICT industry of today and the future. We cannot, Mr. Speaker, look to greater use of technology as an enabler for economic growth without the relevant legislation in place. I call on the Ministers, get it done. Jamaica cannot wait.

Mr. McKENZIE: You West Indies.... (Inaudible) ....performance.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, with increased use of technology and the use of electronic methods of storing data, we must ensure that we maintain confidence among the people of Jamaica that their personal digital information is safe and secure. The protection of my digital information, Mr. Speaker, your information and the information of all citizens of this country is a right not a privilege. We must ensure, Mr. Speaker, that with the new ways in which information is stored, shared and accessed, the citizenry is protected and the gatekeepers of this information are held accountable for its use. Digital information, Mr. Speaker, is much easier to access and manipulate. Measures must be put in place to ensure that personal information is kept secure. That is why, Mr. Speaker, the Data Protection Act is so important.

Our citizens, Mr. Speaker, must feel confident that when they are encouraged to use technology-driven services, their information will not be compromised or handled inappropriately. Without this level of comfort, Mr. Speaker, among our people, many of the proposed initiatives aimed at improving the efficiency of Government services, will no doubt fail. Again, I call on the Ministers, get it done. Jamaica cannot wait.

Mr. Speaker, we are seeing an increase in the need to do more business on-line, do more transactions on-line, to communicate via email in a more secure way, facilitate secured transfer and digital signing of documents between MDAs, the private sector, our citizens and other countries and jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, the Electronic Transactions Act is one we do not hear much about. This Act, Mr. Speaker, was created to provide the legal framework for secured electronic commerce in a bid, Mr. Speaker, to enhance local and international confidence in the integrity and reliability of electronic transactions. Mr. Speaker, it is long overdue for review and amendments. It's a very important Act, Mr. Speaker, given the current landscape and much has changed since 2006. Mr. Speaker, we need to take actions now to plug existing gaps in this Act. Again, I call on the Ministers, get I done. Jamaica cannot wait.

As it currently stands, Mr. Speaker, oversight of the ICT sector is split between the Spectrum Management Authority, the Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica and the Office of Utilities Regulation. Mr. Speaker the concept of a single ICT Regulator, which took flight under the JLP Administration in 2009, and which got overwhelming support, Mr. Speaker, from all the major telecommunication players in the market, was designed to bring the ICT regulatory regime more in line with industry trends.

Mr. Speaker, in an industry where we are seeing the fusion of products and services, new consumption models, the convergence of voice, data and video, it is imperative, Mr. Speaker, that we position ourselves to properly and more efficiently monitor, manage and regulate this environment.

Mr. Speaker, there are serious challenges on the horizon. With the advent of over the

top services and its associated complexities, we must position ourselves to effectively handle these challenges.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to see delays in the creation of this regulator. Only this year, Mr. Speaker, we were informed that the responses to the Expression of Interest for the consultancy to enhance the ICT regulatory environment in Jamaica, something that was to have been achieved in 2013. But, Mr. Speaker, by all indications, the completion and subsequent results of this consultancy will not be ready until the last quarter of this year, if not next year.

Mr. Speaker, this delay will only retard our efforts at unlocking the country's potential through greater oversight and integration of technology.

Mr. Speaker, we must signal to the investment community that we are serious about creating the framework for increased competition in this sector and pave the way for the emergence of a vibrant and highly advanced digital economy. Again, I call on the Ministers, get it done. Jamaica cannot wait.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to see delays in the appointment of the Government's Chief Information Officer. With no one to develop and drive a cohesive and comprehensive ICT strategy, we see limited successes in many of the ICT projects the government is undertaking. Mr. Speaker, this proves to be costly and time consuming. The country cannot afford this. Ministers again, I implore you, get it done, we cannot wait.

Mr. Speaker, we are now embarking on a fundamental paradigm shift in the ICT industry as it relates to how we communicate. New communication models will emerge and the convergence of voice, data and video will lead to even more pervasive communication.

Mr. Speaker, on three separate occasions, we have heard announcements as it relates to number portability and when it will be implemented. To date, Mr. Speaker, we have seen nothing at all. We were told by the Minister that number portability rollout would have been completed by the end of 2012, then by the end of 2013. Then we were told it would have been completed by the end of May 2014. Now we are hearing, Mr. Speaker, that it is the end of 2014. Mr. Speaker, I have to ask the Ministers, both of them, when portability, number portability will become a reality?

Mr. D. SMITH: He's asking you a question?

(Mr. Smith addresses his question to Mr. Paulwell)

Dr. WHEATLEY: And I hope that Minister Robinson, when he makes his presentation tomorrow, will be definitive as it relates to the real date for the implementation of number portability.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that number portability is one of the most critical components to promoting competition in the telecoms market, which Mr. Speaker, will ultimately result in better value for the majority of consumers. Mr. Speaker, it's a generally held view that Jamaicans don't like to or even want to consider changing their phone numbers in an effort to get a better deal. In addition, Mr. Speaker, it is safe to say that

potential new entrants into the telecoms market would be dissuaded by the fact that after contemplating, Mr. Speaker, the huge investment of building out mobile or fixed line networks, they would have an uphill battle of convincing people to switch to their network simply, Mr. Speaker, because consumers would have to consider changing their numbers to benefit from the services of a new provider.

Mr. Speaker, this fundamental freedom of choice is being denied the Jamaican people by the delay in implementing number portability.

Mr. Speaker, the increased value and benefits of competition are being denied by the Jamaican people or to the Jamaican people. The increase in job opportunities and business opportunities are being stymied because of delays in number portability, Mr. Speaker. Again, I call on the Ministers, get it done. Jamaica cannot wait.

Mr. Speaker, I want to briefly speak on the Government's recent failure to successfully auction the 700 megahertz spectrum band. Mr. Speaker, it was apparent that the auction was ill-conceived and doomed to fail from the start. One possible reason for this is the failure to implement number portability, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister was clearly overambitious, some might say overly exuberant in his expectations having failed to create, Mr. Speaker, an ideal and attractive environment for that level of investment. Mr. Speaker, this may be a reason the Minister found himself in the precarious position of having to use this valuable national resource as a bargaining chip, Mr. Speaker, when negotiating with the Telecoms providers to assist the country in meeting its primary surplus targets by renewing their licenses almost a year ahead of time.

Mr. Speaker, I have tabled some questions today for the Minister to answer in the next 21 days that relates to his own Aggregate Spectrum Cap Policy, Mr. Speaker. The Minister needs to come clean on this matter.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Government has failed to create the environment for the attraction of a new entrant into the telecoms market. Mr. Speaker, in order to realize the full potential of the wireless broadband sector, engender competition and attract new investments in the sector the Government must do the following:

- Expedite the harmonization of the ICT legislative framework;
- need to accelerate the implementation of number portability;
- modify the taxation regime for providers;
- create, Mr. Speaker, new market possibilities and business opportunities through the advancement of major initiatives like mobile money.

These are the kinds of things, Mr. Speaker that will spur greater interest in our market.

Mr. Speaker, mobile money, yet another area identified as one with immense possibilities has yet to see any major traction here in Jamaica. Mr. Speaker, the current mobile landscape presents a golden opportunity for Government to look at more

innovative ways of widening the tax net by engendering greater participation in the country's financial system. It, Mr. Speaker, will create new markets, new service-oriented products; not to mention greater convenience for our citizens in conducting their day-to-day business transactions.

Mr. Speaker, in a recently released opinion paper by the Jamaica Information Technology and Services Alliance, (JITSA), it was highlighted that the Government needs to look more seriously at ICT as a 'national utility'. The Government, Mr. Speaker, must adopt a perspective that ICT is as important to national infrastructure as energy, water and roads.

Mr. Speaker, JITSA goes on to say that economic reform cannot be successful without ICT. Mr. Speaker, I cannot overemphasize these statements enough. ICT plays an integral role in the success of the country's economic reform programmes. There are countless studies and reports that definitively show the positive effect that ICT and its adoption has on jobs, salaries and overall GDP. But as outlined in the JITSA Opinion Paper, Mr. Speaker, successive administrations have not taken a cohesive approach to ICT adoption at the national level. This needs to change. This needs to change now, Mr. Speaker.

To do this, we believe that strong partnerships must be forged between the public sector, private sector and stakeholder groups like JITSA, BPIAJ, and JCS to first, secure the reform needed in ICT at the national level which will ultimately aid in success of our economic programmes. Public/ private partnerships, Mr. Speaker, are a key component to the success of ICT reform, and we must do everything in our power to facilitate this.

Mr. Speaker, the final area I want to briefly touch on is the role the ICT will play in the Logistics Hub. Mr. Speaker, the Opposition believes that there is tremendous opportunity for ICT in this project, and if executed in the right way, will lead to huge economic benefits. We must ensure, Mr. Speaker that the necessary infrastructure is in place to facilitate the massive data requirements of the technology associated with the operating environment of a logistic hub, or logistic operation.

Mr. Speaker, the seamless integration of data between air, land and sea operations is critical to efficient provision of services and decision making. We only have to look, Mr. Speaker, at our one time mentee, Singapore, on how its adoption of technology in this area has affected their economy. This is something, Mr. Speaker that we must get right. We must ensure that policies and legislation are in place to marshal the effective and efficient use of data and infrastructure while providing, Mr. Speaker, the ideal environment to take advantage of import and export-led economic growth activities.

I would like to again, Mr. Speaker, stress to the Government, the importance of engagement with all the relevant stakeholders in the ICT industry. There are opportunities, Mr. Speaker, here for all; not only for the large service providers, but for the smaller ones as well.

Mr. Speaker, I began my presentation highlighting the importance of accountability. My review of the sectors my portfolio covers has found the Ministers wanting. Mr. Speaker, Jamaicans all over are clear about one thing; they are tired of the Government's lip service, grand announcements and talk, rather than action.

As I close, Mr. Speaker, I wish to emphasize the following: One of the most important things right now is for us to move as a people from being a nation that only consumes technology, to becoming a nation of producers and innovators of technology. (Applause)

The Government must take seriously, our ranking in the various Global Indices and improve them as they are taken into account by people who contemplate making investments in Jamaica.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. WHEATLEY: The Government must demonstrate that the Jamaican people are vital to everything we set out to achieve as a country, and as such, Mr. Speaker, investments need to be made in their training and development, as well as their attitude towards environment; science in general, and ICTs.

(Applause)

The Government must awake from its slumber, Mr. Speaker, and bring key ICT-related legislation to Parliament as we set the stage for increased competition, enhanced data integrity, and greater value to stakeholders in the sector.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Henry)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Government must make full disclosure regarding commitments it has made to the Chinese, in relation to the Goat Islands.

(Applause by Opposition Members)

The Government must become more accommodating, Mr. Speaker, and appreciative of the views of key stakeholders like the environmental advocates and concentrate, Mr. Speaker, efforts on cauterizing the antagonistic relationship it has with these stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, the Government must ensure that Jamaica is not left behind in ganja reform. We need a legal framework in facilitating medicinal marijuana, and must stop destroying the future of our people, especially the youth, by giving them a criminal record for the possession of a mere spliff.

Mr. Speaker, a word to the wise is sufficient. I thank you and I thank the Members of this Honourable House.

Good afternoon.

(Applause and Standing Ovation)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Dr. Green.

Dr. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I want you to take note that I speak from a seat that is my own. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: You *nuh* have no chance.

Dr. GREEN: And also, that those who may be tempted to leave, that I have sat there and I have truncated the speech so you can just sit there and relax a bit.

Mr. Speaker, I rise once again in this Honourable House to make my contribution to the Sectoral Debate. I would like to thank the

Almighty for the privilege once again, and for his mercies towards me which are countless, including the experience of my recent, brief illness which reminded me that not all the times that we fall we are guaranteed to rise again. As the song writer says, '*O to grace how great a debtor daily I am constrained to be'*.

I wish to thank my family who has allowed me, not only to be away from them most of the times, but also to live away as I choose to reside in the constituency that I represent. (Applause) Thank you Sean, Wade and Ashley who were here last week when I should have presented, but could not be here again today.

To my extended family, my constituents of South East St. Mary, I want to once again, thank you for affording me the opportunity to have a seat in the Houses of Parliament. No wonder, Mr. Speaker, three weeks, or three Wednesdays ago, after the heavy rain, knowing the precarious position of some of the communities in the constituency, I received a frantic call from a resident of Rosemount - who is present in the Gallery today - expressing her fears for the people in that community with respect to the impending worsening situation, with the rain that was then falling. She ended by saying:

"Sir, as soon as you can, I want you to come and see the situation. I know you have been making representation for us. May God continue to bless you, sir."

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. GREEN: I replied to her that I would skip Parliament that Wednesday and come there. She insisted that I go to Parliament and come there another time, to which I simply replied, that without her and other persons like her in the constituency there would be no possibility for me to attend Parliament in the first place.

(Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, in a matter of hours I was there in my water-boot and my raincoat visiting the community, and also other communities where similar situations exists even the Long Road community whose residents demonstrated the following Monday. I thank you all for the privilege, for your patience and understanding. Many of you have seen some ease in your situation, and there is more to come.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my councillors. Here present today is Councillor Levan Freeman, Mayor of Port Maria. (Applause) Present also, is Mayor Danvers; and Mayor Danvers is from the Castleton Division, and he is from the JLP side; (Applause) former Councillor/Caretaker Campbell, former Councillor/Caretaker McLeod, my constituency leadership, including my CDF Administrator, for the assistance and support given to me in the running of the constituency; (Applause) my driver, Ken, and my aides Patrick and Bush.

Mr. Speaker, I still want to recognize some of our future leaders who were present with us last week on my invitation. They could not return again today. And here, I am referring to the students of St. Mary Technical High School who were present with their

principal, Mrs. Lazarus, and two other teachers last week.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the guidance you have provided to this Honourable House; your knowledge of procedure, your unbiased rulings are very admirable, and I am sure that that sentiment is shared on both sides of the House. I must admit though, Mr. Speaker that you stand so tall in the House that you have created in me, a bit of trepidation, and at times apprehension, that at each time that I need to say something, I refrain from speaking.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. GREEN: But, Mr. Speaker, I am putting you on notice today.

I would also like to commend your Deputy Speaker staff of the House. I wish to commend those who have already made their contributions to the Sectoral Debate, especially the newer and the younger Parliamentarians on both sides of the House. It proves to me, Mr. Speaker that the country will be in good hands even after our generation.

Mr. Speaker, our country has a Leader who is loving, caring and understanding. She is gentle, but firm; with soft hands at times...

Mr. McKENZIE: How you know her hand soft?

Dr. GREEN: I have shaken it.

Mr. SAMUDA: She hugs me too.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. GREEN: ...but firm enough to hold the rod of the ships, steering it safely to shore, time and time, and time again. (Applause) I wish to thank her immensely for allowing me to be a part of the team.

Mr. Speaker, so many Bible Scriptures have already been used by previous contributors to describe her...

Opposition MEMBER: No….

Dr. GREEN: ...that I wish not to repeat them, save and except to quote Ruth Chapter 1 verse 16:

"*Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee, for whither though goest I will go and where though lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people and thy God, my God."*

Thank you, Madam Prime Minister.

(Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Explain what that mean *yuh nuh*?

Dr. GREEN: Later on. Mr. Speaker, before I commence on the substance of my presentation, I crave your indulgence to add my voice to that of the world, with respect to the kidnapping of the school girls in Nigeria. In one of the most shocking stories of the year, so far, some 276 Nigerian school girls aged between 12 to 17, have been kidnapped from their dormitories in Chibok, Nigeria by the Islamist Militant Group, Boko Haram.

Mr. McKENZIE: Some of them outside *deh*, but them *fraid* a *wi*.

Dr. GREEN: I want to briefly commend the Jamaican Government and indeed, the Opposition, for taking a stance and calling for the release of the Nigerian schoolgirls. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, atrocity and mayhem anywhere is an affront to humanity

everywhere; and a threat to democracy anywhere is a threat to democracy everywhere. (Applause) Terrorism in any country, on any continent, by any group of persons, must be condemned forthwith. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. GREEN: So, Mr. Speaker, as I rise in this noble House as a Parliamentarian, I want also to lend my voice in condemning the Act, and join the million of voices that are saying, *"Bring Back Our Girls."*

ROADS

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak quickly on a few parochial issues, and one of the issues that is topical in the constituency is that of roads. Mr. Speaker, two Mondays ago there was a massive demonstration in the town of Annotto Bay. Residents of Long Road community demanded that the Long Road breakaway along with the road itself be fixed. By the next morning the Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, Honourable Richard Azan, and myself had a meeting with the residents in the community. The meeting was conducted orderly and with respect, not one single person shouted or disrupted the meeting. As a matter of fact, we started with prayer and we ended with the National Anthem. The Minister decided that the fixing of the breakaway could start within a week or two, and consideration will be given to the road with respect to limited rehabilitation. My last update was that a contractor has been selected and the work is to begin shortly.

(Applause)

I want to thank you, Mr. Minister -

Mr. McKENZIE: You are fortunate. Very fortunate.

Dr. GREEN: I want to thank you, Mr. Minister for your rapid response to this urgent matter.

(Heckling)

Conscientious -

(Heckling)

Conscientious - listen, if you all want to stay here until 8 o'clock you can tell me, you know.

Conscious (sic) of the fiscal space in which we operate and having the confidence that promise made by this Administration are promise kept, the residents returned to their homes peacefully. Some of these residents were here in the Gallery last week, Mr. Speaker. I draw reference to this, Mr. Speaker, as there are several "long roads" type situations in the constituency, that could also be blown up in demonstration and disruption had it not been for proper communication and the patience and understanding of the residents of these areas. But I hasten to say, Mr. Speaker that it has become evident with each passing day that their patience is wearing thin.

Camberwell Road in the neighbouring community is even in a worse condition and has been like that for several years now. I went there, Mr. Speaker, last year to a community meeting and in going and coming my driver spent several minutes trying to negotiate passing the treacherous breakaway without going over the precipice. So much so is the situation, Mr. Speaker, that the residents

have taken it upon themselves, the day surrounding Labour Day, men, women and children gathering stones, collecting money to purchase cement and have started to construct a retaining wall, just so that the children going or returning from school in their gleeful, playful style, won't fall over the breakaway.

It is my opinion, Mr. Speaker, that while some things can wait, because of the fiscal space in which we operate, others like this one just cannot wait. This is not cosmetic, we need a lifeline and we need it now. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Rosemount Road has been in a state of disrepair almost nonexistent for several years now.

(The Speaker leaves the Chair at approximately 6:18 p.m. and the Deputy Speaker presides)

Like Long Road and Camberwell, besides being able to walk through the bushes if there is an emergency, it is a one-way in and a one-way out type situation.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, an elderly woman was seriously ill and had to be carried on a makeshift bamboo stretcher for miles, as no vehicle could go up there. The precipices are now treacherous; the rocks that were feet down are more and more exposed.

Mr. Speaker, a very concerned resident, Donna Murray, literally cries when it rains. Not for herself alone, but for the people living there, especially for the elderly and the children. Children who have to travel in and out of the community to attend school.

Mr. Speaker, I was utterly ashamed on Labour Day to see residents of Brainerd, men, women and children, digging down the hillside, collecting soil and using it to fill massive potholes in the road.

The men were digging and loading the bags while the women and children were burdened like donkeys carrying the soil to the potholes in the road. Not only was I ashamed but more so, Mr. Speaker, I felt sorry for them so much so that I felt like crying. I am overwhelmed and I am speaking out, all is not well and the people who have put me here have asked me to say it here and since I don't represent myself I have acceded to their instruction. (Applause)

Similar road situations exist in the constituency, Mr. Speaker. Epsom Road, School Hill to Gibbs Hill, Richmond to Kendal, Belfield Pen, Belfield Works, Grays Inn, Pleasant Hill, Baxters Mountain, Paisley, Luna and Luna Field, Bungo Town, Fairweather Avenue, Freetown to Brainerd, just to name a few.

There is a serious breakaway in the vicinity of the Richmond Adult Correctional Facility, going some years now. This poses a serious health risk as the sewage pipe that takes waste from the prison and run along the banks of the river are now exposed and are at risk of bursting from continuous erosion of breakaway threatening to pour sewage into the river. But although all is not well, Mr. Speaker, all is not lost and we have started to address some of these situations.

Mr. Speaker, I hasten to say that with the money given under the JEEP Programme, we have started limited rehabilitation. Sections of Epsom Road is now under repair, under the JEEP Programme. (Applause) The massive

breakaway as Gibbs Hill which almost divided the road into two has now been fixed under the JEEP Programme and the residents in that community are happy and are singing the praises of this programme. (Applause) Belfield Road to Orange Hill will see patching under the JEEP Programme. (Applause) Mt. Regale to Seaton Road will see patching under the JEEP Programme. (Applause) Richmond to Kendal will also see limited rehabilitation. The JEEP has rolled into these communities and has provided temporary employment and worthwhile though limited repairs to these roads. For such we are extremely grateful. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, "Mercy drops round us are falling but for the downpour we plead."

A MEMBER: Showers.

Dr. GREEN: Downpour.

A MEMBER: Showers.

Dr. GREEN: Downpour we plead.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I speak briefly on health.

HEALTH

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that a little less than $100 Million was spent on the Annotto Bay Hospital to do some repairs. (Applause) And I must report, I must report that the patients, staff and visitors are very pleased with this improvement. Some amount of money was also spent on the Annotto Bay Health Centre, and in March of this year the Brainerd Health Centre which was built at a cost of $13 Million was opened to serve that community and the adjoining districts. (Applause) For this I wish to thank the Minister of Health, the Honourable Dr. Fenton Ferguson. I lift my hat to the Minister and say that his kindness towards us - (Applause) - is more than "mercy drops round us falling", but I am still appealing for the downpour.

Mr. BARTLETT: For the showers.

Dr. GREEN: In that quest I have made representation to the Minister with regards to the state of some of our health centres in the constituency; namely the Belfield Health Centre, Clonmel, Enfield, Annotto Bay Health Centre, and, of course, there is one in Castleton that is almost nonexistent and a far cry from what a health centre should be.

The Annotto Bay Health Centre serves approximately 40,000 residents, not only in Annotto Bay area but services are extended to residents as far as Portland and sometimes St. Ann. The service provided include: curative clinics, maternal and child health, dental clinic, environmental health service, laboratory services, contact investigation and pharmacy service.

Within the past three months the Annotto Bay Health Centre has provided service to some 9,256 residents throughout the different specialist areas. Given the volume of work and quality of service this clinic offers, the building and equipment are woefully inadequate.

Mr. Speaker, subsequent to my appeal the Minister of State, the Honourable Luther Buchanan, who has responsibility for infrastructure of these facilities, has toured some of these clinics approximately three weeks ago and has made commitment to do work that will alleviate the situation to the

time that the fiscal space will allow. (Applause) And might I point out here…

(Heckling by Mr. McKenzie)

Might I point out here, Mr. Speaker, that the Councillor of the Belfield Division, Mayor Levan Freeman and myself have agreed to do some repair on one of these health clinics, rather than await the Government to do everything.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear! (Applause)

Dr. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, the Annotto Bay Hospital has been around for over 145 years and was relocated to its now location in 1950 as a type C hospital with limited space and services, and up until 1994 there was inadequate infrastructure, no laboratory, staff complement of about 80 including 20 nurses, one medical officer and one assistant, doing just about everything. Most patients for specialist care and investigations were transferred to Kingston.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we have a staff complement of some 270 including 70 nurses, four medical technologists and 40 doctors providing services in some eight different specialties.

Mr. McKENZIE: Is not you do it.

Dr. GREEN: It no matter. How you so tribal, man?

Mr. McKENZIE: Is not you do it. You must make the point.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Bad-mind.

(Heckling)

Dr. GREEN: The hospital provides effective coverage to adjacent health facilities such as Port Maria, Buff Bay and Port Antonio. All above-mentioned consolidates and strengthens our position as we seek an official type B status. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. GREEN: For us it is not just an hospital but functions as a stabilizing institution in the community, and apart from providing quality health care it gives hope and instills pride and a feeling of belonging as well as a sense of security, knowing that there is a reliable health facility that is easily accessible to them and their family. It is the largest employment of labour outside of Jamaican Producers in the region. (Applause)

Last year, Mr. Speaker, 2013, over 6000 patients were admitted, approximately 2000 surgeries were done, 27,000 A&E and outpatients, and we had 1,000 deliveries.

I want to commend the Senior Medical Officer, Dr. Ray Fraser O.D….

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear! (Applause)

Dr. GREEN: …who has guided the ship through turbulent times for some 20 years to date and still continue to guide it along with a committed and dedicated staff.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Ferguson)

Dr. GREEN: Right, right. Right. Good.

I want to personally congratulate Dr. Ray Fraser and the award that he received last week from the Medical Association of Jamaica. (Applause)

Mr. Minister, there are some other very important projects to be done which you are aware of, and we participate and we anticipate your continuous support in ensuring that the

process is accelerated in a similar manner so that the Annotto Bay Hospital will become the Centre of Excellence that we can all be proud of. (Applause)

We are cognizant, Mr. Speaker, of the tremendous burden that the health sector is carrying, and because of this, in February of this year, myself along with Councillor Freeman, we organized a massive health fair at the Belfield Health Centre in conjunction with the medical doctors and dentists from Team Healthcare USA, local participants including the St. Mary Health Department, SDC, Lions Club of St. Mary, National Health Fund, National Council on Drug Abuse, RGD, NIS/PATH, Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities, among others. Most of the specialist services were offered including dental and optical. A few hundred persons were seen at the end of the day, drawing night the lines were still forming.

So because of this, Mr. Speaker, in July of this year we are planning to have another such health fair in the same community by a different team of overseas doctors and dentists, and then we will head for Annotto Bay and its environs. (Applause)

Dr. GREEN: Sports, Mr. Speaker, has been a unifying factor in the scheme of things, and South East St. Mary is no different. It plays an important role as an avenue for the youth to expend their energies in a positive way and a friendly way.

One of the first constituency events that I had in February of 2012 - just weeks of becoming a Member of Parliament - was an All Schools' Sports Day at the Grays Inn Sports Complex. And I continue to promote and support sports, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

On a sad note, Mr. Speaker. In February of this year we lost one of our potential great young athletes, 18 year old Cavahn McKenzie of Annotto Bay, in the constituency, who died while he was participating in the North American, Central American and Caribbean Athletic Association Cross-Country competition in Trinidad and Tobago. I wish to thank the Minister of Sports, Honourable Natalie Neita-Headley...

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. GREEN: ...and the Prime Minister herself, who immediately intervened... (Applause) ...and supported the family through several visits and telephone calls, during and after their time of mourning. It was not just talk, Mr. Speaker it was followed by practical intervention. The Honourable Prime Minister and the Minister of Sports joined the family at the Norman Manley International Airport to receive Cavahn's body from Trinidad and Tobago, taking care of funeral and other related expenses.

One of Cavahn's wishes was to buy his mother a house when he would have earned sufficient money in the future. Although he passed before he could have done that, his wish was granted, as the Prime Minister and the Minister of Sports sought to grant his wish and built a two-bedroom and a three-bedroom house for the large family who were then living under adverse conditions.

(Applause)

Thank you Minister, thank you Madam Prime Minister.

Mr. McKENZIE: So, nobody else never visit the family?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I have committed to establish - and I must say that - no, I must say that at the funeral others were there, and I singled out Member Babsy Grange, she was very much there and participated. We sat beside each other, I think. Mr. Speaker, I have committed to establish the Cavahn McKenzie Scholarship Fund of $100,000, to award the top GSAT student in the constituency.

Miss HANNA: Hear! Hear!

(Applause)

Dr. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, to keep his memory alive, we are now going through the process of renaming the road that he lived on, which was Cane Lane, the Cavahn McKenzie Lane.

(Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mek sure yu fix it first!

Dr. GREEN: Gone but will not be forgotten. Gone but will not be forgotten.

Mr. McKENZIE: Change it to an avenue, it cannot be a lane.

Dr. GREEN: I will do that on advisement, okay. I will do that on advisement.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mek sure it barber greene and you put in kerb wall and channel!

Mr. PRYCE: Wi gwine mek it barber orange!

SPORTS

Dr. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, before I close on the area of sports, I am going to seek the intervention of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Sports in a situation that could be of national interest but has for too long been drawn out with no urgency to address the situation. I refer to the development of the Grays Inn Sports Complex to accommodate professional football.

As it is right now, what is needed to happen are that the stands and perimeter fence and lighting is supposed to be put in. This facility, Mr. Speaker, is one of the better fields in its class. We boast a beautiful field, some 10 restrooms/changing rooms, canteen facility, administrative facility, *et cetera*. This was where the 1998 World Cup Campaign started when the Reggae Boyz trained there for three weeks with Rene Simoes, who commented positively about the facility and playfield. I, along with the other two Members of Parliament in St. Mary, have put up over Two Million Dollars ($2M) from our CDF, with the purpose of erecting the stands to create this professional complex. The Jamaica Producers Group has committed to match our portion of this fund, and I am confident that they will do so.

Something else is happening, Mr. Speaker that is retarding the process. This has been over a year now and nothing has happened and it grieves our heart...

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member’s time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended to allow him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Green.

(Applause)

Dr. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This has been over a year now and nothing has happened. And it grieves our hearts to see our football teams such as Axum, Highgate United and Grays Inn Football Club, *et cetera*, not being able to play a professional competitive match in the entire parish of St. Mary, regardless of our efforts.

Mr. Speaker, since we have done what was requested of us it then seems like the problem is bigger than us, and we seek your intervention.

HOUSING

Mr. Speaker, I speak briefly on the matter of Housing. Like most rural areas, suitable housing solutions remain a challenge. I want to thank the Government for the Nashville Housing Development at Cromwell Land, in the constituency. I was also heartened by the fact that the improvement in the water system that was announced last week, will allow for such developments that were put on hold. Nashville is developing in what will be a gated community, with all the amenities like any other housing complex in the urban area, for which I am thankful. (Applause)

I am also grateful for the recent 36 persons who received their land title under the Land Administration and Management Programme (LAMP). But I further want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that lands are available for housing solutions, and they are available in places like Grays Inn, Charlottenburgh, Fort George, Epsom, Dover, Fort Stewart, among others, the latter for which I have penned a letter to the Minister to explore the possibility. All these lands have been looked on in the past and have been found suitable for housing development, so we await a response from the Government, as there are individual prospective homeowners who are willing to purchase, as well as private developers. Also, Mr. Speaker, the Government itself through the NHT could initiate development of these lands. More could be obtained from Property Tax if the associated issues of land reform are accelerated. I know this issue is among those on the front burner, but a more urgent and speedy approach is needed.

WATER

Mr. Speaker, on the matter of Water I will be extremely short. I just want to thank the Minister for what will commence the Eight Hundred Million Dollars ($800M) Water Development from Agualta Vale... (Applause) ... which will enhance water supply to a good cross section of my constituency.

In the past we have received the Broadgate Water System. We have also received the Enfield Water Supply System. We are about to receive the Devon Pen, Top Leinster and the Seaton Water Systems. For this, Mr. Speaker, I am eternally grateful.

(Applause)

EDUCATION/SKILLS TRAINING

On the area of Education, Mr. Speaker, and Skills Training, this will always remain the cog in the wheel of development and the advancement of individuals and society. We believe in it so much so, that we continue to spend significant portion of our CDC (sic) on education. We are about to see the extension of some of our high schools. The Annotto Bay High School which through an appeal to the Minister - we are about to see the erection of a sixth form block... (Applause) ...as, currently, Mr. Speaker, after completing fifth form students are competing for limited spaces in other schools, some as far away as outside of the parish.

I have also donated some movable building structures obtained from the China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) to schools especially for the purpose of vocational training. The Annotto Bay High School, for example, has already had theirs, and are ready to construct, and they are thinking of four skills-training areas. (Applause)

Similar buildings were donated by me to the St. Mary Technical High School for needed additional classrooms. I have donated these building parts sometime last year, and they are still packed away awaiting building approval.

Similar buildings have been donated to Belfield Primary School, Paisley Primary School, Clonmel Primary and Junior High, Seaton Basic School - and I must add that the one that is at Seaton Basic School will also double as a community centre - and also Broadgate Community Centre, the buildings are there. And the one at Broadgate Community Centre is strictly for the purpose of skills training. All of these buildings are awaiting drawings and approval, and some money to reassemble them.

Cape Clear has been identified for skills training and plans are well advanced for start-up, as the physical structure is ready to accommodate students.

(Applause)

Some of the skills training that will be offered will include bar tending, crop agriculture, property management, and so on. We intend to do repairs to the Richmond Community Centre and to facilitate training in a section of the building.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. GREEN: We are also planning to establish, Mr. Speaker, four homework centres in the four divisions of the constituency... (Applause) ...fully equipped with computers and Internet service. We are seeking agencies to partner with us in this effort as the CDF cannot service all of these development plans.

Mr. Speaker, we have to invest in education, we have to invest in our youths, we have to invest in the future of the country. (Applause)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Drop some Spanish, now!

AGRICULTURE

Dr. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, on the topic of agriculture - and I am winding down. Mr. Speaker, I have a rural constituency which for the great part depends on agriculture for

income, and it has become a way of life for many. The improvement and growth in the sector has been announced and repeated in the public space and in this very House. The last time - I think it was last week - by the Member from South East St. Elizabeth. So, in the interest of time I will not repeat, save and except to say that I raise my hat to the Minister of Agriculture, Honourable Roger Clarke. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker we too, in our neck of the woods, have been doing what we can to promote agriculture, and we believe - as mentioned by me last year in my Sectoral Debate - that St. Mary, with its vast fertile lands, rivers, high level of rainfall among other things such as idle lands, can become a major bread basket for Jamaica. (Applause) The resilience of our banana farmers alone, who have suffered great losses, some seeing their crops completely wiped out during many storms, in the past, have risen to cultivate again, and I must commend them. (Applause)

We are doing everything we can to encourage and assist persons engaging in agriculture. From the simple distribution of seeds, seedlings, young plants to farming implements, water tanks, *et cetera.* Cocoa farmers have been trained in resuscitation of existing farms with funds from the CDF last year.

The establishment last year of a pig mother farm at a cost of Three Million Dollars ($3M) from my CDF is now paying off, as we have started the process of distributing piglets to farmers for breeding.

(Applause)

This year, Mr. Speaker, we are considering a similar goat mother farm programme. Bee farmers have benefitted from materials and the Broadgate farmers have been furnished with an industrial saw to assist in box production. (Applause)

Currently, there is a project on the way in a community, which will be funded by the CDF to raise some hundreds of laying hens for egg production. (Applause)

At the Skills Training locations aforementioned, we want aspects of agriculture to be included among the selected courses.

Mr. Speaker, plan is on the way to have some of our schools in the constituency restart their school gardens and also to have others without school gardens to establish theirs. The products from the school gardens could supplement their schoolfeeding programme, while excess could be sold and the income benefit schools.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, we're a bit discouraged by two major factors: While we seek to increase production in agriculture, we've seen hundreds of acres of lands suitable for agriculture being transformed into woodlands and lay idly for decades. Efforts have been made representations have been done by me, to acquire these lands for our prospective and existing farmers. We have acres upon acres of land at Cape Clear, at Devon Pen, Way Hill to Lunafield, Grays Inn, Fort Stewart, Mt. Regale, Elliot to Mt. Rose and acres and acres of Prison Lands.

Mr. Speaker, a good example of this effort to acquire the land is an application sent to JAS with my encouragement...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Dr. GREEN: ...by one of our farmers to lease Mount Rose property which is some 470 acres of land to put under cultivation as a farmers' cooperative, which would employ 60 persons in the first phase. The objective is to resuscitate cocoa production...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Dr. GREEN: ...and to add five other crops including cassava.

(Applause)

And mentioning cocoa, Mr. Speaker, it has been the mainstay of many farmers in St. Mary historically, it has fed many a families and has schooled many of our bright scholars. It is, however, on the decline as the farmers are somewhat discouraged due to several factors such as the late payments for their produce when delivered to the cocoa agencies.

With respect to the land request for the Farmers' Cooperative, I know that the Minister is aware of this, and has been talking to the particular farmers as to the way forward. For this I thank you, Mr. Minister, but in the same breath, we're asking that the process of these land requests be speeded up.

Mr. Speaker, the second discouraging factor has to deal with the perennial problem of praedial larceny, and I do recall speaking last year this time, in my Sectoral Debate on the topic. Without repeating what I said then, let me say that I am conscious that like other crimes, it can't be the problem of the Government and the security forces alone...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Dr. GREEN: ...but must involve all of us to seek solutions and to join in the fight. (Applause)

Let me also point out that I sincerely believe that the Minister of Agriculture is working assiduously to deal with this problem. I am however, still appalled, at the level of impunity displayed by these infamous two foot puss, even to this day.

Just about two weeks ago while driving through my constituency from Lewis Store to Clonmel; I saw the entrails of a cow on the roadside. Mr. Speaker, upon investigation, I learnt that this farmer who does everything in farming for a living, from planting crops to rearing animals that thieves had went in and stole four of his prized cows...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Shame!

Dr. GREEN: ...savagely butchering them and as usual, leaving the entrails as an insult to the farmer.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Shame!

Dr. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I called the distraught farmer on his cell phone and he was actually in tears as he related the story to me, only giving thanks for his own life and that of his family that has been spared.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, this is just one of the examples of what goes on out there, depriving our farmers of their life's investments and discouraging other persons who seek to go into farming. This drastic action requires drastic measures.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

Dr. GREEN: The difficulty in convicting the perpetrators and the slap on the risk

punishment when convicted must be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to hear that a unit from the Ministry of National Security and also from the Ministry of Agriculture to assist in dealing with this problem. In addition, Mr. Speaker, I want to recommend that the Government allows and encourages farmers to set-up in their respective communities what I call, Farm Guard Teams that will assist...

(Inaudible comments)

Dr. GREEN: ...that will assist or work along with these units aforementioned, in patrolling their farms on a rotational basis, with proper communication networks. Because as you know, Mr. Speaker, in the rural farming communities, it is difficult to commit a crime and escape once a proper alarm is made.

I want to push the envelope a little further, Mr. Speaker. I'm also recommending that limited military/police training be given to these Farm Guard Teams even in the use of firearm and everything should be done to make it easier for them to legally bear arms to protect their property like any other business persons.

(Applause/Inaudible comments)

Dr. GREEN: Of course, Mr. Speaker, this would exclude - and let me point out - of course this would exclude persons with serious criminal records *et cetera.*

(Cross talks)

Mr. Speaker, as I speak I've mentioned the CDF on several counts. Mr. Speaker, as Members of Parliament we're eternally grateful for the CDF. It has stopped many a gaps and has assisted in starting small projects.

Dr. BAUGH: Built by Labour!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hard work!

MEMBERS: Built by Labour!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hard work, yes.

Dr. GREEN: But I do believe, Mr. Speaker that as persons elected to lead...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yuh want some more.

Dr. GREEN: How yuh know?

(Laughter)

Dr. GREEN: I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that as persons elected to lead, a great level of trust has been placed in us. We come with a level of integrity and a lot is expected from us. We should be more empowered financially to carry out these functions. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. GREEN: While Central Government spends billions of dollars, and rightly so, and rightfully so, in the development of the country, each Members of Parliament knows the intricate and the intimate needs of their constituencies, but he or she is made lame in assisting, as the $15 Million given to us for the year, less professional fees, makes it woefully inadequate. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. GREEN: I am proposing, Mr. Speaker, that for the next financial year, consideration be given to increase this figure to a minimum of $50 Million.

(Applause)

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to address a topical issue that I think that we have not paid enough attention to as...

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Dr. GREEN: For the 50 to 35.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Dr. GREEN: All right we can go ascending. Good, good.

...I want to address a topical issue that I think we've not paid enough attention to as Parliamentarians. In recent times, the whole topic of Values and Attitudes campaign once again emerged, from former Prime Minister, the Honourable P.J. Patterson, called for a new conversation on the issue, which has been maintained by successive political administration over the years. He described it as a matter of life and death for the nation, and I feel urged, Mr. Speaker, to lend my voice to renew this clarion call.

(Applause)

Just paraphrasing from his speech, he declared it a national emergency as our condition has deteriorated beyond belief, with a massive increase in crime and violence, drug warfare has increased, urban ghettos have spread across our countryside and our ethical standards have fallen. He continued to say that today there is a growing sense of alienation and greater distrust of leadership in politics, and he continued to mention other groups.

My concern, Mr. Speaker, is with my group, Leaders in Politics. Today, I want to ask us as leaders the question, what have we done as leaders of the nation to arrest the declining values and negative attitudes that is taking over our society? What are we doing to halt the type of incivility, indiscipline, disorder, disrespect for each other and growing corruption in all its forms; the disappearance of integrity...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: True, true.

Dr. GREEN: ...in every facet of national endeavour? We ignore this call again to our own peril...

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. GREEN: ...and to the final decadence of our society?

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, a few Sundays ago while attending a Workers Week Celebration Church Service in my constituency. I was embarrassed when the Pastor turned on the politicians without tongue in cheek or without apology, he began to lambast. He went on to describe our relationship with each other as oftentimes rude, disrespectful, vulgar and outrageous. He then spoke of the lack of values and attitudes and asked what example are we setting for the students who visit Parliament and the younger generation who watches us on television?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: A Labourite pastor.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Pickersgill)

Dr. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I think we need to take a non-partisan approach and let us all agree to promote good values and attitudes in this country we call home... (Applause) ...in this society that we want to live, work, raise family and do business.

I challenge us to initiate a new conversation to reignite the promotion of this campaign. We need to lead by example.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes.

Dr. GREEN: We need to promote it in our homes, in the workplaces, the schools, and I daresay in the churches.

(Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. GREEN: We as Members of Parliament need to promote it in our constituencies. We need to portray a lifestyle that will inspire and transform. We need to be transformational leaders. We need to regain our moral compass and not sacrifice values and attitudes on the altar of political expediency. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I wish for all of us as Members of Parliament, both sides of the House, a productive political year and may all of us continue to do our best to better the socio-economic situation of our constituents.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause/Standing ovation**)**

Mr. McKENZIE: Well done, Farmer Patterson.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Kindly sit. Yes, Mr. House Leader.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended for us to do any further business this evening. I therefore move for the adjournment of the Parliament until tomorrow, the 11th of June, at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House adjourns until tomorrow, June 11, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House was adjourned accordingly at approximately 7:00 p.m. to June 11, at 2:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, June 11, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:33 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central
DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern
MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition
MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern
MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern
MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western
MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern
MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western
MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern
MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern
MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western
MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western
MR. DWAYNE FRANCOIS ST. MICHAEL VAZ, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central
MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western
MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western
DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Raymond Pryce

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- Annual Report of the Committee to examine and recommend for approval proposed Estimates for Constituency Projects submitted to the Constituency Development Fund Project Management Unit by respective Members of Parliament for 2013/2014
- The Public Health (Tobacco Control) (Amendment) Regulations, 2014 under the Public Health Act

The SPEAKER: House Leader, just to point out that the Member from Western Kingston was questioning about questions that he had tabled, but they were tabled in March, so naturally they would have fallen off the Order Paper and he would have had to - yes, Mr. McKenzie, you actually tabled those questions in March, so they fell off the Order

Paper. So if you want to get them back on you can re-table them.

Mr. McKENZIE: Permission to address you from a seat other than my own.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Mr. McKENZIE: Well if that is the case, Mr. Speaker, I would like to apologize to the House for saying that it was tabled after the sitting, Mr. Speaker.

Government MEMBERS: Big man. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Don't spoil it.

Mr. McKENZIE: I will deal with the matter in accordance, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Okay.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yuh a get training.

Mr. CHARLES: You don't expect decency. I don't understand you. You don't see Omar don't clap. He understands and expects that.

(THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, entered and took her seat.)

(HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central, entered and took his seat.)

(MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central, entered and took her seat.)

(MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central, entered and took her seat.)

PRESENTATION OF BILLS WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE HOUSE FIRST OBTAINED

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning, I now move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled: "The General Consumption Tax (Amendment) Act, 2014".

Bill shortly entitled:

The General Consumption Tax (Amendment) Act, 2014,

read a first time.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Planning, I beg to give notice of second reading of the Bill.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

SECTORAL DEBATE

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we continue this afternoon with the Sectoral Debates and we have three presenters this afternoon. Firstly, the Member from South East St. Andrew, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining followed by the Member from North East St. Ann, the Spokesperson on Tourism and Entertainment and then the Member from

St. Mary West who will be the third speaker, in that order.

Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Robinson. (Applause)

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, let me first request permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Mr. ROBINSON: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, Members of this Honourable House, let me begin by expressing thanks to my Lord who continues to provide me with health, strength, a sound mind and whom I am grateful to serve by serving the people of my country. My family is the rock and base of my ability to serve and I thank them for being there for me and supporting me through good and challenging times. My wife is here for the first time (Applause) and I thank her - collectively on our behalf, I thank the spouses of Members of this House who very often bear the brunt of the frustrations that we, who in this Chamber, serve.

Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister, The Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller, continues to demonstrate her confidence in my ability to execute my responsibilities and I am grateful for that, and I thank also my senior Minister, Minister Phillip Paulwell for providing me the opportunity to serve in MSTEM.

I am blessed, Mr. Speaker, to have first-class public servants in the Ministry, the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Technical Director and all the staff who support the work that we do in the Ministry. (Applause) And we don't very often recognize our public servants, Mr. Speaker, but we have public servants who can stand the test of scrutiny anywhere internationally. (Applause) I would also like to thank the heads of agencies and other stakeholders in the ICT sector who have supported the work that I have done and the work of the Ministry over the last year.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents are the only reason I have the privilege of being in this House and I wish to thank them and assure them that I always remember that my first priority is to advocate and represent their needs. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am fortunate to have a very strong constituency management team led by the Councillors, the Deputy Mayor Andrew Swaby and Councillor Kari Douglas who are both here. And there are a number of the leaders from the constituency who are here today to support this presentation.

Mr. Speaker, I would finally like to thank my personal staff, my secretary, security officer and driver.

Mr. Speaker, I will just briefly highlight some of the work done in my constituency over the last year before going into the substantive matter of the ICT sector.

The first highlight, Mr. Speaker, is that we have implemented and built out three community access points in the constituency. The first - and these community access points are computer labs which are in community centres and in other places. We did one in McGregor Gardens with 25 computers and we have also implemented and we did a training programme where persons were trained in

online work. This evening at 6.00 o'clock we will officially open the Jacques Road community access point and very shortly in a month or so we will do one in Lower Vineyard Town on Deanery Road.

These community access points, as I will deal with later, are to ensure that all Jamaicans who don't have access to the technology can find access to computers and internet.

The second area I would like to highlight, Mr. Speaker, is a partnership that we forged with the University of the West Indies to train a number of persons in the constituency in film making. It was a six-month programme. Most of the persons who were trained had no prior experience in film making. At the end of the six months they were able to make short films themselves...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Cartoon on Desmond.

Mr. ROBINSON: …and it's a continuation of a programme which started in Eastern St. Andrew which the Member can speak about.

But I want to commend the University for this Outreach. (Applause) It's providing many of our young inner- city young men and women with a skill which is very much in demand where they can either work with an existing company or develop their own.

The third area I would like to highlight is the work to refurbish the Nannyville Health Centre. This is a centre that was built in the late 1970s and has never been operational. We have started the work, we intend to complete it in August, and we hope to open it shortly after, which will serve not just that community, but most of the Mountain View area. We have also constructed a new community centre in the Monaltrie Housing Scheme, which is off Halfway Tree Road, which will serve that community as well as the Trevennion Park communities.

We have also continued our Summer Camp Programme, where each summer for a three-week period we provide a programme to over 1,000 students. We introduced last year a special GSAT track fusing a software programme to allow the students to practice their GSAT questions and that has proven to be extremely successful.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, I spoke about a proposed Mountain View craft and food market. The work that we have done - we prepared estimates and architectural drawings, we have developed a business plan; we have had discussions with TPDCo around positioning this as a local attraction. Our issue has been with the acquisition of the land. There are three or four private parcels of land; the original owners are no longer there, so we have to work out the best way to acquire the properties so we can move ahead with this.

The final area I want to speak about, Mr. Speaker is an issue which has affected the constituency since I become the Member of Parliament and that is a group of between 30 or 40 homeless homosexual young men who congregate in a gully just off Trafalgar Road. It is a problem which has existed for over two years; they have moved from property to property across the constituency, every empty

building; they have now located in this gully.

The issues here, Mr. Speaker, are complex; they are not just about the sexual orientation of the individuals. Many of them are youngsters who have suffered abuse, physical, psychological, sexual; they have been ostracized from their families; some of them are homeless and many of them engaged in prostitution. They are also regrettably, Mr. Speaker, the perpetrators of - some of them have criminal activities, including theft, break-ins, physical assault.

The solutions are not easy. In fact a number of efforts have been made to deal with this group. They have been removed on numerous occasions and they have returned, and there is now a group of church leaders who are looking at solving this problem. I am highlighting it here because it has received tremendous national and even international exposure, and it has been an intractable problem that we haven't been able to find a solution to, and it is something that requires a national focus and attention.

Mr. Speaker, as I have done over the last two years I will be hosting my Annual Constituency Development Fund Consultations in the next three to four weeks, where I intend to go into greater detail on my stewardship as Member of Parliament, the projects we have undertaken and the expenditures for the year.

ICT

Let me now turn substantively to my portfolio area which is the Information and Communication Technology field.

Mr. Speaker, last year I presented an ICT Road Map which has four main components: first, on strategy, policy and legislation; second, ICT infrastructure; third, public sector modernization and fourth, innovation enablement capacity building. And you can follow in the handouts as I go through them, and I will go item by item and provide an update as to where we are on this.

ICT REGULATOR

The first one is the single ICT regulator; this is something that was formulated, I think, from 2009 and which we committed to implementing in the last financial year.

The objectives of the Single ICT Regulator, I think, as Members of this House may know, there are currently three regulators in the ICT industry; the Spectrum Management Authority, the Broadcasting Commission and the Office of Utilities Regulation. There are inconsistencies and overlap in jurisdiction, there are savings that can be generated in staffing and other expenditure, and we are also trying to establish a regulatory structure which is reflective of the nature of the industry. And the industry that we are dealing with is one that is fast changing, that is always the subject of innovation and where we feel a regulator needs to respond to that.

What have we done since last year? We signed a technical cooperation agreement with the IDB who financed the consulting project and they are financing the consulting project to the tune of US$315,000. The conditions that were required before disbursement were

met in November. We put out to tender and received 18 expressions of interest in January. The request for proposal was issued to 6 short listed-entities in March. We opened the proposals just last week, and we intend to award and commence the contract in July. And the duration of this consultancy is going to be a 6-month one which means by the end of the year we will have a report.

Now what will that report indicate? The report will review the current administrative and regulative framework and governance model for the ICT sector, and make specific recommendations for the drafting appropriate strategic legislation for the establishment of a standalone ICT regulator.

The report will also provide a proposal from an organizational structure for the establishment and the implementation of the ICT regulator, including the cost of the regulator and the systems required to deliver its mandate.

Mr. Speaker, this was something we proposed to have implemented in last year. There were some challenges in the funding and the timing of the funding from the IDB and also the conditions prior that were required to be met, but we are now at a position where a consultancy will be awarded next month and a report by the end of the year.

Let me move, Mr. Speaker, to Free and Open Source Software, and I will indicate why this project is so important. I think most of us can relate to the fact that on most of the PC's in the Government we have, whether it is a Microsoft products and for every PC that has a Microsoft product, the Government actually has to pay a licencing fee to Microsoft and you can imagine that this will run into many millions of dollars. So what were the deliverables? There were a number of deliverables under FOSS Project and I will indicate what we have accomplished in the last year.

We identified three agencies to pilot the project MSTEM was one, JIS and the Ministry of Health. Consulting reports were developed to identify the value opportunities. We conducted technical and user training, the pilot projects underway in MSTEM and JIS, the Ministry of Health was delayed because of their relocation, and we are now in the process of finalizing the National Governance Framework on Policy Guidelines for the public sector's adoption of FOSS which will be done by the end of this month.

Why is FOSS important? Apart, from the issue of the prohibitive costs involved in paying to whether it is Microsoft or other entities these fees every year, there are also a number of other opportunities that FOSS provide. Many of the persons who developed FOSS software products are young entrepreneurs so it provides an entrepreneurial opportunity for them, it provides an opportunity to stimulate competition and innovation because you will be having products which are equal to, if not better than the products that we currently have.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will have by the end of June the guidelines for developing a FOSS Programme across the public sector.

Let me move to the ICT Act. The ICT Act is meant to provide the sector with an

adequate legislative and regulatory framework which addresses a number of issues, Licensing Interconnection Competitiveness, Consumer Protection. What we did, Mr. Speaker, in the last year was to conduct a review of the existing Telecom's Act because the ICT Act is meant to replace some of the legislation which has been developed over the last 12 or 13 years since we liberalized the Telecom's Industry.

In fact, the ICT - the work being done to establish the single regulator is very much part and parcel of the work that is required for the promulgation of the ICT Act. So we held workshops with the ICT and Broadcast Service Providers dealing with issues such as licences access and interconnection. And in fact, much of the work that will come out of the single regulator in terms of the legislative and regulatory environment will form the basis of the work to deliver a new ICT Act. So we intend to continue work on that new legislation for this financial year.

Data protection legislation, Mr. Speaker, the objective here is to implement a more uniformed, robust and clear mandate with regard to the protection of personal data. (Applause) The Act will seek to protect the privacy of individuals in relation to personal data and the regulation of the collection process in keeping use and disclosure of the data.

What have we done since last year? A report was done. We in this area, Mr. Speaker, we had to seek technical assistance and funding from the International Telecom Union who quite kindly provided us with a consultant to - who provided a global perspective of data protection of legislation around the world and assisted us in developing a report for Jamaica and doing the drafting instructions. We had that from June.

Mr. Speaker, we very deliberately in this case, delayed implementation of the data protection legislation. The data protection legislation has far-reaching implications for both individuals and businesses, both government entities and entities in the private sector and will have implications, not just cost implications, but business process implications because it will change the way entities will have to keep, store, retain data with respect to individuals. So, Mr. Speaker, we delayed by having a validation workshop where we invited from both the public and the private sectors entities that we felt would be impacted by the data prosecution legislation.

A final report will be completed by the end of this month, drafting instructions will be issued next month and we intend to table this Bill later next year. Now you might ask why next year, Mr. Speaker. The legislative process and in particular for a Bill which is as far-reaching as this will probably require us to have a Joint Select Committee to examine the provisions of this Bill. And while, Mr. Speaker, we would like to move quicker, part of the legislation requires consultation with stakeholders and that consultation will take place before this Legislation is implemented.

CYBERCRIME

Mr. Speaker, let me now turn to the issue of cybercrime and cyber security, and I want

to just place in context why we have placed emphasis on this particular issue. There is a report that was just done by the centre for strategic and international studies which showed that cybercrimes cost the global economy last year $445 Billion. Cybercrime is a tax on innovation and slows the pace of global innovation by reducing the rate of return to innovators and investors.

In the US alone 40 million persons last year had personal information which was stolen by hackers, the same high profile breaches affected 54 million persons in Turkey, 16 million in Germany and 20 million in China. We made a commitment last year, Mr. Speaker, to amend the Cybercrimes Legislation. We established a Joint Select Committee of Parliament which met between January and September this year. The Report was submitted to this House in October adopted by the House in October and by the Senate in January of this year. There were new provisions which were put forward in the amendments including forfeiture, fraud, malicious communications and action prejudicing investigations.

Mr. Speaker, the Act called for a review after a two- year period, we made the review, we strengthened it, we increased the fines and the penalties in particular for persons who were repeat offenders because of how many cases we have seen where offenders continue to commit cybercrimes. The submission has been prepared and drafting instructions will be issued to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel this months and we intend to submit that Bill later this year.

In addition to the legislation, Mr. Speaker, we have moved to the establishment of a Cyber Incidence Response team and I will indicate why that is important within our context. If we are the subject of any cyber attack as a Government or even critical private sector organizations, we would not have an organized coordinated structured way of responding. What have we done since last year?

We had a project implementation plan agreed with the Government and the International Telecoms Union. Again, Mr. Speaker, you will see a recurring theme throughout the presentation. Much of the - given our own fiscal challenges we have had to reach out to development partners to assist us in bringing the expertise to bear on many of the things we are implementing. We had a stakeholder consultation in July; a Readiness Assessment Report was done where members of both the public and the private sector were interviewed. We have reached an agreement to locate the CERT, it is going to be at e-Gov Limited and we are now discussing the user requirement specifications.

Where we are, we have again approached our development partners for funding to provide the equipment to house - the physical equipment and technology and we are also in the process of creating the post within the CERT and identifying the staff and building the capacity.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we implemented a National Cyber Security Taskforce, which was really meant to support the work of the Ministry in cyber security and was comprised of individuals from both the public and the

private sector. This taskforce played an active role in the development of the cyber security strategy, which I will speak about next and also in the development of the CERT and doing the assessment report. We have also with the assistance, Mr. Speaker, of the organization of American States, and in particular the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism. We sought their help in developing a cyber security strategy, so we have made the amendments to the legislation, we are implementing the CERT and now we are putting in place an overall strategy.

We had consultations, in country consultations where a team from the OAS and CiTECH were in the country in March. A first and second draft of the strategy has been prepared that was done in April and May, the final draft is actually with us which we are reviewing and we are going to be having further stakeholder consultations to finalize that strategy by July. And that strategy will guide how we approach issues related to cyber security and cybercrimes.

Mr. Speaker, let me now move to the second area of the roadmap which is the ICT infrastructure. Before I get into the specific projects. I think it is important to indicate why as an administration we have made the investments in infrastructure and the link between infrastructure and economic growth. Some work done by the ITU indicates that a 10 per cent increase in broadband penetration yields about a 1.3 per cent increase in GDP growth. The same report also shows that - and that is for low to middle income countries which Jamaica would be considered one of those.

In the OECD countries the same 10 per cent increase yielded at .25 per cent increase in GDP growth. And in the US, a 10 per cent increase in broadband penetration led to a 3.6 per cent increase in efficiency.

Mr. Speaker, there is also a direct correlation between not just broadband and economic growth, but broadband speed and economic growth. There is a study done in 2013 by Ericsson, Ericsson is the famous maker of telecom's equipment which showed that in OECD countries upgrading from .5 megabits per second to 4 megabits per second increased income by US$322 per month and in the BRIC countries, without Russia, Brazil, India and China, that upgrading from .5 megabits per second to four, increased income by US$46 per month. So there is a direct correlation between broadband speed and economic growth.

Mr. Speaker I think it's also important to remind this House of a measure taken by the Government just recently where we removed the duties on smartphones under the Common External Tariff regime where instead of a 20 per cent duty on smartphones, it has been zero-rated starting June this year (Applause) for a three-year period to allow, Mr. Speaker, greater access to phones and ultimately greater access to broadband...

Miss HANNA: Hear, hear!

(Applause)

Mr. ROBINSON: ...because we have seen quite clearly that the majority of

Jamaicans access the Internet by their telephones.

Let me now move - and I think that's what the - which one? Let me now move, Mr. Speaker, to work that we have done through the Universal Service Fund to establish an islandwide broadband network, and there are four main pillars of this islandwide broadband network. We have connected 67 of 77 post offices. We have connected 206 of 207 educational institutions.

(Applause)

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBINSON: We have connected all 41 libraries that we said we would do. (Applause) And just in the last year, Mr. Speaker, we, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, we have connected 57 of 60 hospitals and health centres across the country.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBINSON: The slide on page 20 gives you a complete picture of the work done; total sites that have been commissioned 371: 206 educational, 41 libraries, 67 post offices and 57 Ministry of Health facilities.

(Applause)

Mr. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

(Cross talk)

Mr. ROBINSON: Let me just indicate the question might be why are we connecting health centres and hospitals? And I give a very practical example, if you're a patient. Let's say you went to Cornwall Regional and you had to take an X-ray, because you broke your leg and the doctor did that X-ray, but the specialist is in Kingston at KPH or even in Cuba and in the olden days you would have to get that picture or film and physically send it. When we connect our hospitals and our health 7 centres, Mr. Speaker, with broadband access you are improving patient care directly, because the same person who is at Cornwall Regional that film can be sent electronically to KPH or anywhere else in the world. So that a doctor could sit somewhere else, look at that film, prescribe treatment and provide a solution to the patient. (Applause)

In addition, Mr. Speaker, there are whole - and I know when the Member from East St. Thomas and the Minister of Health speaks - there are whole set of applications that the Ministry of Health plans to roll out. The GOJ Health Card is already there. There is a Laboratory Information System, but all of these have to be supported by a backbone and the islandwide broadband network is the backbone and this will provide the Ministry of Health with the capacity to deliver and improve healthcare services across the country. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, we're not just only doing the health centres. The next stage of the strategy is to connect police stations and operational centres and the objective is to improve the general capabilities of the JCF's operation by facilitating efficient communication and transfer of critical information in real time to enhance crime fighting. So the JCF has already implemented their islandwide e-mail communication system. This will support it to ensure there is high speed and fast Internet access for our

police officers. It will also support the Automated Palm and Fingerprinting System and ensure that data, which is captured, can be transmitted from rural locations to a central database in Kingston.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned these to indicate how in a very practical and real sense, the investment in our infrastructure is meant to deliver public services to Jamaicans in a more effective and efficient manner, and that is why we have made these investments. (Applause) Another central plank of the Government's commitment to universal service, which is to ensure that all Jamaicans, regardless of where you are, whether you are in a deep rural area or in a urban centre, to ensure that all Jamaicans have access to the Internet. The Government has built out over 181 of these Community Access Points. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. ROBINSON: And as I mentioned, later today at 6 o'clock I will be opening the 182nd one in Jacques Road in South East St. Andrew.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

(Cross talk)

COMMUNITY ACCESS POINTS/CAPS

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, let me say a little about the CAPs. The CAPs are meant to provide access to persons who otherwise can't afford computers. These community-based organizations, churches, sports clubs, can apply to the Universal Service Fund for these facilities to be set up in their communities. Once you have the physical facility and importantly, once you have the management team to ensure that you can effectively manage this because once the USF provides it, it is handed to the community and the community has to run it. This is ensuring, Mr. Speaker, that the least able have access to computer technology and the Internet.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to go step further because we have been challenged with the sustainability of some of these centres and we are looking at ensuring that we develop programmes that can allow Jamaicans to utilize the technology in such a way that they can earn money legitimately. So, for example, we already started in a small way with Digital Jam a training…

(*Sotto voce* comment by Government Member)

Mr. ROBINSON: Well, part of the reason we're doing it is to ensure that persons have alternative to that and that they can find legitimate ways of making money. But we believe providing those opportunities will make our CAPs more sustainable, because the community centres have to charge a relatively small fee, because they have to pay the light bill and they have to have somebody there who monitors the facility. And when persons know that they use the facility in a way in which enhances or uplifts them then they would be willing to pay that money.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, to the islandwide broadband network the community access points, there are some special projects that have been implemented by the Universal Service Fund, and on page 25, I'll just outline some of those, and in particular, Mr. Speaker,

I want to point to a commitment of this Administration to deal with special groupings: the Women's Centre on Trafalgar Road is one (Applause) that provides services for young teenage mothers and other women who are the victims of either abuse, *et cetera.*

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. ROBINSON: Trafalgar Road is South East St. Andrew. The Jamaica Association for the Deaf, which is an institution again, a commitment to deal with the disabled community. (Applause) And I want to commend my colleague who is in the House, Senate President, Floyd Morris, who has been the strongest and most consistent advocate for ensuring that technology is provided to this community; and there is a special project - it's not listed in the notes, but I'll just tell you - a $33 Million project to provide computerized equipment – specialized computerized equipment to the disabled community.

There are six schools it will implemented at: Llandilo in Westmoreland, Woodlawn in Manchester, the Lister Mair Gilby in Kingston and St. Andrew, Randolf Lopez in Kingston and St. Andrew, the Salvation Army for the Blind in Kingston and St. Andrew and the Carberry Court Special School in Kingston and St. Andrew. (Applause) A commitment, Mr. Speaker, to provide the technology so that many of the persons who are differently challenged have economic opportunities, because we do know that they don't have the same access to economic opportunities as most able-bodied persons.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, six subject areas are going to be converted to sign language: ICT, Math, English, Biology, Building Construction and Integrated Science. And the equipment will allow those persons who are blind, who are deaf to be able to use the technology. A commitment to that community, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to what we have done with the islandwide broadband network, the community access points and these special projects, we are establishing a broadband strategy and plan and under a Caribbeanwide programme which is called the Broadband Infrastructure Inventory and Public Awareness project in the Caribbean, we are part one of about nine countries participating. The objectives of that programme:

- to deliver a broadband diagnostic and infrastructure maps;
- to review the legal regulatory framework;
- to have ICT awareness and capacity building programmes;
- and for public policy recommendations for the design of national broadband strategies.

What have we done since last year? We have revised the scope of work following consultations with our stakeholders. We have developed a project budget. A consultant evaluation process has been completed and a feasibility study has also been done to extend this to the OECS countries.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended enough to allow him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently to allow him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Mr. ROBINSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Members. (Applause)

In addition to that broadband plan and strategy, there is a very specific broadband development project, which is being done here in Jamaica, and the objective is to gain a better understanding of the GIS capabilities within the Government that would be relevant to the plan for the future design and launch of an interactive broadband coverage map. What we want to do here is have a map which shows all the broadband across the country, the areas that are deficient and it will assist us in planning. We have developed the expression of interest and the terms of reference in May - again, this is funded by the IDB through a grant. We got the no objection. The EOI was published; the deadline for submissions is June 24. We intend to sign a contract in August and for a project to be completed in two months.

DIGICEL

Mr. Speaker, now let me turn to the auctioning of the 700 MHz frequency. We indicated last year that we had special frequency that was extremely valuable and that we felt would enhance broadband coverage. The 700 MHz band is more penetrative and propagates further, which means you need fewer towers to cover a specific area. It also represents the most cost effective option for 4G technologies such as, what are termed LTEs (Long Term Evolution(s)), which allows for the faster delivery of data and the streaming of mobile devices.

Mr. Speaker, last year we had a public consultation in September. We issued a request for bids later in September. At the close of the period, Mr. Speaker, we didn't receive any bids. The Minister sought and received Cabinet approval to negotiate directly for the sale of one of the bands. And in March, this year, Mr. Speaker, the band was awarded to Digicel at a price of $25 Million and they expect to rollout this service over a five-year period.

(DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health, entered and took his seat.)

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me just say a little bit about this. When we went to the market we obviously went to the market seeking a new provider and based on the RFP that was put out, we didn't have any new takers for a new provider. Now, the only way you can determine market interest is by going to the market and the price that was put out was based on research done globally looking at what spectrums were being sold for across the world. We had to make a decision having not

received any bids as to do we keep this spectrum idle or does the Government provide the spectrum to a player, recognizing that you won't get the price that you originally wanted but recognizing that the spectrum provides an opportunity for the build-out of broadband and also an opportunity for revenue for the country both in terms of sale price and also regulatory fees and a decision was made to do that. There are two bands, Mr. Speaker one of those has been awarded to Digicel. We still have the other band, which we have in reserve, and at later stage the Government can decide how it treats with that.

Mr. Speaker, let me now move to an area which I know there is great public anxiety around: number portability - and I'll just indicate how we have managed this process. We established very early, Mr. Speaker, a number portability working group chaired by someone who has over forty years experience in the ICT industry and someone who has implemented number portability projects globally.

The working group is comprised of the Telecoms providers, the OUR and MSTEM. What have we done since last year? We issued a request for information to provide us in October and invited nine companies to present their number portability centralized database and services. This assisted the working group in scoping the services required as well as drafting the Number Portability Rules.

The telecoms providers FLOW, LIME and Digicel agreed in November last year to use the local routing number method for call routing. This cleared the way for the providers to develop detailed plans for the implementation of number portability in their networks.

The Number Portability Rules were developed and two versions were reviewed by the working group to date. And the final sets were issued to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel in April of this year.

Several meetings and there are a number of subcommittees of the working group; the Technical Business & Commercial and Legal and Regulatory subcommittees have met to deal with the issue of number portability.

We do have a challenge and I am going to speak to the House and the country about what that challenge is.

Two of the providers Digicel and FLOW have received the necessary internal approvals and budget to implement Number Portability as planned for. And the new deadline that we are working towards is May next year, and this is full number portability. One provider, LIME has indicated that they can only be ready with mobile by this period. The other two providers have indicated that they will not go ahead with number portability unless it is full, meaning both - and let me explain. You have mobile, which allows you to move from one of the two carriers to the other. You also have fixed portability which would allow you to take your fixed- line phone from one provider to the other.

LIME has not been able to indicate to us when it would be ready for full portability. And it has indicated that because of its legacy systems, that it is more challenging for them to implement number portability.

Mr. Speaker, the Government and the OUR, we are now, based on this scenario, examining the options to ensure that we can have a timely implementation. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we had a projected time frame of May this year, which clearly will not be met. We revised that and we are now working to May of next year and we have made the necessary background work in terms of the rules, the issuing of the instructions to the CPC for them to be drafted for number portability to be ready by May next year.

I now move to another area which is the Internet Exchange Points. What these are, Mr. Speaker, are - it allows Internet traffic to be routed within the country instead of being routed abroad. Right now all Internet traffic in Jamaica has to be routed through providers abroad and it is then sent back into the country. The implementation of an IXP will provide both cost savings and importantly, increase the speed of Internet access for providers in the market.

Mr. Speaker, we are working with an entity called the Package Clearing House. We have already done the initial design and we are looking at implementing this IXP in August of this year.

Why is this important? This is important because it will allow for those companies that are involved in developing products and solutions that require heavy use of the Internet to locate in areas close to where an IXP is. So, for those, for example, in animation and other areas, you can create a hub around which those companies can locate.

Mr. Speaker, we are not alone and in fact, there are many other countries in the Caribbean region, which are ahead of us in the establishment of IXPs, so we are moving quickly and we intend to have an IXP launch by August.

Let me now move to the third area which is public sector modernization.

Last year we indicated that the Central Information Technology Office which provided advice and policy direction would be wound up and incorporated into MSTEM, we did that in October. The portfolio responsibility for Fiscal Services was transferred to MSTEM in April of this year. Fiscal Services was renamed eGov in November and Fiscal Services is being repositioned from just being the implementer - it's no longer Fiscal Services, its eGov - from just being an implementer of large scale government ICT projects to having overall oversight of all of Government's expenditure, policy related to the ICT industry.

We have developed a Terms of Reference for a CIO, a Chief Information Officer who would have overall responsibility for eGov.

Now, let me again deal with some of the challenges we have had with implementing the CIO.

The role of the CIO in the new structure will be - the individual will have to have oversight of all Ministries. And will have to be in a position, for example, where they can say to a Permanent Secretary, do not implement that PBX system because we are going to be doing something else.

The challenge we have had in implementing this position is that you have to, one, have the position positioned at a level that it can attract someone who has the experience and that authority to be able to deal with the most senior public servants in our system. And secondly, to ensure that we have a package which is attractive enough so that we can find the kind of person who can drive the kind of innovation that we need.

Mr. Speaker, we developed the Terms of Reference. We have actually gotten a private consulting firm to assist us with that. We are in discussions with the Ministry of Finance to finalize how we position the CIO position within Government.

We have also, Mr. Speaker, implemented and established a National Information and Communication Technology Advisory Committee, which advises the Minister on matters related to ICT policy, and they have already started their work.

Let me now move to GovNet, Mr. Speaker.

GOV NET

GovNet is meant to be a secure wide area network backbone which will connect Government entities and Agencies, Ministries, Agencies and Departments. Right now, all Ministries, Agencies and Departments manage their own infrastructure.

We are now doing a new design for GovNet which we intend to complete by July. We were fairly down the wicket with a previous design, but we had some challenges, Mr. Speaker, in terms of developing the business case and getting the appropriate data to justify the business case.

For example, Mr. Speaker, through some mathematical modelling, we determined that in 2012 Government spent approximately US$8 Million on Government to Government calls, and for data an additional $4 Million - just somebody in Government calling somebody in Government. So we are looking at, for example, a Gov-Talk system which will eliminate the need for all of these particularly the cellular calls. So, Mr. Speaker, the new design around GovNet is something that will be ready by July of this year.

Let me now move to the e-Learning Project. And the one area of the project which I think is well known is the technology infrastructure part where 203 institutions have been provided with ICT equipment Servers, Desktops, Laptops, *et cetera*, but what is not well known, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the e-Learning Project also, through a number of components delivered instructional materials to teachers and students in 10 of the 11 CXC subjects; provided teacher training in basic ICT skills; provides remedial support and also does a continuous assessment at the Grade 7, 8, 9 levels. So the e-Learning Project has been completed. The Ministry is about to hand it back to the Ministry of Education and that continues to be a success.

The Tablets in Schools Project, Mr. Speaker, which - and out there in the Lobby those of you who saw - there was an example of a White Board and a Tablet, the same kind

of Tablets that will be used in our system.

Twenty-five thousand (25,000) Tablets are going to be distributed to 38 schools; six pre primary, 13 primary, five all-age and junior, 12 high schools, one special school which is the Windsor School in Spanish Town and a Teachers College. It involves the distribution of a computer and the multimedia devices including the White Boards projectors, scanners, printers to the schools. And it also involves the installation of Wi-Fi at these institutions.

What have we done to date?

- We have identified the applications to be used on the Tablets.
- We have negotiated with the publishers to load the Tablets and this remains a challenge, because some of the publishers want the same price that they charged for the hard-copy books for what they provide electronically, and the Ministry of Education is continuing those discussions.
- we have signed contracts with four service providers for the provision of the Tablets;
- we have trained teachers in basic ICT skills;
- we have customized training for teachers on how to utilize the Tablets;
- we have developed a Tablets in School Manual;
- we have sensitized the schools and the parents about the use and the care of the Tablets;
- and we have launched a Public Education and Awareness Campaign.

And we intend to launch this project by the beginning of the school year in August. (Applause)

Let me now move finally, Mr. Speaker, to the Innovation Enablement, the fourth pillar of the ICT Road Map. And I just want to share a little story of an app, which some of you may know, many of you may not know, it's called Floppy Bird. It's a game which was developed by this youngster who lived in Vietnam. He was somebody who played games growing up as a teenager and over a weekend he created this Floppy Bird Game.

The game went live in May last year and it was offered free of charge. Every month, Mr. Speaker, there are 25,000 new apps which come on to the market for both your - all forms, Apple and iOS platforms.

By February of this year....

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. ROBINSON: If I must translate it? Oh, you don't have one of those phones; you still have one of the older ones. (Chuckles)

This app, Mr. Speaker, was downloading more than 50 million times and the developer of this game, Mr. Speaker, estimated to be earning on a daily basis US$50,000 a day. No different, Mr. Speaker, from those youngsters who you have seen outside there who are equally developing tablets. And I am going to come to how we are treating with those young entrepreneurs and what we are doing to ensure that they become the next Floppy Bird.

Earlier this year, Mr. Speaker, we hosted

Digital Jam, which was an initiative to deal with the issue of high youth unemployment by looking at opportunities in the global economy.

Dr. DAVIES: You invite Wheatley to these things?

Mr. ROBINSON: One of his colleagues was there.

There was a regional mobile apps competition, and I am emphasizing regional. In fact, one of the teams out there is a team from Barbados. So we had nine (9) countries participate; Dominica, Barbados, Trinidad, Antigua, St. Kitts. So we had four categories of apps competition. We also provided hands-on training workshops. So we went to the community access points, the same community access points that I referred to earlier, and provided training for youngsters on how they could go online and use their computers to make money.

We also had, Mr. Speaker, a Get-up, Start-up Conference where the developers of the apps could come and present their ideas. We did this in March, what came out of this?

The first is that we have now established an Angel Investor Network. What is that? That is a network of persons who will make investments, early stage investments for young entrepreneurs who are developing apps and technology solutions.

Twenty (20) of the finalists, Mr. Speaker, were put in a virtual incubator project called the EPIC Project Entrepreneurial Programme for Innovation in the Caribbean. Two of the teams CrimeBot and Route87 have entered into an agreement with Microsoft to develop their ideas. (Applause)

Another one of the winners, Banana Bill… (Applause) ....has had this app released on the Google Play Store. (Applause) We have had over 100 persons employed using online training platforms Mobileworks and Crowdflower.

Participants in Digi-Jam. One of the categories of the Mobile Apps Competition was e-Learning. We are going to be distributing 25,000 tablets to students across the country, so we had a competition for youngsters to build an app, which could connect the e-Learning applications to what they are doing now physically in the classrooms.

We developed a partnership between the World Bank and the CDB to ensure that those persons from the OECS, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States could participate.

And, Mr. Speaker, coming out of DigiJam, there has been a design of a new Youth Employment Programme which we are currently about to approve. Mr. Speaker, after DigiJam, we recognized many of the youngsters had developed good apps, the question is, what's next? You have a good app, where do you move forward?

FILM FESTIVAL/EPIC

EPIC, which is a $20 Million programme funded by the Government of Canada, stepped in and provided a mobile boot camp for these youngsters. They provided training in technical projects, start-up teams going global,

and also how to pitch your ideas to seek funding, and they had Dragons' Den-type exercise which is a show in the US where you present your idea, and individuals determine whether they fund it.

EPIC, just yesterday at the UWI, launched what they called their Caribbean Mobile Innovation Project, where UWI, Mona has been selected as the mobile innovation coordinator. And the UWI will coordinate six mHubs. What is a mHub? These are business incubator facilities that target the mobile app developer. They identify talented entrepreneurs with high growth potential ideas, and recruit them for incubation.

Mr. Speaker, with the proliferation of mobile phones, this is an area that we believe, with the talent that we have in Jamaica, is ripe for development. (Applause) Jamaica - UWI Mona will be the hub for this and six mHubs will be developed across the Caribbean linking to UWI.

KingstOOn, Mr. Speaker, was done last year, which was an animation festival which was aimed at raising awareness of the opportunities in the animation industry. The animation industry, Mr. Speaker, globally, is worth $220 Billion. It provides significant opportunities for outsourcing, because when you see a five or ten-minute animation film, it requires many hours of design work, drawing work, speech work, *et cetera.* Many of the companies that produce animation are looking for countries to outsource the development of their content to. So, KingstOOn provided an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, for us to unearth the talent in the animation industry.

What came out of that? The first animation training programme was designed, developed and implemented by CARIMAC at the University of the West Indies with support from the World Bank and the Government of Jamaica.

And importantly, Mr. Speaker, it's one of the few programmes where everyone who graduated from the programme was actually offered a job once they graduated. We have companies here that can - the only inhibiting factor for them doing more work is the availability of trained persons in animation, and we are committed to increasing the training and providing opportunities for young animators.

But, in addition to the outsourcing opportunities, there is also an opportunity for young Jamaicans to develop their own animation content, and use that as a basis for exporting that as a service, again, consistent with our theme of not just being consumers, but becoming producers of technology.

OPEN DATA

Let me now move to what is called Open Data, which is really an initiative where government agencies make data that is non-restricted, available to the public.

Mr. Speaker, what are some of the initiatives that have taken place in this? The Mona School of Business and Management just completed a pilot in collaboration with RADA and the Ministry of Education, and they developed and demonstrated the potential of apps in assisting in the issue of praedial larceny.

One of the apps, Mr. Speaker - and, you know, this is a classic case of how technology is being used and applied, to deal with real world problems. We have spent a lot of time in here discussing the issue of praedial larceny. This mobile app will enable the police to have instant and mobile access to RADA's Farm Registration and Receipt Book System.

(Applause/*Sotto voce* comments)

A MEMBER: That was what Hutchie was talking about.

Mr. ROBINSON: The Harvest API is an open data platform for enabling better sharing of agricultural sector information.

Mr. Speaker, UWI is currently completing a study on the impact of Open Data which will help to form - inform government policy. That should be done by next month. The Government is in discussions with the World Bank to undertake an Open Data Readiness Assessment which we intend to start in September, and we intend to establish our policy and portal by December of this year.

Mobile money, Mr. Speaker, is an area which provides great promise for us within this country. We have a very high unbanked population, and we have a very high mobile penetration.

BOJ

Where are we? The Bank of Jamaica has already issued guidelines for Mobile Money. Just last week, right here in this House, Mr. Speaker, we passed the Banking Services Act, and the passage of that Legislation paved the way for commercial banks and other deposit-taking institutions to begin to use agents, in order to offer banking services.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is critical. I'll tell you what that means. Banks can now use agents to do a number of services; cash deposits and withdrawals, cash payments of Bills, transfer of funds, balance inquiries, and the collection of documents from customers. So, this opens it up for non-financial institutions to become agents which wiH facilitate mobile money.

The DBJ is close to launching its pilot which it will do in July, where it is working with microfinance institutions at providing a number of services: of loans, loan payments, balance checkups, bill payments, all *via* the mobile phone.

The BOJ has received 13 applications already for Mobile Money, and are in the process now of preparing the regulations to detail the criteria to be met for banks to utilize the agents. (Applause) So, we are making the steps to implement mobile money.

I have included, Mr. Speaker, an example of how mobile money has transformed the Kenyan economy. M-Pesa which was launched in 2007 in Kenya, now has 45,000 agents serving 18 million customers. Forty-three (43) per cent of the country's GDP flows through M-Pesa, and it has lifted financial inclusion from 23 to 80 per cent, and there are products which have developed from mobile money, which have also had a major impact.

Mr. Speaker, there is - there is a great opportunity for us, in particular with our PATH programme where many of the beneficiaries now either are provided with the

money physically in cash, or some of them use cards. The use of mobile money would reduce the delivery costs to PATH beneficiaries, free of additional resources for us to reach out to more PATH beneficiaries. We believe - a study was done, and we believe that this provides a great opportunity and a catalyst for rapid adoption of mobile money and more financial inclusion. The Microsoft - and NIS as well, the same principle applies to NIS.

MICROSOFT INNOVATION CENTRE

The Microsoft Innovation Centre which is a joint project with Microsoft, Jamaica National, and other members of the private sector, is about to be launched in collaboration with UWI. Under the banner of the Innovation Centre, four workshops have been held between Kingston and Mandeville, resulting in a number of things: the creation of a community of high schools and college developers.

One of the things we have to do, Mr. Speaker, is ensure that from a younger age, many of our youngsters are exposed to coding and developing skills. The launch of a successful mobile game called Jungle Escape has been downloaded 400,000 times. This is a game that a young Jamaican, Nicholas Brown, developed - 400,000 times.

Jamaica also has a team in the Imagine World Cup finals, which is being led by someone from UCC, Orane Campbell, and Nicolas Brown from NCU. Mr. Speaker, this again demonstrates the talent that exists in the country, and I'll now finally, Mr. Speaker, talk about how we plan to harness that talent. (Applause)

There are two main projects that we believe are critical to dealing with the issue of the growing ecosystem around innovation and entrepreneurship. The first is the Venture Capital Ecosystem project which is designed to create the legal and regulatory framework for venture capital in the country; to provide training for fund managers, and to build the expertise of local private equity individuals.

Since last year, Mr. Speaker, the Venture Capital Project hosted the first Venture Capital Conference in September, with local and international participants and presenters, which has resulted in us now being on the radar both locally and internationally. The legal and regulatory changes have been identified and will be put before Cabinet for approval.

The project sponsored a National Business Model competition, and also Digijam to encourage and promote creative and innovative thinking of our people. And the winner of the competition placed 8 out of 42 participants in an International Business Model Competition in Utah, again, giving an indication of how skilled and - the kind of talent that exists here. (Applause)

Going forward, there are a number of activities planned: training for venture capital and private equity persons, the establishment and recruitment of fund managers for specific funds, and the establishment of a Private Equity and Venture Capital Association.

START-UP JAMAICA

Finally, Mr. Speaker, *Start-Up Jamaica.* Last year we indicated that we would have a programme which would take individuals from - once they have built an app. So, we have DigiJam where people came up with great ideas. Some of them went into the EPIC programme which was a virtual incubator. The question then was, what happens next? I have a great idea, how do I take it to the next level. So, we have established what is an accelerator which is a physical facility which will take equity in start-up companies. They will go to an intensive selection process in return for seed capital, training and mentorship. The programme is generally delivered over a three to four month period at the end of which these persons graduate.

We have signed memorandum of understanding with four entities: LIME, who will be providing the equipment and the furniture for the facility; the Jamaica National Building Society which will be providing two buildings at their office on Duke Street just down the road; the Development Bank of Jamaica who has provided the funding for a consultant to do the early stage development of Start-Up Jamaica; and fourth, Mr. Speaker, Oasis500 which is an early stage seed investment company.

OASIS500

Now, who is Oasis? Oasis500 is the first development and early stage seed investment company in the Middle East and North Africa. Its programmes are aimed at supporting entrepreneurs by providing them with funding, training, incubation, coaching and mentorship to accelerate their transformation from business ideas into startups.

Mr. Speaker, they have invested in over 74 technology companies, and many of these companies, after the acceleration period, have received follow-up funding.

How will the programme work, Mr. Speaker? Once a company is - a team is selected, they will be provided with cash and in-kind support of US$30,000. Half of that will be cash; the rest represents the support of being in the incubator, and having the technical expertise there. The companies will be required to provide an equity stake, which means they will have to give up a percentage of their ownership. During that 100 day period, there will be an intense programme of training, mentorship, guidance on financial issues, intellectual property, legal, *et cetera*. Once those companies graduate, so to speak, they are then in a position to go out there and seek equity funding from providers.

Mr. Speaker, we intend to have a boot camp in September of this year, with this programme to be launched by October to November of this year. So, we now have an opportunity where young entrepreneurs will be provided with a physical facility and the funding, to take their ideas from just being ideas to where they can be businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I have outlined the work that has been done, specifically on the ICT road map over the last year. And let me be frank...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Good report.

Mr. ROBINSON: ...we have not met every single target, as defined, but we have

done substantial work in every single area, and we have substantially advanced the agenda of... (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. ROBINSON: ...of using ICT as an enabler for development and growth in the country.

I end, Mr. Speaker, by going to the Bible: What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he has faith, and have not works?
Can faith save him? Even so, faith if it has not works is dead being alone. Mr. Speaker, I have demonstrated that we have not just faith, but we have works. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear.

Mr. ROBINSON: I end, Mr. Speaker, by drawing inspiration from Isaiah 40 verse 31:

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

(Standing ovation by Government Members)

The SPEAKER: Mrs. Robinson.

(Applause)

Mrs. ROBINSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank God for his continued blessings, strength and guidance, and to state that without Him nothing that I have done and accomplished would have been possible. I want to also specially recognize and commend my family, my workers and constituents of St. Ann North East, and of course, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition for his continued faith in me as we work together to bring about real and substantive change for the betterment of Jamaica land we love. I also want to pay tribute to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who have also provided and continue to provide that critical support during my now 13 years in political representation. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I also want to put on record my thanks to the councillors of North East St. Ann, Councillor Dallas Dickenson, Councillor Delroy Giscombe, the Mayor of St. Ann's Bay from St. Ann North East, His Worship Mr. Desmond Gilmore, and Dr. Rohan Williams. (Applause)

The Opposition would like to put on record our sincere appreciation to Ms. Carole Guntley Bradey the first female head of the Jamaica Tourist Board who retired recently. We wish her well in all her future endeavours.

(Applause)

I want to also commend the contribution of Mr. John Lynch the outgoing Director of Tourism, as well as Mrs. Evelyn Smith outgoing President of the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association. (Applause) And, Mr. Speaker, at this time we want to offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Clive Taffe who passed recently, the former Deputy Director of Tourism.

Mr. Speaker, I must acknowledge my Government counterpart, the Minister of Tourism, Dr. Wykeham McNeill and thank him for his accommodating engagements.

(Applause)

The constituency of St. Ann, North East has its own challenges and peculiarities like any other constituency. The lack of affordable housing solutions continue to plague the constituency. Many persons continue to live in informal settlements even though they are contributors to the National Housing Trust.

Mr. Speaker, water lock-offs have become a constant feature, even in the urban centres of Ocho Rios and St. Ann's Bay, and the St. Ann National Water Commission continues to be inept, uncaring and unresponsive, and as we speak many communities are without water, Mr. Speaker. This is the agency that says that water is life and they are depriving the people in these communities of life.

The cry of bad roads is loud and persistent. The condition of some of the roads is deplorable, and despite my continued appeals to the relevant Ministers they have gone unheeded, much to the discomfort and peril of the motoring public and pedestrians.

Mr. Speaker, we hope to see some improvement in the road network, particularly the main arteries. From Lime Hall to St. Aim's Bay is in need of attention. The truck route from Davis Town, through to Drax Hall is also in need of attention, and we just want to point out, and there are many breakaways that need to be looked at.

Mr. Speaker, crime continues to haunt us nationally, and St. Ann North East has been experiencing a spike in murders, and this is despite the efforts of the hard working members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force. I am publicly appealing to the Minister of National Security to provide any additional resources that he can, to assist in tackling the scourge of crime that is threatening to take over the constituency.

Through the Constituency Development Fund there have been repairs to schools, there are sponsorships of football clubs and competitions, a lot of social intervention programmes, educational assistance and road rehabilitation. Mr. Speaker, we continue to respond to the needs of the people in spite of the constraints that we face.

I now turn to tourism and cruise shipping.

TOURISM SECTOR

I think that all of us will agree that the tourism and cruise shipping sector is crucial to Jamaica's success, and I am delighted at the opportunity to play my role in ensuring that this critical sector is steered into safe waters. I am thankful that most of my life has been spent in St. Ann, close to the hub of tourism activity, and Ocho Rios, as you all know is heavily dependent on tourism and ranks as one of the region's premier tourist destinations. Mr. Speaker, I am, therefore, well aware of the factors that positively and negatively impact our tourism sector.

The hallmark of leadership in the tourism sector is the capacity to articulate a vision, get key stakeholders to embrace that vision, and work feverishly to make that vision a reality.

The tourism sector under the current Administration is yet to see a clearly articulated, cohesive and credible vision. A clearly articulated vision, Mr. Speaker, facilitates meaningful partnerships among stakeholders and gives them a precise sense as

to how they fit into the scheme of things. This is not the case at present.

I am forced to arrive at this conclusion about our Tourism Industry as we still have a tremendous amount of work to do in getting our tourism sector to achieve greater levels of success. There are just simply too many people who are on the outside looking in who are getting little or no benefit from this industry. Without clearly established targets and a clearly articulated vision, Mr. Speaker, the Minister is merely left to hobble along with no sense as to where we are going and how we are going to get there.

I must say respectfully, that I am deeply concerned about the sometimes lackluster approach taken to developing our tourism industry. Let us be frank, Mr. Speaker. The average increase in arrivals during the four years of the JLP Administration ably led by the then Tourism Minister was 80,000 per year. Let us not forget, Mr. Speaker that the JLP Administration was in the throes of the 2008 global economic crisis which saw tourism sectors in neighbouring countries declining significantly.

Dr. DAVIES: You were going well until now.

Mrs. ROBINSON: The sector had a vision at the time -

(Heckling)

The sector had a vision at the time and had leadership that knew where they were going, and were clear as to the steps to be taken in getting there. By the time our Administration demitted office in 2011 we were just about 40,000 shy of the two million stopover arrivals mark.

While the Administration left arrivals at 1.96 million stopover visitors, this Administration has just managed to hit the two million mark. In effect, Mr. Speaker, it has taken this Administration all of two years to achieve what we achieved in half a year while we were in office. (Applause) We must also note, Mr. Speaker, that while we left earnings at US$2,011 Billion in 2011, last year earnings declined to US$1.9 Billion.

Opposition MEMBER: That's poor, poor, poor.

Mrs. ROBINSON: As we further examine the quantitative performance of the Tourism Sector, Mr. Speaker, it is important to consider where Jamaica fits into the global scheme of things. In terms of a regional analysis, Jamaica's 2013 stopover arrivals growth rate has fallen behind the Caribbean's average of 1.8 per cent, landing at 1.1. On the other hand, Aruba is up 8.3 per cent, the Cayman Islands is up 7.4 per cent and Belize is up at 6.1 per cent. Mr. Speaker, this Administration is underperforming at a time when it should be actually performing. After all, there is no global crisis monster hovering over them at this time. (Applause) We can do much better than this but we must get our act together.

Mr. Speaker, I endorse the call by outgoing Director of Tourism Mr. John Lynch, that we should now set our sights on four million stopover visitors *per annum*. What I find most profound if not disturbing,

however, is that this talk of four million stopover visitor arrivals is not being touted or championed by the Minister himself, it is coming from somebody who is leaving. The truth is, we have heard nothing to suggest that four million stopover arrival is an actual goal being targeted by the Ministry. So, while we have heard a titbit mention of four million stopover arrivals, this is not predicated on any definitive and credible policy by the Ministry of Tourism. The Dominican Republic, for example, has 4.5 million stopover visitor arrivals *per annum*, while Cuba has approximately 3 million, they have managed to do it. Mr. Speaker, so should we.

To highlight the extent to which the sector is underperforming I draw your attention to the clever manner in which performance in the Industry is now being reported. Mr. Speaker, tourism interests know fully well that if our winter season is not vibrant and robust in terms of growth we aren't cutting it. We have to have an excellent winter season to go through summer and fall. The winter season is that period during which rates are most lucrative. Average daily rates are at their best during the winter season and are usually much higher in yield than that of any other period during the calendar year. In terms of share numbers it is the winter season that usually gives us bang for buck. So the four per cent growth this past winter, that many are quick to gloat about, especially against the backdrop of a very low base as per winter 2012/2013, is by no means flattering. Winter is simply too important a period for us to be dropping the ball in the way we have been.

If that were not enough, Mr. Speaker, I must point out that we have also been underperforming as it relates to having a real and substantive impact on the lives of our people in our main tourism centres. The tourism pie is huge. We have a duty however, to ensure that ordinary Jamaicans are not being deprived of their slice of the pie. Mr. Speaker, some of them believe that they are not even getting the crumbs from the pie.

Mr. Speaker, I have listed just a few of the critical matters that the Minister of Tourism must move to address with a sense of urgency. I want to talk about cruise shipping.

CRUISE SHIPPING

Cruise shipping for the most part has been treated like the stepchild of the sector. This is regrettable as it offers multiple opportunities for growth, therefore, the Minister must move to ensure that we not only increase cruise arrivals but that we effectively spread the benefits across the ports so as to increase the benefits for the people of Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica's cruise ship arrivals last year were down by four per cent over 2012. Broken down we see where Ocho Rios was down by 3.2 per cent and Montego Bay down by a whopping 29.8 per cent.

Opposition MEMBERS: What? What?

Mrs. ROBINSON: Falmouth on the other hand registered an increase of ten per cent. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it is noteworthy that the Falmouth cruise port welcomed nearly half of the 1.2 million cruise visitors last year. While we are pleased with the growth in Falmouth we can do much better there too. I

am seriously concerned about the way in which our cruise shipping sector is being managed. Mr. Speaker, it has now come to my attention that Carnival Breeze, one of the largest ships built for carnival cruises, as of May 2015 will no longer call on Ocho Rios, they are instead going to go to Falmouth. We are looking at a fall off of approximately 100,000 visitors per annum and this is just for Ocho Rios alone. We cannot afford for this to happen. Our tourism product cannot afford this kind of dislocation. Mr. Speaker, businesses will close, people will lose their jobs.

Mr. D. SMITH: You guys mash it up.

Mrs. ROBINSON: Ocho Rios and Montego Bay cannot be allowed to suffer devastating falloffs in cruise ship traffic. I call on the Minister to immediately pull together a multi stakeholder team to work towards ensuring that we boost the berthing capacity and increase cruise ship arrivals, we effectively balance the cruise ship traffic spread across the resort towns, and to include Port Antonio that has a massive potential for exclusive boutique tourism. (Applause)

And, also, that we make our resort towns more attractive and tourist friendly, so as to attract more visitors to disembark and spend much needed foreign exchange.

Mr. Speaker, I again urge the Minister of the importance of moving now, as we face a crisis on our hands if current trends continue.

Mr. Speaker, the window of opportunity to reverse or to get the *Carnival Breeze* to come back in 2016 is closing. We have between now, Minister, between now and October to negotiate with *Carnival*, to make arrangements to bring the *Carnival Breeze* back to Ocho Rios in 2016. We implore that he does that, because the people of Ocho Rios and St. Ann - because it's not just Ocho Rios people who benefit from the tourism trade and cruise shipping in Ocho Rios, it is the parish of St. Ann that will suffer, and suffer greatly. I cannot overemphasize the importance of renegotiating to get the *Breeze* to come back, and even more ships to come to Ocho Rios.

Mr. Speaker, why are they leaving? Why are they leaving? It is because of the condition of the port facilities. It is because cruise liners, *Carnival*, and every other cruise liner, want their passengers to experience - to have the best on-land experience, and currently it is not happening. And, I say to the Minister, it is not your fault, but I am saying to you, address it and address it with alacrity.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mrs. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, I now turn to Community Tourism. I am pleased to see that the Ministry of Tourism is moving on getting in place a Community Tourism Policy and Strategy. According to the Ministry, the Community Tourism Vision is:

> "An invigorated tourism sector in communities that enriches community quality of life through social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits, exemplifies sustainable livelihoods, and strengthens Jamaica's national policy values and interests."

Mr. Speaker, while our all-inclusive hotels

have done very well - and we are absolutely proud of that - we simply cannot ignore the fact that communities have suffered from the lack of interaction with tourists. Whilst we are of course mindful of the concerns about crime, safety and other issues, we must, as a policy priority, shift significant financial and technical resources into building up community tourism. From an economic standpoint, the possibilities are endless and from an experiential standpoint, it is the way to go.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to move Jamaica's tourism beyond sun, sand and sea. While this is what we are predominantly known for, the global tourism industry is seeing more and more travellers wanting a varied vacation experience. Jamaica's culture is world renowned. It is time to showcase the cultural, authentic and indigenous image of Jamaica. It is time to extract the best of our culture for our tourists to see upfront and personal. After all, when people go on vacation they are seeking to enjoy experiences which they would not have at home.

It is time for the Jamaican people to see for themselves the importance of tourism, and what better way to have them know this, than to get more and more of our visitors outside of walled enclaves and treading through the communities and interacting with our people.

Opposition MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, we note the concerns, we do. But if we are serious about reaching four million stopover visitors, we must focus more energy in community tourism. Picture this, Mr. Speaker, Usain Bolt's, Yohan Blake's or Shelly-Ann Frazer-Pryce's childhood communities being developed into tourist attractions. This will boost infrastructure development of the communities and generate local employment. It's done in other areas, so we can do it.

Mr. Speaker, I call on the Minister to leave no stone unturned in this endeavour. True success, and frankly, the very survival of this sector is dependent on community tourism.

Mr. Speaker, the craft vendors, they are in crisis. Many of them feel cheated and are crying foul, as they believe that there is a deliberate strategy to prevent them from making any sales. Mr. Speaker, a visit to the Harbour Street Craft and Cultural Village in Montego Bay, offered an opportunity to hear their cries. These craft vendors have lamented that business is extremely bad, and they feel sidelined and marginalized.

Mr. Speaker, one of the craft vendors shared that there were days when she would be left in tears as she did not even have bus fare to go home; and another showed a craft item that had gone unsold for the last 35 years.

Mr. Speaker, this is...

Dr. DAVIES: Thirty-five years!

Mrs. ROBINSON: Yes, that is antique now. This is how hard it is for our craft vendors.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mrs. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, I moved a Private Members' Motion in Parliament late last year, with regards to the state of the craft

industry, which sparked vibrant and instructive debate. During the debate, I recommended that the craft industry should be under the direct supervision and control of a single government ministry. Currently, they are managed by various organizations, including the respective Parish Councils, UDC and different authorities. Mr. Speaker, I further stated that the island's craft markets were in need of upgrading and refurbishing in order to enhance their aesthetics. I trust that the Minister will deliver on the commitments he has given to this most vital sector.

Opposition MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, just to say that I don't need to remind the House of the challenges that confronted jet ski operators, and some of the gravely unfortunate incidents that have occurred. The Minister has given the jet-ski operators in Ocho Rios, the go-ahead to resume operations. However, Mr. Speaker, they are finding the US Two Thousand (US$2,000.00) a year insurance costs extremely prohibitive.

Mr. Speaker, there is a reluctance on the part of insurance companies - and while neither myself nor the Minister can tell them how to run their businesses, there is a reluctance on their part to engage in a system of payment by installments. I am appealing to the Minister to see if he can intervene, and how best he can help to resolve this situation. Because we must bear in mind that these operators were out of work during the time of the ban, so they weren't earning any money. This is how they earn their living, and they have had to spend money to become compliant, only now to be met with this Two Thousand US (US$2,000,000) insurance. So, we ask the Minister to see what he can do.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the former Minister, the Member from East Central St. James, for his sterling work in increasing airlift into Jamaica. Had it not been for this and other timely initiatives on his part, Jamaica would have slipped badly during and following the 2008 global economic crisis.

Mr. Speaker, the current Minister is no doubt cognizant of the importance of airlift. It is a difficult area in the tourism sphere and requires hands-on and daily attention. I am encouraged by news of the increased airlift out of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Europe.

However, Mr. Speaker, I am seriously concerned about the suspension of non-stop flights from Moscow, Russia to Jamaica. Russia, after all, is a serious growth market, given its expanding middle-class and horrid winters. Despite the challenges in Russia, especially in its economy and recent geopolitical events, its potential is still huge. As such, I urge the Minister to work hard at ensuring that service resumes for the upcoming winter tourist season, and is sustained in going forward. The Russian market is key to the long-term development of a diversified tourism sector; we cannot miss the boat.

On another note, Mr. Speaker, I also encourage the Minister to continue to redouble efforts on the Latin American market, where

huge growth potential resides. I also encourage the Minister, to make a special effort in cornering more of the world's most populous continent, Asia. There, Mr. Speaker, exists a burgeoning middle-class stretching from China through to India. Let's just seriously explore the tremendous possibilities. Let us work hard at achieving that four million stopover visitors.

Mr. Speaker, we are a responsible Opposition, and we are disturbed by the levels of violence on the periphery of major resort areas. It is always difficult to estimate and measure the precise impact that crime and violence have on the performance of a destination and its tourism product.

What we can be sure of, however, is that we are living in the information age where information is readily available to persons at the touch of a button.

Mr. Speaker, like any other buying decision, persons considering travel and vacation do engage in research and take multiple factors into consideration. Clearly, the levels of crime and overall safety of a destination would rank highly among them. I do not doubt, Mr. Speaker, that crime does in fact have an impact on the potential of our tourism sector. It is uppermost in the minds of hoteliers, attraction owners, restaurant and store owners, and all other stakeholders.

It is incumbent on us to reduce the levels of crime, to enhance the overall safety of our destination and compensate for negatives such as crime, by presenting and highlighting more of our strengths, for example, the natural beauty of our country, our unique culture and the warmth of our people.

(MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, I hereby call on the Minister, again, to practice joined-up governance by strengthening coordination with the Ministry of National Security, the Police, the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association, and other critical stakeholders, in tackling the monster of crime and violence.

Mr. Speaker, as we seek to better spread the benefits of the tourism sector, I am pleased to see that the Tourism Economic Linkages Committee, conceptualized by our Administration, is benefiting from continuity.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica cannot continue to have hoteliers and other tourism interests importing food, furniture and other goods and services that can be produced and supplied here in Jamaica, and in many cases, at competitive prices. Whilst there have been serious concerns about the price, quality and consistency of supply of local products and services, and while these issues are being addressed, we must still seek to deepen the linkages between the tourism industry and others, especially the manufacturing and agriculture industries.

I am disturbed, however, that in seeking to

make the linkages hub a reality, the Government put the proverbial cart before the horse. The Committee was put in place, but the preparatory work, the data-gathering effort, in particular, that would inform the work of the Committee, was not completed.
As a result, we have a situation where the Committee is in place but the data that would drive and inform their work is not in place.

Going forward, I trust that the Economic Linkages Committee will concentrate considerable effort on bridging gaps between demand from the sector and supplies of locally derived goods and services; informing an increasing number of stakeholders of its existence, and promoting the hub as a generator of business opportunities for micro, small and medium-sized entities.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Member from South Central St. Catherine, in his Sectoral presentation yesterday, spoke to the controversy surrounding the Negril Breakwater system. As Spokesperson for Tourism, I am seriously concerned about government's plans, led by the Planning Institute of Jamaica and the National Environment and Planning Agency, to put in place a system that has sparked furious, sustained and legitimate objections from stakeholders in Negril and other persons here and abroad. It is more than obvious that a major breakdown in the process of consultation occurred here.

Whilst cognizant, Mr. Speaker, of the beach erosion challenges in Negril, the breakwater solution being put forward - which has been heavily criticized by experts in the field - is simply unacceptable. Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, the damage that this project will do to Negril from an economic and environmental standpoint is simply too much. It cannot stand.

I call on the Minister of Tourism, who happens to be the Member of Parliament for much of Negril, to break his silence and with immediate effect consult with the stakeholders. This problem is not just a Negril problem, it is a national problem. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, beach nourishment, which is less expensive and environmentally friendly, has been proposed by respected authorities and must be looked into seriously. I look forward to immediate action on this matter.

Mr. Speaker, this Negril breakwater disaster, I am sure has taught the Government one major lesson, and that is the importance of real consultations, not Anancy-like consultations, real consultations with the people.

Mr. Speaker, all of Jamaica is aware of the tough economic circumstances. We are also aware of the realities and the issues concerning taxation, waivers and incentives for the tourism sector.

As we adjust, Mr. Speaker, there needs to be frank and open conversation with all stakeholders. We must see to it that whatever is done is simple, fair and positive in its impact on this critical sector. We must be mindful of the highly competitive nature of the regional tourism industry, and we must all be guided by the need to ensure that Jamaica has a competitive edge if we are serious about expanding the industry.

TEF/TPDCo

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the Tourism Enhancement Fund and the Tourism Product Development Company. Are we satisfied with the performances of the Tourism Enhancement Fund and the Tourism Product Development Company? Mr. Speaker, whatever the answer is, we cannot negate the simple fact that more and more questions are being raised about both entities.

The Tourism Enhancement Act allows for a tourism enhancement fee of US$20 to be charged to incoming airline passengers and US$2 to be charged to cruise passengers. The monies collected are to be paid into a dedicated Tourism Enhancement Fund. The Tourism Master Plan provides framework in which the TEF will fulfill its mandate of promoting growth and development in the tourism sector, encouraging better management of environmental resources in Jamaica; enhancing the country's overall tourist experience and providing for the sustainable development of the tourism sector.

Mr. Speaker, is the Tourism Enhancement Fund effectively fulfilling its mandate? The state of our resort town still leaves a lot to be desired. Once you come to Ocho Rios and you turn left, you go east of the Jamaica Grande gate, you really wonder if you're in a resort town; and much could be done there.

Mr. Speaker, as for the TPDCo, it is the central agency mandated by the Government of Jamaica to facilitate the maintenance, development and enhancement of the tourism product. I will not discount some of the good work done, but I'm concerned with the way in which the TPDCo is being operated.

In March, I had tabled a number of questions; they fell off of the Question Paper but I'm going to ask them again. I want to ask the Minister whether there has been any significant adjustments in the company's mandate since the current Administration took office in January 2012. And the Minister is yet to identify, based on projections in the 2013/2014 expenditure budget, the special projects TPDCo proposed to embark on during this said financial year.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister has to update the House as to what portion of TPDCo's special projects budget has been actually used to date.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time be extended to allow her to complete her presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently for her to complete her presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Mrs. Robinson.

(Applause)

Mrs. ROBINSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, thank you colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister needs to update the House as to what portion of TPDCo's special projects budget has been actually used to date, and we would like the Minister to outline the rationale or justification provided

by TPDCo in respect of its special projects expenditure to date.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Minister is yet to indicate whether he's satisfied, we'd like him to indicate whether he's satisfied with the level of budget absorption and the stewardship of TPDCo's leadership in this regard. Because the special projects have not been undertaken and the reason given is that the implementing agencies have not implemented them, which we find unacceptable. Mr. Speaker, I would like answers to these questions, it is the public's business.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to close and as I close I again reiterate the need to set our sights on four million stopover visitors *per annum*. The entire Ministry, its Agencies, Stakeholders and all of Jamaica must be seized of the importance in achieving this goal. Mr. Speaker, I have a number of critical issues for the Minister to address, some are easier to address than others, some of course, require multi-stakeholder and inter-ministerial coordination and oversight. We look forward to them being addressed. Mr. Speaker, rest assured, if we focus our minds all is possible.

Thank you and God bless you as we all strive to build a better Jamaica.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Silvera.

(Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: A yuh a goh gi trouble yah now?

Mr. SILVERA: Be quiet down there.

Mr. McKENZIE: Half hour mi a gi yuh enuh.

Mr. SILVERA: Mr. Speaker, last year's presentation in this Sectoral Debate was a very special one for me, as it marked my first contribution as Member of Parliament for the great constituency of Western St. Mary.

(Applause)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Yuh only have a few more; just a few more.

A MEMBER: Yea.

Mr. SILVERA: A few more years - terms. (Laughs)

I wish to express my deepest appreciation to the constituents of Western St. Mary for choosing me to represent them in this Honourable House.

I want to thank Members of both sides of this House for their kind reception and support given to me both inside and outside the walls of this Honourable House. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, were it not for the diligent and the meticulous efforts of the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller in leading this Administration, Jamaica's debt to GDP ratio would not be on the decline and the overall economy would not have gained - experienced growth over the past two years.

(Applause)

Madam Prime Minister, I salute you.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will oblige me as I acknowledge and recognize the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller's exemplary leadership of the People's National Party. Comrade Leader, you continue...

Mr. McKENZIE: No man, dis a nuh Old Hope Road yuh nuh.

Mr. SILVERA: Relax.

(Cross talks)

Mr. SILVERA: …Prime Minister, you continue to lead…

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. CHUCK: The Most Honourable Prime Minister.

Mr. SILVERA: The Most Honourable Prime Minister, you continue to lead with a firm and fair hand and I bid you the highest respect. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the presence - I think she's here, my love Melissa, who is undoubtedly in my mind, is one of the most bold and beautiful and brilliant women I have had the pleasure of knowing. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Yuh know sey a family... (Inaudible)

Mr. SILVERA: Huh?

Mr. McKENZIE: Yuh know sey a family... (Inaudible)

Mr. SILVERA: Who?

A MEMBER: Stop listening to him. Go wey!

(Laughter)

Mr. SILVERA: Shut up!

Mr. P. BUCHANAN: Yuh lose aready!

Mr. SILVERA: She has been the beacon of unwavering support in all my endeavours. Melissa is the mother of my two handsome sons Adam and Aden. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. SILVERA: I want to recognize my first daughter Joelle, who is also here, and the pair of my twin children Cieran and Jhordan, who live overseas. (Applause)

I also want to acknowledge the presence of my mother Cynthia... (Applause) ...Rachel and her husband David, my mother-in-law Leslene, Melissa's mother, who has supported me from the inception. (Applause)

Collectively, Mr. Speaker, these people provide me daily with stability, happiness and joy and I thank them for their unconditional love and support.

A MEMBER: Of course.

Mr. SILVERA: To my brothers Stefan and Ryan who are overseas, and my wider family, I send a special thanks for providing me with a firm foundation support system.

Mr. Speaker, I owe a debt of gratitude to quite a number of persons who continue to work seamlessly in perpetuity under my leadership as Member of Parliament.

To my constituency executives, supportive and performing councillors, administrative staff, constituency workers, personal staff, my personal security, friends, colleagues and well wishers, I thank you for never losing focus of the fact that together, we restored a sense of integrity and decency to the constituency. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. SILVERA: Last year I stated in my presentation to this Honourable House, the need for Jamaica to undergo sustainable change. Mr. Speaker, I identified food security and energy security as the fundamental pillars of the country's economy, that in my view, are drivers for real creation of sustainable change, which is the type of change that would grant Jamaica its economic security.

Mr. Speaker, as I have not yet had the esteemed privilege to serve as a Member in an

Administrative capacity with a portfolio sector, I embrace the fortune of having the freedom to speak at liberty, on all full spectrums of national and global issues that have been brought to this Honourable House.

TRADE TREATY

Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago, I took part in Parliamentary deliberations which are required in order to ratify the terms of the Arms Trade Treaty in a conference hosted by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. I am pleased to acknowledge that Jamaica has now signed the treaty, and commend the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their prompt facilitation of the Government's position on this matter.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. SILVERA: I want to take the opportunity to send greetings to our brothers and sisters in Lomé, Togo who embraced Jamaica, and received me warmly as a Jamaican during my visit, and especially during the celebration on African Liberation Day. Mr. Speaker, it became abundantly clear to me, that Jamaica still enjoys the goodwill created by our forefathers, who placed Jamaica as the fore-runner of international action in the form of sanctions imposed on South Africa against Apartheid.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I find myself inspired by our forefathers, our leader, our former leaders of this sovereign nation and more specifically these words of Michael Manley:

"The Constitution of a country has to evolve just as well as its laws, because all of it is part of the total fabric of change".

This year, having discussed the need for sustainable change, my presentation to the Honourable House will consider looking at other aspects of change, which are fundamental to the successful continuity of Jamaica as a sovereign state.

Before coming to the heart of the matter, Mr. Speaker, I would like to report on progress made in the constituency this year...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. SILVERA: ...and highlight a few current concerns. Agriculture still remains the primary provider for majority of our constituents in the Western St. Mary.

To that end, I conceptualized developing a community type Agro Park in the constituency, where farming individuals or groups would have the opportunity to enter into partnership agreements with private sector stakeholders to produce Irish potato for the 2013 crop year. Mr. Speaker, birthed from that idea, the "Women and Youth Agriculture Project" was launched.

Fifty three women and youth farmers participated in this project. (Applause) Over 100,000 pounds of additional Irish potatoes were produced in the constituency, for supply exclusively to our local hotel industry. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture Honourable Roger Clarke, was very encouraged during his visit to Western St.

Mary. I want to thank the Minister for his resounding support to the Women and Youth Agriculture Project.

I also want to thank the farmers who participated and the private sector stakeholders CKL Trading, for the successful implementation of this mutually beneficial project.

Mr. Speaker, additionally, an investment of $3.7 Million from the CDF was used to provide Western St. Mary farmers with needed assistance in the form of procurement of feeds, farm tools, fertilizers, chicken and land preparation.

EDUCATION

We invested in early childhood education in the constituency this year, Mr. Speaker, and opened the Church of Christ Basic School in Gayle. (Applause) Work is now underway for the completion of the Trinity Evangelistic Basic School in Bamboo Walk.

As was instituted last year, the top GSAT boy and girl received scholarships from the CDF and we're seeing an improvement in GSAT passes in Mathematics and in English Language.

Mr. Speaker, one of our prominent secondary level institutions suffered a treacherous act of arson last month. The Tacky High School's administrative building and canteen suffered severe damages from a fire, taking with it irreplaceable school records dating back to the school's opening in 1978.

Mr. SILVERA: Mr. Speaker, let us learn from this misfortune and move swiftly to storing our school records in electronic archives. I would like to commend the firefighters and members of Gayle and its surrounding communities for their assistance in arresting the fire and also acknowledge the responsive action undertaken by the Minister of Education, the Honourable Ronald Thwaites, to provide the required governmental resources which saw the prompt resumption of classes.

Mr. Speaker, in light of this tragedy, approximately 67% of my resources as Member of Parliament for Labour Day activities in the constituency was used to execute work on the improvement of the building currently in use at the Tacky High School. (Applause) In fact, Mr. Speaker, I took it one step further and invited members of the private sector to come on board with my initiatives in collaboration with the principal of the Tacky High School; Tacky High School Labour Day Project was launched.

Mr. Speaker, over 700 persons participated on Labour Day. Various groups represented, including the Tacky Teachers' Association, Parents Association, Irie FM, the Ministry of Education, Heart Trust/NTA, Jamaica National Building Society, Total Tools, RADA, Past Students Association, the PNPYO, the G2K, Kingston College, Ocho Rios College and several other Western St. Mary communities. (Applause) We were able to paint 17 classrooms, constructed a facade wall to block direct view of the burnt area, painted corridors and ceilings, painted the male and female bathrooms and trees were planted.

I want to thank 15 private sector sponsors that contributed to make this project a success. And I acknowledge, in particular, Mr. Leonard Henry, the CEO of Couples for facilitating the overall private sector effort. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I must commend the constituents of Western St. Mary who came out to participate and in doing so showed the true spirit of Jamaicans.

I want to recognize the presence of the Principal of the Tacky High School in the Gallery, Mr. Errol Basco (Applause) and commend him, the teachers and the administrative staff for their professionalism and for steering the course.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to contributions to infrastructure of these schools, a further $3.7 was spent from my CDF to assist some 300 students with their back-to-school expenditures.

The United Nations Equator Initiative represents outstanding local achievement in advancing sustainable development solutions for people, nature and resilient communities. Mr. Speaker, out of 1,234 nominations from 121 countries around the world, Western St. Mary, Jeffrey Town Farmers Association was one of seven winners, Mr. Speaker, from the Latin America and Caribbean Region. (Applause)

I want to acknowledge the presence of the President of the Jeffrey Town Farmers Association Mr. Wordsworth Gordon who has been awarded the Prime Minister's Badge of Honour for Long Service in the field of Agriculture. Welcome, Mr. Gordon, and his wife. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I also want to acknowledge a shining example of our youth who has a passion for her community and is a dedicated change agent in the constituency. Please allow me to welcome to the House Miss Kadesha Croney who is the Western St. Mary's recipient of the Prime Minister's Youth Award for the category of Youth in Service. Kadesha, I want to encourage you to keep up the good work and inspire more of your peers to be the change agent as well. (Applause)

As Member of Parliament, I work very closely and collaborate in a nonpartisan manner with these and other community leaders on an individual basis or through the CBOs or the CDCs. In that regard, I have to big them up when they are recognized globally and nationally for excellence. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Housing Programme under JEEP facilitated the issuance of 20 houses in year one and this year a further 15 houses will be given to the vulnerable and the needy persons in the constituency.

A shelter was constructed at the Gayle Clinic in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. I want to thank the Minister, Honourable Fenton Ferguson for his facilitation.

Last year the constituency experienced significant damage from Sandy. This year the flood rains of January caused severe damages to roads leading to Grants Town, Days Mountain, Canupon and in addition to roads leading from Eden Hill to Jacks River, residents were marooned in these communities as a result of the damages.

Mr. Speaker, contracts totalling J$83 Million were tendered and awarded for the repair of these roads inclusive of drainage structures and repaving. In Days Mountain the work is 80% completed; in Grants Town the work is 60% completed and in Canupon the work is 40% completed.

The repairs continue, Mr. Speaker. The river training exercise has been completed in Jacks River and the road has now resumed service to Eden Hill. Additionally, work is underway for the rehabilitation of road from Frankfurt to Cascade and the contract for implementation has now been awarded.

Mr. Speaker, Western St. Mary JEEP continues to have a positive impact on our residents. In addition to receiving houses a contract has now been signed and work is scheduled to commence in short order for the total rehabilitation of all the roads in the Arcadia Housing Scheme.

I want to thank the Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, the Honourable Dr. Omar Davies for his professionalism and sound leadership of this crucial Ministry. I want to recognize the Minister of State the Honourable Richard Azan in the Ministry of Transport, Works on Housing for his diligent facilitation of these works.

Water still remains a major concern in the Northern and Eastern section of the constituency. Mr. Speaker, there is an ongoing crisis for the lack of potable water for many of our residents. I want to commend this Portia Simpson Miller-led Administration for making water a priority issue on the Government's agenda. (Applause)

In fact, Mr. Speaker, ten years after the launch of a project to provide potable water to the residents of Mile Gully and Warwick Castle, the water supply system was finally commissioned representing $60 Million investment.

I want to thank the Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Robert 'Bobby' Pickersgill for his sound stewardship...

(Applause)

Mr. CHUCK: You like to hear that, Bobby.

Mr. SILVERA: ...which saw to the long overdue completion of this project.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to emphasize to the Minister and this Honourable House the need to execute the planned Mason Hall Water Supply Project, which would provide potable water for the first time to over 5,000 residents in Western St. Mary.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to a brief moment to our agriculture sector. Born and grown in the banana farming household right in the constituency of Western St. Mary, the matter of promoting agro business entrepreneurship to the youth of our nation is very near and dear to my heart.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that Jamaica as a member of the African Caribbean and Pacific States benefitted from the Banana Protocol annexed as Protocol 5 to the Lomé Convention which provided Jamaica with a framework to supply its bananas to European Markets on a preferential basis.

Mr. Speaker, in 1996 the Latin America Banana Producers and the American owned multinational corporations challenged the Banana Protocol in the World Trade Organization. This resulted in the Banana Protocol being revised under the successor agreement to the Lomé, the Cotonou Agreement which came into being on June 23, 2000. This new partnership placed emphasis on the EU providing Jamaica and other ACP States with the technical assistance rather than trade.

Mr. Speaker, under the Cotonou Agreement Jamaica Banana Industry became to an abrupt halt leaving the breadbasket constituencies such as Western St. Mary to undergo very hard economic times.

Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the preferential trade incentives, I want to recognize the Government's intervention to promote domestic incentives to farmers through its agro-park initiatives. I must commend and pay much respect to the Minister of Agriculture for this precise and timely action.

CARICOM

I want to take this opportunity, however, to remind this Honourable House that the Cotonou Agreement expires in 2020 and we must now initiate discussions through CARICOM with the EU to advocate for the return of trade incentives similar to that of the Banana Protocol (Applause) especially, Mr. Speaker, within the context that Jamaica, though it has a population of over one point five million, it is recognized as a vulnerable small state by the EU, which we all agree needs economic protection.

Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. SILVERA: Mr. Speaker, out of - the Minister of Agriculture is now currently engaged in these types of discussions relating to sugar as Jamaica hosted the International Sugar Organization's 45th Council Session in Montego Bay a few weeks ago. I have every confidence in him and in our leader who is charged with the responsibility of CARICOM external trade negotiations that Jamaica has the best representation and reap fruitful outcomes on these international trade discussions. This brings me to a matter of our country's food security.

I want to acknowledge the food security policy that has been drafted for Jamaica which highlights technological advancement and research and development as a part of Jamaica's strategic initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, to this end I have facilitated a scholastic delegation in my constituency to tour our farm lands and check the quality of the soil in order to determine its suitability for potential opportunities to implementing their field experiments.

Mr. Speaker, I have a letter in my hand here of intent from Delaware State University that affirms their interest in performing a pilot study on lands in Western St. Mary utilizing clean seed technology for Irish potato production. (Applause)

Mr. SHAW: You are going to have to add Christiana to that.

Mr. SILVERA: No problem. I am speaking for the benefit of Jamaica on the whole. (Applause)

Government MEMBER: Yuh nuh have nuh seed up deh.

Mr. SHAW: We sow all of them.

Mr. SILVERA: This targeted seed production and capacity building project is focused on the global priority food crop Irish potato. It is a collaboration with Centres of Excellence and Delaware University and Canadian Universities. Mr. Speaker, farmers will learn about the state- of-the-art techniques as well as to develop a value chain for potato seed production. Too often our farmers suffer upon reaping their crops due to lower yields than expected. There are several variables that traditional farmers consider when rationalizing their loss. These are often attributed to improper land preparation, to improper herbicide and pesticide application. However, one variable that is rarely considered is whether or not the seed that is planted is actually clean. In other words, free from disease and viruses.

Mr. Speaker, as a result adopting techniques to ensure the seeds we are planting are clean, farmers with Irish potato capacity will increase productivity which will strengthen Jamaica's food security and contribute to reducing our food importation bill.

The intent is to work with the relevant agencies of the Ministry of Agriculture such as the Scientific Research Council and RADA to:

One, support capacity building to establish potato seed production programmes leading to certifications.

Two, provide training demonstrations to promote the use of benefits of the Irish potatoes seed system.

Three, facilitate national integration efforts aimed at developing and implementing potatoes seed certification regulations and procedures.

I look forward, Mr. Speaker, to facilitate a meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture in order to discuss a national collaboration in this regard.

I now turn to Constitution Reform.

Mr. Speaker, my closing remarks in last year's presentation to this Honourable House referenced Norman Manley, who told us that the task of his generation has been completed. As he has given us the political independence, yet 52 years have passed and we have not exercised our rights granted to us by those who fought long and hard for our freedom to amend our Constitution through an Act of Parliament to bring Jamaica to a status of a republic state.

Mr. Speaker, as early as 1974, Michael Manley addressed this Honourable House and indicated his feelings that after 12 years of Independence, it was time that Jamaica had a look at its Constitution. He felt that this was the time to carry out a general review of how it was working its appropriateness to the needs and aspirations of the Jamaican people. By 1981, Michael Manley took a more resolute position when he said,

"The time has come for Jamaica now to move rapidly to cut the link with the monarchy and to become a republic."

Mr. Speaker, so cognizant of the fundamental importance of reform of Jamaica's Constitution was he, that in his maiden budget presentation to this Honourable House, as Prime Minister, the Most Honourable PJ Patterson made it in his first order of business to address suggestions presented by then Leader of Opposition on the matter and affirm that the exercise of constitutional reform has now acquired urgency.

We must not forget 1994, when P.J. Patterson rose in this Honourable House and stated his intent to Jamaicanize our Constitution through an Act of the Jamaican Parliament and in 2001, when he said,

"The process towards our self-definition as a people must now be accelerated, the institution of own indigenous President as Head of State in the Republic of Jamaica must now be placed on the front-burner of the public's agenda."

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, during 2006 budget debate contribution, our Leader the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller also rose in this Honourable House to affirm her position that there is now no major obstacle standing in the way of any agreement necessary to change the Constitution to a republic form of Parliamentary Government.

As a representation of her strong resolve of this issue, my Leader issued the charge to her generation during her inaugural address as Prime Minister in 2012 as she said,

"As we celebrate our achievements and as an independent nation, we now need to complete the circle of Independence. In this regard, we will, therefore, initiate the process for our detachment from the monarchy to become a Republic with our own indigenous President as Head of State."

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, as a citizen of the United Kingdom through naturalization, I identify with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as the longest serving living symbol of Great Britain and respect her. However, I am a proud citizen of Jamaica, born and raised in Jamaica who now serves the Jamaican people.

To this end, Mr. Speaker, I want to place my voice which hails from the backbench of this Honourable House writing to the vanguard of revolutionizing Jamaica's constitutional identity and join the voices with my Leader, Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller former Prime Minister P.J. Patterson and former Prime Minister Michael Manley, who collectively represents three out of four Presidents of the greatest political movement in the western hemisphere for the People's National Party.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: The speaker's time to complete his presentation has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended to allow him to complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the speaker's time be extended so as to allow him to complete his presentation.

Motion put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Silvera.

Mr. SILVERA: Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is overdue its status as a republic.

(Applause)

JAMAICA REPUBLIC

We must honour our forefathers and act on the power granted to us by the representatives of the people, so that our children can identify with the living symbol of Jamaica, a Jamaican President, who remains relevant to Jamaica and the majority of Jamaican people.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the media's handling of the broadcasting of the Throne Speech this year at the opening of the Houses of Parliament, can be used to personify what I mean by maintaining relevance to the populace of Jamaica.

The media in their wisdom determine that the sentencing of the popular musical artist Vybz Kartel was more news worthy than the Governor General who represents the Queen our Head of State. In the airing of the Governor General's Throne Speech was interrupted to celebrate the life of a man convicted for murder, who is loved and identified with the populace of Jamaica as 'World Boss'.

Mr. Speaker, if we, as those elected by the people do not...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. PRYCE: What you say world boss bigger than GG?

Mr. SILVERA: Mr. Speaker, if we as those elected by the people do not set the foundation for our people's self-definition and constitutional identity, then they will fall on that cultural icon who emerges with the resolve to leave them, who provides them with a typical cultural definition of whom they are the people, causing the evolution of what is known as Jamaican subculture into a redefined culture. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, please indulge me as I make a biblical reference. The Israelites at Mount Sinai who were waiting on Moses to return with the Ten Commandments, a set of laws that would define them as a people and provide a guideline for how they should live, after just having gained their independence from Egypt decided that Moses was taking too long to return, this drove them to create their own idols made of gold, essentially false gods, that in their minds would define their identity as a people.

Mr. Speaker, we saw similar happenings in 2010, the emergence of Christopher 'Dudus' Coke known throughout the length and breadth of this country as President. The Constituency of West Kingston seemed to have been operated as its own little republic state within Jamaica having elected its president who is, in the constituents' minds...

Mr. McKENZIE: Weh him come from - shut up.

A MEMBER: Boy, you get touchy eh seh man, how you get touch suh?

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. McKenzie)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. SILVERA: Mr. Speaker, I seek your protection, sir.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Members on both side, please allow Mr. Silvera to complete his presentation. Continue please.

Mr. Silvera continue, please.

Mr. SILVERA: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we saw similar happenings in 2010, with the emergence of Christopher 'Dudus' Coke, known throughout the length and breadth of this country as President. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments from Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. SILVERA: Mr. Speaker, the Member from West Kingston has asked me to start again.

Mr. McKENZIE: Repeat it, continuously, don't stop and again and again.

Mr. SILVERA: Mr. Speaker, we saw the similar happenings in 2010 with the emergence of Christopher 'Dudus' Coke, known throughout the length and breadth of this country as the President. The constituency of West Kingston seemed to have been operating in its own little republic state within Jamaica, having elected a president who in the constituents mind was more powerful than the Prime Minister of Jamaica and the elected representation to this Honourable House. So committed to the social code were the people of West Kingston that when the extradition request was signed for 'Dudus' and a warrant was issued for his arrest it resulted in civil war between people and the State of Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. SILVERA: Stay in a yuh lane man.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind this Honourable House of the mass burials which resulted during the state of emergency, scores of people lost their lives, hundred were injured the country literally came to a halt and the Jamaican image was tainted in the global community.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. SILVERA: Mr. Speaker, the leader, the leader...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. McKenzie)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, that outburst is unacceptable. We must allow the Member to finish his presentation. It is unacceptable. Mr. Speaker, can you just bring the Member in order. Mr. Speaker, can you bring the Member in order.

(Heckling)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. McKenzie, Mr. McKenzie, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Buchanan, I am asking if this behaviour continues then the Speaker will have to exercise his authority. (Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Henry.

Mr. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, suppose I was to rise now and cite the historical aspect that Bustamante's Father was asked to the leave the home of Manley because he married black....

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. HENRY: I have demanded and apologized for Coral Gardens but I cannot apologize for Bustamante's Father being

thrown out of the Clarke's home for marrying black because he was considered to have married below his status, as recorded by George Heathen in his book. So let's get history right and not conjecture.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Henry, please sit, sir, please, please sit.

Mr. Silvera. (Applause)

Mr. SILVERA: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of Opposition in his Budget Debate presentation spoke...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Silvera, I would ask that you do not respond to any utterances coming from that side.

Government MEMBER: But he has not.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Just continue with your presentation, please.

Government MEMBER: And ignore them.

The Deputy SPEAKER: I am asking the Members on the Opposition side there are more than enough opportunities that will present themselves for you to expatiate on your various concerns.

Government MEMBER: Dem *nuh* know what that mean, Speaker

The Deputy SPEAKER: In other words, to express yourself. Mr. Silvera, continue.

Mr. SILVERA: Mr. Speaker the Leader of the Opposition in his Budget Debate presentation spoke briefly of social reform and indicated to this Honourable House that he suggests a grand referendum to let the people decide on a number of issues all at the same time. These include: the CCJ, liberalizing ganja, review of the Buggery Act and an issue of the Queen being Head of State.

Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned that the Leader of the Opposition's social reform diet, if fed to the people of Jamaica all at once, as he suggests, may result in the majority of Jamaicans experiencing severe colic. (Chuckles) Mr. Speaker, the matter of Jamaica becoming a Republic is a serious one and after fifty-two years of Independence, it should be considered substantially with the precision and in an exclusive manner. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, only an Act of Parliament can amend the Constitution to provide Jamaica with Republic status. This, Mr. Speaker, as entrenched in the Constitution would then have to be ratified by the people. As you are well aware, a majority vote of two thirds of both the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament must be achieved as this provision is entrenched in the Constitution.

While the ruling party have the majority of votes in the Lower House, as elected by the people, the Upper House's composition is achieved differently, which is also a provision entrenched in the Constitution. The Senate Members are chosen by both political parties in a fixed proportion that sees no political party having two thirds representation. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition must come into agreement with the ruling Party in order to enact an amendment of our Constitution for Republic status. (Applause)

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, I have taken the House through this discourse, in order to emphasize

the awesome responsibility and power that has been bestowed on the Opposition by our forefathers, as enshrined in our Constitution. I want to say to the Leader of the Opposition, that your responsibility to the people of Jamaica requires reverence, diligence and a sound steady judgement. We are not living in a time where the country can afford further delay on this fundamental matter. This is the burden that our forefathers have placed on you. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, after researching this issue, my quest to understand the full depth of our constitutional reform history, I want to remind this Honourable House of the year 1994 and I am certain the six-star and seven-star generals on both sides of this House would be familiar with the Justice Kerr Commission Report, which provided the framework for the Legislature to consummate Jamaica as a Republic. The report, Mr. Speaker, can serve as a basis, from which parliamentary discussions may commence, with a view to arrive at a consensus, to the extent that an actual Bill of Legislature for the adoption of Jamaica's Republic Constitution can be drafted by the Parliamentary Legal Counsel.

Mr. PRYCE: Hear, hear!

Mr. SILVERA: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind this Honourable House of the words of our leader, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller, at her 2012 swearing-in ceremony, I quote:

"*One important agenda item will be to establish the Caribbean Court of Justice in its final appellate jurisdiction, and in this way end the judicial surveillance from London. We must fully repatriate our sovereignty. Let us together complete this aspect of regional integration within the life of this Administration*."

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I will not discuss the CCJ in any detail in this presentation. However, I want to remind this Honourable House that similar to Canada, our Constitutional Legislature has the competence to replace the Privy Council by the Caribbean Court of Justice whether we remain a monarchy or we become a Republic. Both issues are separate and apart, and we must not confuse the two or delay consensus for consummation of our Republic status because we are unsure about the CCJ, and *visa-versa*, Mr. Speaker. I am confident in the Prime Minister's wisdom to initiate the required process in her good timing so that we can close this circle of our Independence.

Mr. PRYCE: Hear, hear!

Mr. SILVERA: Mr. Speaker, two sister founding member states of CARICOM are Republics within the Commonwealth. Guyana was proclaimed the Cooperative Republic of Guyana in 1970 and in 1976 former Prime Minister Eric Williams was able to successfully steer his Administration through the adoption of Trinidad and Tobago's Republican Constitution. Mr. Speaker, Jamaica and Barbados remain a monarchy, with the very distinct functional difference between the privileges of the citizens of each country: Jamaican citizens now require a visa to travel to the United Kingdom, whether it is for pleasure, whether it is for business and

whether to seek judicial reprieve at the Privy Council, which still remains Jamaica's final Court of Appeal.

Mr. PRYCE: Or for the GG to attend the Royal wedding. The GG needed one for the Royal wedding.

Mr. SILVERA: As Jamaica prepares itself for imminent globalization, the attraction of foreign direct investments to Jamaica through the Logistics Hub, tourism opportunities, financial services and otherwise, will not only be dependent on the passing of the IMF's quarterly tests, or the latest Standard & Poors Credit rating; it will be dependent also, on the sound, stable, constitutional and judicial structures that are indigenous to Jamaica, which portray our self-confidence as a people and the maturity of our sovereignty. Mr. Speaker, this represents the total fabric of change.

I thank you.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Please be seated, Members. Please be seated.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended for us to do any further business this afternoon...

(Cross talk/The Deputy Speaker gavels)

...I, therefore, move for the adjournment of the Parliament until next Tuesday, the 17th of June, at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House now adjourns until next Tuesday, June 17, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) This Honourable now stands adjourned.

The House accordingly adjourned its sitting at approximately 5:14 p.m.

TUESDAY, June 17, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:35 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security

HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. DWAYNE FRANCOIS ST. MICHAEL VAZ, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Raymond Pryce

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we will have a Statement today by the Minister of Education.

The SPEAKER: Rev. Thwaites.

Rev. THWAITES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in March of this year 39,438 Sixth Grade students in Jamaican primary education sat the Grade Six Achievement Test, and I am pleased to report to this Honourable House this afternoon that the results of the 2014 sitting of the Grade Six Achievement Test, known as (GSAT), for 2014 have been compiled and will be available to the primary schools on the evening, Thursday, June 19, 2014 and to secondary schools one week later.

Overall, there has been slight improvement in student performance over the last year as evidenced by a five- percentage point increase in average scores for Science, followed by a small increase in students' [average] scores for Social Studies and Communication Tasks as well as an unchanged average score for Language Arts.

However, Mr. Speaker, student performance in Mathematics has decreased, marginally.

(HON RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, entered and took his seat.)

(MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. KENNETH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP); St. Andrew, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. KARL GEROGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), Manchester, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture, entered and took her seat.)

(HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took his seat.)

The change in Science, five percentage points above last year's average, is commendable, is significant and portends well for the future educational advancement of our students.

It is important to note that Communications Tasks shows the highest average student performance of all GSAT subjects, at 72%, one point above last year's average score. (Applause) The good showing in Communication Tasks reflects the Ministry of Education's programmatic emphasis on the teaching and learning of basic literacy at the primary school level since 2009.

The one-percentage slip in Mathematics over last year reflects a chronic weakness in Maths that has existed for long in our primary schools, Mr. Speaker, and as part of measures to address this deficit, 120 Mathematics coaches will be deployed to primary schools where performance is weak as of September, 2014. (Applause)

When viewed over a five-year period, student performance in all GSAT subject areas shows significant improvement. Over this period, Science has seen the largest increase in average student performance - fifteen-percentage points. Communication Tasks follow with an eleven-percentage point increase since 2009. Social Studies are next moving up by ten-percentage points since 2009, followed by Mathematics at seven points and Language Arts with a six-percentage point movement.

Mr. Speaker, we are on the right track but

we are moving too slowly. (Applause) In this regard, the Ministry notes that 90 reading coaches were deployed to Grades 1 to 3 in 450 primary schools in September 2013. (Applause) The Ministry's effort is now on achieving even better results from each student. Although we hope to see the results sooner, we recognize that investing now at Grades 1 to 3 is one with a three-year maturity horizon, which is when we will begin to see the full results at the GSAT level.

Of the 39,438 students who sat the examination, 34,804 have been placed in high schools; 3,191 have been placed in technical schools; 1,002 have been placed in primary and junior high schools where there is a junior high section of these schools; 13 in special schools and, Mr. Speaker, this year we haye kept none in All-age schools and we have not had to attend to private institutions. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is worthy of note that Jamaica is further advanced than many neighbouring, countries and, indeed, many other large countries in the availability of spaces up to the end of high school. It is an inheritance and an investment which the people of this country, under successive governments, have made in the education of our children. (Applause)

Twenty-eight thousand eight hundred and eighty-three (28,883) of these students, 73% of the cohort were placed in one of their preferred schools, Mr. Speaker. This is higher than before; (Applause) 10,127 or 26% of the students were placed in terms of the proximity to the schools they are currently attending while 3,000 students were placed in proximity to their homes.

Mr. Speaker, although a limited number, it is important that wherever it is possible and acceptable students should not have to travel long distances from their homes to go to high schools.

Four hundred and twenty-eight (428) or 1% of the cohort were placed manually in proximity to the address they submitted.

The Ministry of Education is employing strategies to increase quality secondary school places by providing additional spaces for schools that are on shift or are over-crowded, refurbishing existing facilities and developing partnerships with private institutions to provide places and offering more aptitude-appropriate curricula.

Mr. Speaker, students who have scored 50% or less in any subject in the GSAT results are considered to need intervention in order to manage Grade 7 studies. This is most important. All high schools are being directed, therefore, to one, make full of the GSAT subject profiles for each student in order to determine challenges.

Mr. Speaker, what is very important is that parents and teachers look at how each - their student scored on each of the subject areas and where there is the need for remediation, it must be done at the earliest stage rather than left to become compounded later on when the quality and the depth of the studies in high school become more and more unattainable and therefore we reiterate, they must make full use of the GSAT subject profiles for each student in order to determine

challenges and to undertake upgrading and remediation at the outset of Grade 7. And the Ministry is equipped to provide specialist interventions to schools, particularly in the areas of Language Arts and Mathematics.

Mr. Speaker, school administrators are reminded that transfers may be requested two weeks after the release of the GSAT results and that in accordance with the Code of Regulations, 1980, the Minister must give approval for transfers where necessary. All transfer applications must be submitted to the Ministry of Education [for approval] before effected.

In closing Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Ministry of Education, I commend the army of particularly primary level teachers who dedicated themselves to the task of preparing this cohort of students to sit GSAT. We congratulate all the students also and encourage them to perform to the best of their ability in the high schools where they have been placed.

Thank you.

(Applause)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- The University of the West Indies Annual Report for the Financial year 2012/2013 and Publications entitled Recognizing Outstanding Researchers for 2014 Research for Development 2014
- Office of the Public Defenders 10th Annual Report for the calendar year 2010
- Ministry of Local Government and Community Development Performance Report for the Financial year 2013/2014
- Auditor General's Report on the Fiscal Policy Paper for Financial year 2014/2015
- The Foreign National and Commonwealth Citizens Employment (Work Permit Fees) (Amendment) Regulations, 2014 under the Foreign National and Commonwealth Citizens (Employment) Act
- The Office of Utilities Regulations (Amendment of First Schedule to the Act) Order, 2014 under the Public Utilities Regulations Act

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

The SPEAKER: Mr. Davies.

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move on behalf of the Prime Minister:

Be it Resolved in accordance with Standing Orders #73 that the Office of Utilities Regulation (Amendment) of First Schedule to the Act, Order 2014, under the Office of Utilities Regulation Act, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 17th day of June, 2014, be referred to the Regulations Committee of the

House of Representatives for consideration and report.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today I will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion.

(DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Kellier.

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

Be it Resolved in accordance with Standing Orders #73 that the Foreign Nationals and Commonwealth Citizens Employment Work Permit Fees (Amendment) Regulations 2014, under the Foreign Nationals and Commonwealth Citizens Employment Act, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 17th day of June, 2014, be referred to the Regulations Committee of the House of Representatives for consideration and report.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today I will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take this motion.

(HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, entered and took his seat.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to the notice that at the expiration of 21 days I will ask the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, the following question:

Question 1:

Will the Minister give a status report on the Plantain Gardens River Agro Park?

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days I will ask the Minister of National Security the following question:

Question 1:

How many bullet-making re-loading machines are known to be in Jamaica?

Question 2:

Where are these machines located?

Question 3:

Has it been established how many of these machines are operational and if so, where are they located?

Question 4:

Did all these machines enter Jamaica legally?

Question 5:

If the answer to Part 4 is in the affirmative, by whose authority were they allowed to enter Jamaica?

Question 6:

If the answer to Part 4 is in the negative, has any action been taken against the owners for illegal entry?

Question 7:

How many shooting ranges are operating in Jamaica at this time, and where are they located?

Question 8:

How do these shooting ranges acquire ammunition?

Question 9:

What are the rules governing the distribution and use of ammunition by these shooting ranges?

Question 10:

Who audits these shooting ranges and how often are they audited?

Question 11:

What are the results of the most recent audit of these shooting ranges?

Question 12:

What are the sanctions, if any, if there are discrepancies found by an audit?

Question 13:

Is the Minister aware of bullet-making/reloading machines owned or operated by persons other than the operators of shooting ranges?

Question 14:

If the answer to Part 13 is in the affirmative, can the Minister provide the House with details of such machines and their owners/operators?

PRESENTATION OF BILLS WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE HOUSE FIRST OBTAINED

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to seek the leave of the House to withdraw the Annual Report of the Special Select Committee to examine and recommend for approval proposed estimates for constituency projects submitted to the Constituency Development Fund, Project Management Unit, by respective Members of Parliament, 2013/2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 28th day of May, 2014.

The SPEAKER: Is it the wish of the House that the Report be withdrawn?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I now ask for the recommittal of the Item Notices of Motions Given Orally.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal of Item Notices of Motions given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

Be it Resolved that the Annual Report of the Special Select Committee to examine and recommend for approval, proposed estimates for constituency projects submitted to the Constituency Development Fund, Project Management Unit, by respective Members of Parliament 2013/2014, which was laid on the table of the House on the 11th day of June, 2014, be adopted.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

The SPEAKER: Dr. Davies.

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, I now move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to

enable me to take the motion, notice of which I gave earlier.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow the Minister to take the motion notice of which was given earlier.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister Davies.

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, I now move that the motion be approved.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Kellier.

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, I now move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion notice of which I gave earlier.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow the Minister to take the motion notice of which was given earlier.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister Kellier.

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, I now move that the motion be approved.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: At Public Business today, Mr. Speaker, we will continue with the Sectoral Debates, we will have presentations from the Minister of Local Government and Community Development, which will be followed by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, and then the MP from Eastern St. Andrew.

The SPEAKER: Minister Arscott. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: You may proceed, Minister Arscott.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, let me thank the Great Architect of the Universe for guiding us, this Parliament and the people of Jamaica in our search for progress and advancement for the people of Jamaica.

(THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, entered and took her seat.)

I want to thank the Most Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Portia Simpson Miller for entrusting me with the responsibility of leading the Ministry that is closest to the people and critical in delivering opportunities for growth and development. (Applause)

I acknowledge my family for being an unending reservoir of strength. They have been unswerving in their support and for that I must extend my gratitude. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I want also to use this opportunity to thank the constituents of Southwest Clarendon, my councillors, my constituency executive, cluster managers, youth leaders, works group, NGOs, Ministers fraternal, educators and all other stakeholders who have created and taken advantage of the opportunities for growth and development in the constituency. (Applause)

To my esteemed Minister of State, the Honourable Colin Fagan, for your support and

contribution to myself and the Ministry's mandate. Greatly appreciated. (Applause)

(HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, North, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for Public Service, entered and took his seat.)

Let me thank my Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Deon Jennings whose steady leadership qualities have sustained the high level of motivation and output by the staff. Thank you Mrs. Jennings.

Special thanks to my special adviser, my executive assistant, the support staff in the office, both at the Ministry and constituency, my security team and driver for their significant daily support and commitment.

Mr. Speaker, I have always maintained the stance that in order to achieve our full developmental capacity we have to employ a collaborative approach. With that said, I want to say thanks to the team of Mayors, and some of them are there in the Gallery today. (Applause) Councillors, who are here, board chairpersons and board members. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Also to thank the heads of agencies, namely the Board of Supervision, the Jamaica Fire Brigade, the National Solid Waste Management Authority, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management and the Social Development Commission. They have stayed the course and have met many of the demands of the Ministry, and more importantly, the people of Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, a number of our programmes and projects would not have materialized without the kind assistance of our international development partners and donor agencies. They continue to show their support by being here with me today. Thank you for being here. (Applause)

Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: I want to thank my colleagues in this Honourable House for their support, and in the same breath, Mr. Speaker, let me publicly recognize and commend the principled manner which you continue to conduct the proceedings of this Honourable House. Thank you and your staff, Mr. Speaker, for your continued guidance and support.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to use this opportunity to acknowledge and salute Mr. Keith Miller, former adviser, consultant on Local Government Reform who recently concluded his contract with the Ministry. (Applause) His contribution to Local Government and governance in Jamaica, the region, and the rest of the world, is immeasurable. As the foremost authority on Local Government and governance in the region he has given sterling service to the development of this country and has served selflessly. I take the opportunity to thank him wholeheartedly. Thanks Keith. (Applause)

(MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development has made tremendous strides in addressing some of the critical problems facing our country, both at the local and national levels. The Ministry has been unwavering in its commitment in ensuring that with very limited resources we maximize the impact we have on households and communities.

Given the wide gamut of this portfolio and time constraint, Minister of State, Honourable Colin Fagan will address other important areas to include but not limited to: fire safety and protection, social protection to cover infirmaries, homelessness, indigent housing and other related matters, and governance and institutional strengthening to include town management.

Mr. Speaker, last year in the Sectoral Debate, I referred to the Ministry's Local Economic Development Policy Initiatives and Strategy, to enable Local Authorities, communities and other stakeholders to collaborate in creating development in the local communities. Unless we think in this House that it is a Jamaican phenomenon, I would invite Members to look at the World Bank's website where they have actually defined LED. And they say:

> "The purpose of Local Economic Development is to build up economic capacity of local areas to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all. It is a process by which public business and nongovernmental and stakeholder partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth, employment and employment generation."

So, Mr. Speaker, I also spoke of the Ministry's collaboration with the Caribbean Local Economic Development, (CARILED), a programme funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, formerly CIDA, in five pilot parishes, namely, Kingston & St. Andrew, St. Catherine, Clarendon, Manchester, Westmoreland and the Municipality of Portmore.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out that CARILED has committed funds for 12 projects and to date has approved disbursements funds for 6, amounting to approximately Thirty-eight Million Dollars ($38M). (Applause)

One such project, Mr. Speaker - I am sure the Member from - one such project, Mr. Speaker, is the Riverton Recycle Project. This project involves the collection of PET bottles for export. This will improve the health of the surrounding environment. The acquisition of additional equipment, such as shredder/perforator, forklift, the construction of a ramp and installation of lighting system, will help to expand this project. That, Mr. Speaker, empowers the residents of the Riverton community, through gainful employment and training.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: The project now accepts PET bottles from other community-based organizations around the Corporate Area. Mr. Speaker, this will significantly reduce the number of plastic bottles being disposed of at

the Riverton disposal site, as well as in our drains and gullies.

Other projects approved are the:

- Cecil Charlton Park Development in Manchester (Applause)
- Spanish Town Tourism Project
- Beeston Spring Organic Training and Agro processing, and
- New Roads Rest Stop in Westmoreland

Mr. McKENZIE: Pure PNP constituencies!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Very soon these local communities will be buzzing with economic activities. Mr. Speaker, this - this, Mr. Speaker, is Local Government creating opportunities for growth and development at the community level. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: You name five constituencies, an' a five PNP constituencies!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Such an outcome allows residents within their communities to pursue various forms of enterprise.

(MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP) Clarendon, Central, entered and took his seat.)

Collectively, these will reduce the rural-to-urban-migration phenomenon, assist in environmental hazard reduction and create jobs within the communities from which the positive multiplier effects require no great debate.

The Social Development Commission will ensure sustainability of the programme as it continues to build Local Economic Development capacity. Just recently, Mr. Speaker, 20 members of staff from the Social Development Commission were trained and certified in Project Writing, by the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Speaker, in recognizing the importance of the development approval process to the growth and development of our economy, we have placed new emphasis on this area. I have personally visited each and every Local Authority to highlight and champion the new thrust, and I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, with the progress that has been made. (Applause)

This fiscal year, 2013/2014, 5,248 applications with an estimated valued of Forty-two Billion Jamaican Dollars (J$42B) were made for public building permits; 4,543 or 87 per cent of these applications, with an estimated investment value of Thirty-one Billion Dollars ($31B) were approved. Of the total approved, Mr. Speaker, 81 per cent were approved within 90 days.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, allow me to show you a map...

Mr. McKENZIE: Is who draw it?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. ARSCOTT: ...with building approvals received and approved by the Authorities in 2013 and 2014.

A Government MEMBER: Desmond, tek one! (Laughter)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: But Desmond can't read it.

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend all Local Authorities for their continued efforts in ensuring that we are accelerating the fast growth investment and development. The parishes of St. Catherine, Clarendon, Westmoreland, St. James, St. Ann and Portland are to be congratulated, as these parishes were able to deliver an approval of more than 87 per cent of the applications received. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, an average of 90 per cent of applications were approved within 90 days. This is a significant improvement over previous years. (Applause) An achievement, Mr. Speaker, which must be properly understood as tangible evidence that the Local Authorities have taken ownership of their responsibility for the development of the communities under their charge, and their own contribution to the National Development Agenda.

In fact, contrary to arguments bandied about that a significant majority of the applicants are being held up by the Local Authorities, and that this accounts for over Forty Billion ($40B) of investment value, as at the end of March, 2014, in fact, there were 1,044 applications being processed by the Local Authorities. Only 287 of these, with an estimated investment value of Four Billion ($4B) exceeded the 90 day approval target.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, 757 or 73 per cent, with an estimated investment value of Nine Billion Dollars ($9B), were still within the 90-day commitment period. The point is, Mr. Speaker, while there is room for improvement, the Local Authorities have made unprecedented gains in advancing the development/approval process. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Let me just highlight a few examples, Mr. Speaker. In St. James, the Playa Hotel made application to the St. James Parish Council for approval to renovate and expand. This application was made in May 2013, and approval was given in July 2013, within the 90 days. Today, construction is in progress and completion is expected by the end of the year.

A Government MEMBER: Good work! Good work!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Let us look at another one from St. James. The Bank of Nova Scotia Western Head Office, approximately 2,000 square metres of development was received in April. Approval was granted in June 2013, and construction is now underway.

These are all significant projects which will contribute to the country's GDP. They will provide jobs, increased services within the communities, and enhanced productivity at the local level. In fact, Mr. Speaker, for the last fiscal financial year the total number of approved projects represent potential employment of over 90,000 persons within the construction industry. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: What kind of bandoolo... (Inaudible)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, our Local Authorities are committed to ensuring that the development ranking of the country is improved, making Jamaica the place of choice to do business.

The Ministry will continue to implement measures to streamline the development applications process in a sustainable manner to ensure improvement in the country's ranking in the World Bank's Doing Business Report. These include, Mr. Speaker:

- capacity building within the Local Authorities;
- establishment of help desks in all Local Authorities to guide applicants before, during and after the application process;
- continuous monitoring of the development applications process within the Local Authorities;
- continuous improvements to the standardized application form, and standardized processes and checklists, and of course, site investigation reports within all Local Authorities;

And, finally, Mr. Speaker,

- we will improve the legislative framework to guide a modern building industry with the impending passage of the Building Bill.

I know that this has been promised for some time now, but I am pleased to advise this Honourable House that the final version of the Bill will soon be submitted to the Legislation Committee of Cabinet, and thereafter, it will be tabled in this House.

Mr. Speaker, there has been an argument in the construction section of the need for the creation of a czar. Mr. Speaker, I am the czar.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You hear dat, Desmond!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, the implementation of an Application Management and Data Automation, AMANDA system, is one of the strategies employed by the Ministry to improve the development approval process. I am pleased to announce that personnel from all Local Authorities have been fully trained in the use of the AMANDA system. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: We are doing this to ensure transparency in the process and to enable clients, locally and internationally, to track applications online. The system will inform the clients of the status of his or her application, whether it is with the Council or any referral agency, such as NEPA, Jamaica Fire Brigade, or the National Works Agency.

Mr. Speaker, it was previously reported that procurement of equipment for the installation of AMANDA in the remaining five Local Authorities was underway. To date, 50 computers have been received, delivered and installed within the remaining five Local Authorities. (Applause) All Local Authorities will be fully equipped to use the AMANDA system by the end of the financial year.

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: And, Mr. Speaker, what this will do is digitize the entire process, so the problem of storage of large building plans will be done digitally, and can be stored on server, in cloud or any other electronic area

for storage. It will free up a lot of space currently being used to store many of these plans for many, many years. And the opposition spokesman on Local Government will know what I'm saying, how we have to deal with these plans of storage of these plans.

Mr. Speaker, while we focus on improving the Development Approval Process and to promote Local Economic Development, we are mindful of the conditions under which our Councils have to operate. The buildings are, in most instances, are inadequate; they are inadequate to accommodate and to satisfy the volume of work in modern Jamaica.

In this regard, Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce that $90 Million have been approved from the Equalization Fund to start construction on new buildings for St. Thomas, Westmoreland... (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: ...and the Municipality of Portmore. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we've been steadfast in our efforts to complete the process of empowering the Local Authorities, especially as we intend to, and shall be holding them to a higher level of accountability.

I am happy to report that the Cabinet has granted approval for the issuing of drafting instructions to the Chief Parliamentary Council for the three strategic laws. We've received and commented on draft Bills for the Local Government Financing and Financial Management Act, the Local Government (Unified Services) and (Employment) Act, and we await the Governance Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier the progress we've made with the Building Bill. As it relates to the Disaster Management Bill, I'm pleased to announce that this Bill has been submitted to Cabinet for approval for tabling in this Honourable House. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yuh agree Desmond?

Mr. McKENZIE: Mi haffi see it first.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, we have made significant strides over the past two years in relation to our legislative agenda. And I wish to use this opportunity to thank Minister Golding and the team at the CPC for their tremendous work.

(Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. ARSCOTT: That's Minister Mark Golding.

Mr. Speaker, approximately 25,000 kilometres of roads are in Jamaica. The Parochial Road Network is now estimated to be close to 20,000 kilometre or 80% of all roads in Jamaica. Also for the last five years the Ministry received an average of $30 Million *per annum* from Capital Budget for road rehabilitation.

A MEMBER: How much?

Mr. ARSCOTT: Thirty million.

The resources available to maintain the Parochial Road Network have never been anywhere close to the actual needs. In fact Mr. Speaker, the only dedicated source of funds for the parochial roads is the Parochial Revenue Fund which is derived from the proceeds of the Motor Vehicles Licensing Fees. In addition, based on resolution from the

Local Authorities, a portion of the Equalization Fund is also used for road repairs.

Mr. Speaker $2 Billion has been spent by the Local Authorities to effect repairs on 165 kilometres of road that had badly deteriorated.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear.

Mr. ARSCOTT: They've carried out patching on 184,000 square metres of roads and bushing on 2,057 kilometres, and carried out drain cleaning and repairs including flood mitigation measures along 1,697 kilometres of roadway.

This is not a minor point Mr. Speaker, anyone who takes the time out to do the math will discover as we have, that the significant majority of our citizens live on parochial roads. While the central system of highways, boulevards and main roads are important for commerce, business, education and health services, it is the underserved network of parochial roads within communities that are the lifelines between families, communities and the rest of the social and public services. It is therefore obvious that new approaches with respect to the maintenance of these roads are now required.

Mr. Speaker, based on our vulnerability to storms and other disasters, I am convinced that we will never have enough money to rehabilitate the roads under our current *modus operandi*.

Mr. Speaker, we have to find ways to construction roads with longer, lifespan. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear, hear, hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: This Ministry, along with the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Cement.

Mr. ARSCOTT: ...is assessing road construction technologies with the intent of realizing value for money in the road-building sector. Mr. Speaker, in light of the benefits to be derived, the Ministry is endorsing concrete as one of the preferred paving material for our roads given its life expectancy, load carrying capacities and competitive price. (Applause)

I am happy to report that the first pilot using concrete solution will be the access road to the Riverton City disposal site. (Applause) This will be done through a donation of $200 Million from the Meso-American Fund operated by the Mexican Government. We intend to do a further 20 kilometres of concrete roads after the completion of the Riverton pilot. (Applause)

The ability of the landfill to operate efficiently is hampered by the condition of the road. The Project will be managed by United Nations Office for Project Services - UNOPS. I thank the Mexican Ambassador and his team for facilitating this initiative.

Thank you, Ambassador.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: I want also to thank Minister of Finance, Honourable Peter Phillips for his support in this Project.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: The Minister's time for speaking has expired.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker we ask that the Minister's time be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Minister's time be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, whether you represent an urban or a rural constituency, we all know how important streetlights are to our constituents' feel of a sense of security.

Mr. PARCHMENT: Yes.

Mr. ARSCOTT: We can also agree that the current situation leaves a lot to be desired. This has to change.

A MEMBER: Di man dem back yuh up.

(Cross talks)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, changing a system that has been in operation for decades, and entrenched in legal contracts are never easy. However, we are now at a point where we can truly say we are on the verge of a more efficient streetlight regime.

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Since I last reported to this Honourable House, we've made progress in the following areas:

- We've completed an analysis of the current and proposed tariff for street lighting, and submitted our recommendation to the OUR;

Mr. Speaker, this is happening for the first time. Previously the Ministry of Local Government simply accepted whatever tariff is approved by the OUR based on the submissions by Jamaica Public Service Company. Out of this, we expect a specific tariff for streetlights, as well as a new system of measurement that will recognize smart streetlights that can be dimmed at various times and thereby creating the kind of efficiency in terms of electricity use.

Presently, Mr. Speaker, the lights utilized systems like ballast and photocells, which are highly efficient and used a lot of current.

- We've also completed a joint audit, with the JPS, for all streetlights installed, complete with the GPS mapping; and that is important.
- We've worked closely with MSTEM in the negotiation of the impending new All Island Electricity License to resolve some key issues relating to streetlights that could have become an obstacle to getting more efficient streetlights; and
- We've had several consultations with the JPS, the Development Bank of Jamaica, the Ministry of Finance to pave the way to the introduce modern streetlights system in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, under the current arrangement, the Government of Jamaica has not been able to benefit from the reduction costs associated with the deployment of efficient streetlights. The archaic system for the monitoring, repair or replacement of the streetlights has been found to be ineffective as many streetlights across the island is now out of service. Communities continue to complain about the long time it takes to repair these.

A MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Local Government, on behalf

of the Government and people of Jamaica, who elected us to act in their interests, will see to the replacement of the existing lights with efficient LED lights. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, the Request for Proposal for the new programme will be issued shortly, and we expect to complete the procurement process by the end of the year. Based on our economic model, we expect to see savings in the order of $1 billion per year. Mr. Speaker, we're working, working, working to provide opportunities for growth and development. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Working, working, working.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, markets are critical to the development of the micro enterprises in Jamaica and they enable our small business microfinance level businesses and vendors to produce and sell their wares. In fact, it is the intention therefore, to position the markets to be profit centres for the Parish Councils. Cognizant of this, the Ministry is collaborating with the Local Authorities to identify and rehabilitate key markets in parishes across the country.

Last financial year approximately $100 Million was spent on rehabilitation and maintenance of markets. This was done through support from the Ministry, the Local Authorities, Tourism Enhancement Fund and the Jamaica Social Investment Fund.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, in April of this year, the Rocky Point Market was opened officially by the Most Honourable Prime Minister, Portia Simpson Miller. (Applause)

The Member from South East Clarendon who was here seemed to have left the House...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes.

Mr. ARSCOTT: ...expressed his gratitude and satisfaction with this modern multipurpose facility.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: The Ministry collaborated with JSIF and the Clarendon Parish Council to finance the project which cost in excess of $50 million. I must commend the Rocky Point Development Council, which provided labour for this project. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Free labour?

Mr. ARSCOTT: The Linstead Market - which is iconic - is being given new life through efforts of the Ministry, the UDC, JSIF and the St. Catherine Parish Council. Renovation is being done in three phases; phase one has already been completed.

Mr. Speaker, there are other markets that are slated to be renovated or are already underway. Spanish Town electrical upgrade and security cameras installed. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, it is now possible...

Miss GRANGE: You need to relocate Spanish Town.

Mr. ARSCOTT: ...to be able to monitor Spanish Town.

Yuh know which part of Spanish Town this is?

Miss GRANGE: You need to relocate the Spanish Town Market to Redemption Ground.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Why?

Mr. ARSCOTT: Okay.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: No, you need to relocate Spanish Town.

Miss GRANGE: We need a new market now.

Mr. ARSCOTT: I don't know, I'm sure you had recommended that to the former Prime Minister but he didn't take you up on the offer.

The completion of the Black River market - we expect to open that brand new facility by August of this year. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Talk Minister, talk.

Mr. ARSCOTT: We are also doing repairs on the Ocho Rios market, and retrofitting the May Pen Market which suffered a fire earlier this year.

Again, we are creating opportunities that can lead to major growth and development. These include: construction jobs in the building and refurbishing space, as well as greater use of the facilities with better convenience for the vendors and consumers alike.

It is also well known as the Prime Minister has said repeatedly, that the majority of the users of these markets are women. We can no longer give a blind eye, or only pay lip service to the standard condition to which they are exposed - the sub standard condition to which they are exposed. The improvement of these facilities is our contribution to the growth and development of our economy.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I now wish to look at a few of the agencies under the Ministry. When you drive past many of our major gullies and drains, Mr. Speaker, it is a disgrace. Some of our citizens continue to dump garbage, while others turn a blind eye. We all need to understand and accept that "Jamaica's beauty is our duty."

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear.

Mr. ARSCOTT: It is everybody's business. I believe, Mr. Speaker, it is time that we stop this madness of littering our country...

Mr. BUCHANAN: Yes... litterbugs.

Mr. ARSCOTT: ...and then weep and wail at the repercussions. We are only hurting ourselves.

The current fines, Mr. Speaker, for littering and illegal erection of signs are J$2,000 and J$3,000, respectively. This is not a deterrent. For any sanction to be meaningful, it must be felt hard. I am pleased to announce that we have received, from the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, a draft National Solid Waste Management (Disposal of Solid Waste) Regulation, 2014. The purpose of these Regulations, Mr. Speaker, is to regulate the kinds of material which may be disposed of at landfills, or the manner in which such disposal is done. The Regulations also seek to impose tipping fees on users of the landfill, based on the waste burden put on the landfill by those users.

We have also received a draft National Solid Waste (Public Cleansing) Regulations, 2014, Mr. Speaker. These Regulations are designed to maintain and clean public environment by providing the proper storage, conveyance, and disposal of waste by making provision for penalties where regulations are contravened.

They also seek to clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of the citizens, waste haulers, the NSWMA in matters of waste management. After the necessary consultations, I'll also ensure that the requisite public education takes place before implementation.

Mr. Speaker, the components of most of our waste are: organic material, plastic bottles, bags and Styrofoam. We must find ways to do more with our waste. That is the trend, globally. In fact, our mantra is: *Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.* As a result of this thrust, the NSWMA has partnered with a number of private and public sector interests to clean up Jamaica. A number of these initiatives are:

- the Clean School's Competition, where registration is now 152 schools, up from 85 last year;
- the joint product between the Government and the Private Sector Partners, such as WISYNCO, Pepsi, Lasco and Tru-Juice, among others, for recycling of plastic bottles;
  This project will see approximately 4,690 tons or 35 per cent of bottles in Jamaica being recycled by 2016.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, last year I indicated that we would establish a Transfer Station to assist in the management of waste in Western Jamaica, where we currently have to move waste from Westmoreland to St. James in small trucks. Funds have now been provided in the Budget for that project. A site has been secured. The NSWMA has obtained a Non-Objection from NEPA with the requisite conditionalities. The procurement arrangements are being put in place and ground will be broken as soon as this is completed. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear; man with vision.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, Riverton continues to be a major problem. Fires are sometimes lit with malicious intent. There is the issue of spontaneous combustion. We are determined to do something about this. Our strategy is three-pronged:

- For a short-term, we will be meeting with the Ministry of Finance and Planning to access funds from the environmental levy to properly cover this site with soil so that only one cell of no more than about four acres will be exposed at any given time. This will greatly enhance the containment of any fire;
- For the medium term, a request for proposal (RFP) will be issued shortly for waste recovery and waste-to-energy solutions.
- Finally, we are in the process of identifying alternate sites to Riverton where a modern landfill will be established.

Mr. Speaker, we must act once and for all to protect our citizens and businesses from the repeated exposure of smoke and fumes from Riverton, Retirement, or any other disposal sites. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the cost incurred from disaster over the years has been negative on our GDP, and in general on the economic growth of the country. We cannot prevent

natural disasters. Our concentration and efforts are on building more resilient communities, as this will reduce the impact and foster sustainable growth and development.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to highlight a few projects being undertaken by ODPEM to mitigate impact of any disaster:

- Twenty-seven (27) community emergency response teams were established in communities, island wide under the Building Disaster Resilient Rural Communities and Livelihood Projects;
- Sixteen (16) community hazard maps were completed as part of the community resilience program;
- Eleven (11) Community Disaster Risk Management Groups were established under the LPH project and Building Disaster Resilience Rural Communities and Livelihood project;
- The tyre-soil retaining wall project.

Mr. Speaker, a recent probabilistic semi seismic hazard assessment of Jamaica, characterized the country as a medium to high seismic hazard. The greater the seismic hazard, the more probability there is of an earthquake occurring of great magnitude at the same interval. In other words, the last great earthquake we had was 100 years, or so, ago, we are on the cycle. It is this awareness that led ODPEM to collaborate with the United Nations Development Programme, the UNDP to conduct the first Seismic Risk Forum for the country. This resulted in the development of a National Road Map for seismic safety, and this is the document for the Road Map. I see everybody - Desmond, this is it. (Displaying book)

Mr. McKENZIE: All I can hear is talk and I can't... (Inaudible)

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. ARSCOTT: This resulted in the development of a National Road Map for seismic safety which will serve as an instructional material for seismic readiness in all areas, especially on our critical infrastructure. It will also integrate the Building Code and the Building Bill which will be tabled in this House in short order.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, Jamaica's geographic location, telecommunications, human resource and infrastructural facilities, as well as the expansion of our port facilities, positions Jamaica as an ideal location for supporting the air lift of food and humanitarian support to the rest of the Caribbean in case of a disaster.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica will be a sub regional hub for the OCHA programme. (Applause) This proposal has been supported by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordination, Mrs. Valerie Amos who has expressed readiness to explore modalities for establishing a sub-regional humanitarian hub in Jamaica.

I would just like to elaborate a bit, Mr. Speaker. Jamaica's two major international airports are at or near sea level. Any national disaster can take out one or both of those airports. The Government of Panama has

recently developed an abandoned American military base, similar to the one at Vernamfield into the regional hub for humanitarian response. Jamaica has that facility - identical facility in Vernamfield, and I am going to visit the facility in Panama shortly to see, in collaboration with the Panamanians and the UN, how we can position Jamaica.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Good move, good move. (Applause)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, God forbid that we should have a disaster at both ends of the country. We need an alternative somewhere that is protected. It is well-known that countries that recover from disasters are the ones that have the ability to respond. The earthquake in Haiti in 2010 taught us a great example. To date, Haiti is still trying to recover because they did not have the preparation and the capability to deal with a recovery from a disaster of that magnitude.

Mr. Speaker, this is as a direct result of the Ministry's collaboration with two of its international partners to hold the Sixth Regional Meeting on International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance (MIAH), for Latin America and the Caribbean, right here in Kingston in October of last year. Special thanks to the regional office of the UNDP, and the coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, HOCHA, and the UNDP. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I cannot emphasize the importance of property taxes. It is the largest source of revenue, dedicated to Local Government. We are also aware that the collections have never been able to sufficiently cover the cost of providing essential services required by our citizens:

- solid waste collection and disposal,
- street lights,
- general civic improvement,
- maintenance of public parks and gardens,
- some aspects of Local Authorities' administration, and where possible, rehabilitation of parochial road network.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry, and by extension the Local Authorities, is no longer receiving deficit financing support from Central Government for street lights and public cleansing services. This means that the Local Authorities and the NSWMA provide these services from property taxes and own-sourced revenues. In spite of the financial constraints, the Ministry is attentive to the difficulties which the citizens face. We have decided that there will be no increase in property taxes for this fiscal year. (Applause) However, we have to place more emphasis on collection and compliance.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Despite the challenging economic environment, we realized 80 per cent of the $7.26 Billion target which translate to $5.83 Billion in collections. This is almost 100 per cent increase over the previous financial year. Mr. Speaker, we want to extend our appreciation to the councils, the entire field and office personnel who worked to realize this target.

(Applause)

In particular, special congratulations to the Portmore Council and citizens as they not only met but surpassed their target. (Applause) As an incentive, Mr. Speaker, for their success in the collection of property taxes, the Council was awarded $5 Million to be used in the development and improvement of a community project. I must also commend all those persons who have paid their property taxes and are contributing to the development of their country.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, global trends have shown a growing understanding and acknowledgement that in order to promote economic growth and alleviate poverty, there is a need to recognize and support locally-led programmes and projects which aim at sustainable development. Local government has a key role in fashioning, implementing and monitoring this development agenda as well as a new global development target post 2015. We celebrate the success earned on our citizen's behalf even as we acknowledge that much more remains to be done. We are well aware of the difficulties that exist within the nation's communities, because we too, live in these communities.

We, therefore, know the areas which we need to do more with the limited resources to which we have. We will continue to promote local economic development, delivering the sustainable development goals through strengthened partnerships with central government, international development partners, local communities and civil society. We will further implement measures to improve the delivery of key services such as planning and development, social protection, fire safety, infrastructure development such as roads, markets, council buildings, and streetlights.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: We will increase levels of efficiency and effectiveness while strengthening governance and institutional mechanisms.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, local government is positioned to continue to create opportunities for growth and local economic development. We are steadfast in our commitment to continue working at the local, regional and national levels aimed to build stronger, more cohesive and empowered communities. We will not stop until we fulfill the mandate that the Jamaican people have given us. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: That's our motivation at the Ministry and it cascades throughout our agencies and all fourteen local authorities.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, we will transform governance at the local level. We will work and play our part in making Jamaica the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Long live Jamaica. God bless you. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: Minister Hayles.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear! (Applause)

(Inaudible comment by Miss Grange)

Mr. HAYLES: Thank you, Babsy.

Mr. Speaker, let me thank God Almighty for bringing me - Oh, Mr. Speaker, allow me to -

Mr. SHAW: Did you get permission to speak from that seat?

Mr. HAYLES: Hold on nuh, Audley; let me finish nuh. Just hold on.

Mr. SHAW: No man. No! Ask for permission.

Mr. HAYLES: I see you have nothing to do these days. Mr. Speaker; could I speak from a seat or chair other than my own, sir.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

(Cross talk)

Mr. HAYLES: Thank you. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, let me thank God Almighty for bringing me here safe today and let me thank God Almighty also for allowing me to be here another day.

Mr. Speaker, for the third time I rise to present my contribution as the representative of the people of Western Hanover, and for the second time as Minister of State in the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change. Mr. Speaker, each time I stand before this Honourable House I am humbled by the awesome responsibility that has been entrusted in me, first by the people of Western Hanover… (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. HAYLES: ...but also by the Most Honourable Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear! Hear, hear!

Mr. HAYLES: Today, I would like to express my profound gratitude to the Prime Minister for affording me the opportunity to be a part of an administration committed to the long term growth and development of Jamaica...

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear! (Applause)

Mr. HAYLES: ...and to the people of Western Hanover, who have allowed me the opportunity to represent them in this Honourable House.

Mr. McKENZIE: Including Mayor Shernet.

Mr. HAYLES: Including the Mayor Shernet Haugton; you're correct. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am but one man, but I stand here only because I enjoy the support and confidence of a few wonderful people. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the Honourable Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Robert Pickersgill. (Applause)

(Mr. Pickersgill stands to give Mr. Hayles a handshake)

I am proud to work with my senior Minister, a true Jamaican patriot, from whom I learn new things every day and Mr. Speaker, I realize I am fortunate in having the opportunity to work with him directly in politics.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, I realize how fortunate to have the opportunity to work directly with someone with his years of experience in government, in politics, in public service, and I thank him for his steadfast support tutelage and encouragement. (Applause)

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: Ahh, elder statesman; Chairman for life.

Mr. HAYLES: Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed working with the Minister so much I went out last week and bought a new suit to represent him fully here today.

(Laughter/Applause/Cross talk)

I would also like to thank my family: first my wife, Ann, my brother-in-law, Norman is there and my children, (Applause) for all the sacrifice they endure daily in support of me. I'd also like to thank my other family; the people who work tirelessly to keep things in order: Mrs. Sherell Atkinson, Damion Ricketts, Everton Goulbourne, Marvel Sewell, Sheridan Samuels, Shelliann Forbes and my entire support staff.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, if I haven't called a couple names or I have omitted, please forgive me. I acknowledge and appreciate all the support that everyone has given me over the past year.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

(Cross talk)

Mr. HAYLES: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize the many people who work within the public service diligently doing their part for Jamaica. Specifically, I'd like to recognize my Councillors: Councillor Neville Clare, Anthony Walker, Councillor Shernet Haughton, (Applause) and Councillor Lester Crooks, who is currently recuperating from a stroke; my prayers are with him and his family. I would also like to recognize, and thank wholeheartedly the entire team at the Ministry: Permanent Secretary, Dr. Alwin Hales, Director General, Mrs. Sharon Crooks, Chief Technical Director, Lieutenant Colonel Khan and the dedicated staff of the Ministry.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. HAYLES: Mr. Speaker, the portfolio of the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change is massive and while in his presentation the Honourable Minister spoke extensively about the achievements and projects of the Ministry, we still have much to account for.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. HAYLES: Today I will cover these areas that the Honourable Minister did not cover, notably the environment, planning and development portfolios. I will also give an update on upcoming and ongoing projects within the [National] Water Commission. Before I address these matters, Mr. Speaker, of my Ministerial portfolio, I ask the indulgence of my colleagues in allowing me to deliver a brief account of my stewardship as Member of Parliament for the mighty, mighty constituency of Western Hanover.

Mr. Speaker, as a leader, I recognize the importance of empowering our youth. There is no nation that can prosper without making a size burning (sic) continuing investment in youth training, education, and development. With those investments beginning at the community level in Western Hanover, as part of our efforts to engage our youth, this year we established a world class sporting facility in Logwood and in Cauldwell...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear, Hear!

(Applause)

Mr. HAYLES: ...and I must thank the Honourable Minister of Agriculture - Audley, listen *nuh* man; you say I must thank Roger. I must thank the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Roger Clarke...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes.

Mr. HAYLES: ...and the Sugar Transformation Unit for making these facilities a reality. As Member of Parliament, I will ensure that we continue to invest in our youth, and so, later this year we will be opening the Western Hanover Youth Information Centre...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. HAYLES: ...a $41 Million Dollar investment, which we will break ground, Minister, in the next two weeks and I say thanks to you personally. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we are about to complete the Lucea pipeline, a $1.2 Billion project. This will bring access to a more reliable water supply to the people of Western Hanover and Negril. The Minister -

(*Sotto voce* comment by Miss Grange)

Mr. HAYLES: Yeah, Babsy, I'm going to touch Tawes Pen today, yeah. The Minister journeyed down to Negril and he met with stakeholders there and, Mr. Speaker, I can report the Minister made promise there and thus far we have not had any problems all year with the Negril tourism sector complaining about water. So, Minister, I thank you. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, in the 21st century, there are people in Western Hanover who do not have electricity in their homes. We are about to correct this situation. For the first time, residents of Spring Mountain, Rock Hole, Prosper, Winchester and other communities will experience access to electricity through the Rural Electrification Programme; and I would like to thank my good friend Minister Paulwell, who isn't here today.

In the past year, we were able to deliver ten houses to our neediest residents, giving these Jamaicans a fair shot at life in their own country. As I stand here Mr. Speaker, the completion of building works on the Green Island Post Office is proceeding apace through JEEP.

(Applause)

(MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central, entered and took his seat.)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. DAVIES: Through where?

Mr. HAYLES: JEEP.

Dr. DAVIES: JEEP.

Mr. HAYLES: The JEEP. And let me thank the Honourable Minister Omar Davies and all the Ministers within that Ministry: Minister Guy, Minister Azan for continuing the support that you give to the constituency of Western Hanover.

Mr. Speaker, in Western Hanover we will continue to use our Constituency Development Fund allocation to address the urgent needs of our citizens in terms of welfare, education, and healthcare Mr. Speaker, I would like to make an appeal; Hanover has an 80 per cent - approximately

80% tax compliance rate and in terms of infrastructure development I could not come here and appeal (sic) for some more funds to return to the parish of Hanover, especially Western Hanover in terms of dealing with some of the problems that we have within the parish of Hanover.

Mr. Speaker, as we have heard from the presentation of my colleagues over the past few weeks, this administration is firmly committed to Jamaica's long term economic growth and development and to making our economy globally competitive. We realize, however that no country can have sustained economic growth development or social wellbeing without due and careful consideration of the environment.

Mr. Speaker, growing population means that our finite national resources are under pressure and are likely to be pressured even more by climate change. Prudent management of the environment is therefore critical to all national priorities: Food and nutrition, security, health, wealth creation, energy, tourism, commerce, community development and more.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, care, protection and management of the environment cannot be the sole responsibility of government. When it comes to the environment, all Jamaicans, the private sector, academia, NGOs, community-based organizations, international agencies and every citizen have a role to play.

Mr. Speaker, this Government recognizes the importance of partnership and whenever given the opportunity we will partner to pool our resources, to access expertise and more.

At the moment the Government is actively addressing a number of environmental issues, chief among them, preserving and conserving the rich biodiversity of the Cockpit country, preserving our beach resources in Negril and other coastal areas, maintaining the existing 8% of primary forest, while increasing the island overall cover and promoting orderly and sustainable development through the development approval process and the promulgation of development orders.

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to highlight some key achievements and outline plans and programmes in five principal areas:

- The management of the island protected areas,
- watershed management,
- air quality,
- the development approval process,
- monitoring and enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica's protected areas include our forest reserve, fish sanctuary, heritage and cultural sites, as well as the designated marine and coastal areas.

As Government, we rely heavily on partnership with the private sector NGOs and community-based organizations to safeguard our resources. These partnerships with agencies such as NEPA and the Forestry Department have proven invaluable in managing our protected areas.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out that some activities do occur in the island's protected areas. Our protected areas are the livelihood of small farmers, eco-tourism interest, light industries; all of this takes place within our forest.

Mr. Speaker, with this in mind we have finalized the protected Area System Master Plan, which will be forwarded to Cabinet for approval in this financial year. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker this four year plan will ensure the effective management of our protected areas in order to sustain the eco-system services that they provide namely clean air and water purification, habitats for endemic species, preventing soil erosion, as well as protecting against flood and hurricanes.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, we will establish a National Protected Area Trust Fund. This Fund will be financed, from among other sources, the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund and will support Jamaica's thrust to conserve 25% of our marine areas by 2020.

The Fund will allow us to safeguard our marine and coastal resources so that they can better support the livelihood of our fisher folk. The tourism and industrial sectors and protect key infrastructure such as our road network and power generating plants, which are located along our coast.

Mr. Speaker, we are also working on the promulgation Managed Resources Protected Area Regulation under the NRCA Act. These regulations govern different types of activities within protected areas such as residential and commercial and conservation areas to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue of protected areas management, I would like to speak a little about one of our key coastal tourism communities and the recent intervention made by my Ministry and its agencies.

Negril is considered an ecologically sensitive area and it requires special attention for several reasons. The area comprises diverse but fragile eco-systems including the great morass, coral reefs, sea grass beds and species such as the endemic royal palm and the friend West Indian whistling duck.

The area is also important to the local economy and significantly to the nation's GDP. It is an important tourism destination and it is known around the world for its culture and the 7.2 kilometers of white sand beach.

Mr. Speaker, the Government through NEPA, has been monitoring beaches in Negril for approximately 12 years. Research reveals that the rate of beach erosion in Negril is approximately one metre per year. And scientists estimate that we have loss some 30 metres of beach since 1980.

Over the past 10 to 15 years, the erosion has exacerbated the proliferation of informal settlement, more intense and frequent hurricanes, discharge of waste- water and pesticide run off, fires in the morass, unsustainable land management and dying sea grass beds.

It goes without saying that any further degradation of this area will affect the dynamic ecological balance. Mr. Speaker, the Government is pursuing a holistic approach to the management of the environment and planning issues in Negril.

Last year we completed a provisional Negril Green Island Area Development Order to address illegal encroachment within the Great Morass and started a plan on

environmental study to determine the extent of the level of intrusion within the morass.

Last month the Honourable Minister presented a Cabinet Note outlining short to medium term strategies to tackle informal settlements and illegal land use and development in the Negril area. Some of these strategies include:

- serving more stop and enforcement notices to spur land owners to act in preventing illegal occupation. Planning and environmental breaches;
- where these notices are ignored, the breaches continue. We will use court injunction to force cessation and/or corrective measures by the owners or occupiers;
- identifying, allocating and zoning of Government-owned lands for commercial and municipal use and towns expansion;
- relocating informal, commercial and residential settlers to designated areas.

Once they have been relocated, we will implement a plan for post-relocation enforcement and monitoring to prevent resettlement.

Although those strategies are expected to make a real difference overtime, Mr. Speaker, studies have shown that one immediate way to stem the rapid rate of sand loss would be to install breakwater structures as part of reef extension initiative.

Mr. Speaker, research has shown that breakwater structures will help to reduce the energy of waves coming on shore and will therefore allow for natural growth in beach width overtime.

The centre of Applied Coastal Research Ocean Engineering Laboratory at the University of Delaware in the United States, for instance, has advised that based on the technical design the proposed submerged breakwaters will be able to withstand major storm with a return period of every 100 years.

Mr. Speaker, we are actively investigating the solution. The Government with the support of the Adaptation Fund on Climate Change was able to secure a grant of $5.4 Million to design and to test, construct and monitor two breakwater structures of approximately 990 meters long in Negril. (Applause) The structure will be 1.5 kilo meters off-shore with the top of the structure being at the mean sea level.

We have recently completed an Environmental Impact Study for the breakwater structures and we will begin public consultation on the matter shortly. We anticipate the structure will be completed, Mr. Speaker, by 2015.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the Government is working in partnership with ODPEM in collaboration with NEPA in preparing guidelines and technical standard for beach restoration and shoreline protection, as well as adaptation plants for the most vulnerable areas along the Negril coastline.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to beach access: Mr. Speaker, we are not concentrating our efforts exclusively in Negril as the integrity of our beaches is critical to our environmental

and sustainable and to our adaptation of effective climate change policies going forward.

There are currently 86 public beaches of which the NRCA has managed responsibility for approximately 33. The NRCA is currently developing a Beach Management Programme for the beach under its purview. This programme will address the provision of essential services of the NRCA beaches for public use, particularly the 26 beaches identified as suitable for recreational purposes by the general public.

In relations to beaches not owned and managed by the NRCA, Mr. Speaker, the Beach Control Act, the main legislation governing management and use of beaches does not inherently or explicitly provide for the public to have general rights to access and the use of the foreshore and floor of the sea. By foreshore, Mr. Speaker, I mean the area of the beach covered and uncovered by the sea in layman's term, the wet part of the sand.

Mr. Speaker as Member of Parliament of a constituency with extensive beach and coastal areas, I know firsthand how important it is to make our beaches and coastal policy regulation right. I am also aware of how important our beaches are to coastal communities and I know it has been a long grass route campaign spearheaded by DJ Amber of IRIE FM to have Government address this issue. Our people, Mr. Speaker, have to have access to the beaches across this country. (Applause)

So I want to say to IRIE FM, we have heard your cry and this administration along with the Ministry that I am a part of will deal with this finally.

(Applause)

I am therefore pleased to announce, Mr. Speaker, that we have heard the cry of the people in response and is currently developing a Comprehensive Beach Access and Management Policy. The main goals of the policy are to provide physical access to the beach, foreshore and the sea and a managed basis to the general public, and to increase the opportunities for recreational use of the beach and coastal areas in an environmentally sound manner.

It also aims to protect the traditional rights of fishermen to access the foreshore of the sea upon beaching of their vessels. This policy will be forwarded to Cabinet for approval as a Green Paper in this financial year, and thereafter will be subject to a public consultation.

Mr. Speaker, here we have a prime opportunity for our citizens, residents and stakeholders to partner with the Government in envisioning how we want to use the protected areas.

I invite all those members of the public who voice their opinions on social media or in writing or on radio to participate when the time comes.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said that the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago; the second best time is now. And never a truer word has been spoken, trees are essential to every aspect of life as we know it. But while all of us reap the benefits of trees, few of us take the time and effort to plant a tree. Indeed,

Mr. Speaker, a forest is irreplaceable. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in order to revitalize) our watershed and to increase public awareness and involvement in reforestation efforts, the Forestry Department, which last year celebrated its 75th Anniversary has been working assiduously oftentimes in quite challenging circumstances to ensure the preservation of our forest.

In the 2013/2014 financial year the Forestry Department distributed 137,345 seedlings through three programmes. Under the Private Forestry Programme we distributed some 92 seedlings and during the last tree planting day on October 3rd last year, a total of 40,000 seedlings were distributed. (Applause) Importantly, however, Mr. Speaker is the Adopt a Hillside Programme, which is geared towards engaging private sector community-based and non-government entities in reforestation efforts.

During the last financial year JMMB, LIME Foundation, RBC Jamaica each planted one hectare or 1,875 seedlings in total and I would like to commend these companies and their staff. The experts at the Forestry Department are happy to guide anyone interested in tree planting and they will even supply the seedlings. If we are to get Jamaica back to being the land of wood and water each must do our part, and I am so appealing; come Jamaica, let's go plant some trees. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in the past year, the Government fulfilled its commitment to expanding the air quality monitoring network. NEPA established monitoring stations in Catherine Hall, Montego Bay and on Main Street, May Pen during the last financial year. The expansion cost $8 Million and brings the current Government's air monitoring network to eight sites. NEPA has also lightened 35 industry emitters who also operate air monitors. These 35 complement the eight government stations and bolster the islandwide air monitoring network.

Mr. Speaker, for 2014/2015 financial year we will further expand the Air Quality Monitoring Programme to Manchester and St. Catherine. The Ministry is currently in discussion with our international partners to develop our ability to monitor greenhouse gases, specifically in procuring a mobile air quality laboratory. This will increase the country's emergency response to air pollution incidents and allow for a prompt dissemination of information to our emergency response partners to save lives in hazardous situation. (Applause)

But beyond emergency, Mr. Speaker, I am putting the country on notice that this year we will begin tackling an even more pervasive air quality issue, motor vehicle emission. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, NEPA will be finalizing the Draft Motor Vehicle Emission Standards and we expect these to be adopted into a regulatory framework this year. The implementation of this regulatory framework will allow the country to realize the testing of motor vehicle emission and regulate fleet emission. The Ministry will also be partnering with (UNEP) and the University of Technology in implementing a global fuel efficiency initiative in this financial year

which will look at issues relating to clean fuel and vehicle efficiency. This will support the Motor Vehicle Emission Standards that will be adopted this financial year.

Mr. Speaker, town and country planning and spatial planning are particularly important, especially in light of rapid urbanization of our towns and cities. Development orders facilitate the rational and progressive development of land and continue to be a priority as the country face increased development pressure from limited land resources.

Mr. Speaker, during the last financial year our provisional development orders were promulgated for Negril and Green Island, along with the parishes of Portland, Trelawny and Manchester. Also draft development orders for Kingston, St. Andrew, St. Catherine, excluding Portmore, Clarendon and St. Thomas have also been completed and is being reviewed by the Town and Country Planning Authority.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we now ask that the Member's time be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the Member's time to be extended sufficiently for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister Hayles.

Mr. HAYLES: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the Tourism Enhancement Fund and the National Housing Trust have indicated that they are willing to give funding support for the drafting of the promulgation of development order? With this support we will be able to complete and promulgate the remaining five development orders for Westmoreland, St. Mary, St. Elizabeth, St. James and St. Ann by 2016.

In light of these activities, Mr. Speaker, we expect that for the first time the entire island will be under the control of Town and Country Planning Act by 2017.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I have more good news. I am pleased to report to this Honourable House that the Ministries/agencies have continued to increase enforcement effort to achieve compliance with environmental and planning laws. NEPA reported a 41% increase in the total number of enforcement actions from 633 in 2012/2013 to 893 in 2013/2014 financial year. The enforcement actions include cessation orders, enforcement notices, stop notices, and notice of intention to suspend.

The number of matters brought before the courts for environmental and planning breaches also increased with the number of summons served from 13 in 2012/2013 to 49 last financial year. Mr. Speaker, over the past year the scaled-up enforcement activities have resulted in a number of convictions and settlements also. NEPA has begun using the court injunctions to enforce compliance with Town and Country Planning Act and the Beach Control Act. This initiative has been very successful. The intention is that injunction against offenders will become a regular part of the enforcement procedure.

Mr. Speaker, the Forestry Department also achieved considerable success through its targeted enforcement initiatives during the last financial year. Several matters have been brought before the agency, before the Island's Resident Magistrate's Court and increasingly, higher fines are being imposed by the judiciary for offences committed against the Forest Act of 1996 and the Forest Regulation of 2001. There was a reduction in the number of offences detected (in area) of management by the Forestry Department over the same period in the last financial year. This was due mainly to increase monitoring by the department enforcement personnel as well as community meetings to increase public awareness about the fines and penalties as well as activities that constitute offences.

Through its enforcement efforts, the Forestry Department in 14 separate incidents seized timber and non-timber forest products that were not legally acquired from the forest reserves and forest estate management. Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to make an appeal to all Jamaicans please stop raiding our forests. (Applause) We must preserve what we have and if you breach the regulations and chop down our forests, we are coming after you with the full force of the law.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I will now turn to water. My senior Minister spoke extensively on the Water portfolio, but I would like to add to his presentation with some more information about the plans for managing our water resources and extended access to portable water.

Mr. SHAW: He was talking to the farmers about thieving water, too.

Mr. HAYLES: Particularly under drought conditions.

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the thrust to build resilience against climate variability and particularly below average rainfall season into drought, the Meteorological Service is now expanding the climate predictable rainfall outlook to six months. The Met Service has developed the seasonal drought forecast.

Mr. SHAW: He should apologize to the farmers.

Mr. HAYLES: …forecast which will allow the improved planning preparation and implementation of proactive actions to deal with a deficiency in water availability. As a result the water sector will now be vested with the cutting edge scientific information for at least three months in advance to plan and implement measures for the (onset) of drought conditions.

Another tool in reducing the impact of below average rainfall on agriculture is the Farmers Bulletin which disseminates information on climate services such as drought analysis, rainfall prediction and drought forecast.

Mr. Speaker, the protracted dry season this year highlights the need for the household in Jamaica to increase storage capacity in order to augment NWC's water supply. In this regard, the Ministry...

Mr. SHAW: What he said in Portland.

Mr. SILVERA: I cannot hear. Yuh just chat that is why you lost.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. SHAW: You don't want to remember all the….

Mr. HAYLES: In this regard, the Ministry has prepared a draft National Rainwater Policy guideline for new and existing residential and commercial development. Under these guidelines, Mr. Speaker, rainwater harvesting will be a requirement on condition of approval for every single new residential and commercial development in Jamaica. (Applause) This is an idea whose time has come and we will be moving to implement in the shortest time possible.

Mr. Speaker, the drought response will be underpinned by the Rapid Response Programme. There are currently 20 trucks in operation islandwide transporting water on behalf of the NWC, Councils, schools, the parish councils, hospitals and other institutions. Rapid Response also supplies private and commercial customers which is the main source of its earned revenue.

Mr. Speaker, the last rate of increase for the trucking of water was in June of last year and the current rates $3 per gallon for NWC and other government agencies $3.50 for private truckers. This compares favourable with the $6 per gallon being charged by private truckers whose sources may be questionable. Under this rate regime the Rapid Response Programme earned $89 Million in the 2013/2014 fiscal year (Applause) and nearly 82% increase over the $49 Million earned the previous year. At present the programme employs 38 persons islandwide and with the scheduled repairs of units this year more persons are expected to be employed under the Rapid Response.

Dr. McNEILL: Working, working, working.

Mr. HAYLES: Mr. Speaker, the Minister tells me all the time that I treat Rapid Response as my baby. It has increased its earnings potential and, Minister, you know that when we just came into office it was about to be scraped, but it has now turned a profit.

Mr. SHAW: Scrap long before 2011.

Mr. HAYLES: Hold on nuh, Audley.

Mr. Speaker, as stated by the Honourable Minister and pointed out on several occasions, the National Water Commission is operating...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. McKENZIE: You think a Cuba yuh deh!

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. DALLEY: General...

Mr. HAYLES: …within very serious fiscal constraints imposed on both the capital and expenditure budget for 2014/2015. These constraints will undoubtedly pose challenge to the NWC in maintaining its costly ongoing operations but also in sourcing, funding and implementing new projects. Notwithstanding these difficulties, I am pleased to elaborate on the new projects the NWC will be implementing on a phased basis over 2014 and 2015 - 2015 and 2016 fiscal year also.

These, Mr. Speaker, are in addition to the numerous large projects which the Honourable Minister Robert Pickersgill announced in his presentation on June 3. In North West St. Ann the constituency of MP Dayton Campbell, the

construction of Bridgewater No. 2 Tank Replacement Project value (Inaudible) $30,000; tank Replacement Project is expected to be completed in 2015.

The projects are expected to benefit over 300 persons and will each cost $20 Million. (Applause)

Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. HAYLES: Mr. Speaker, the Member from North West St. Ann has made continuous representation to the Ministry and the NWC about water for residents of Bamboo in his constituency. I am happy to let the MP know that he has been heard in response to his many, many calls to Honourable Minister, Robert Pickersgill. (Applause) We will be spending millions to equip the Green Park well and to construct the pumping station, Mr. Speaker. This project will take place in two phases, with Phase 1 scheduled to begin the first quarter of 2015/2016 and approximately 800 citizens will benefit.

In Southwest St. Ann, the constituency of MP Keith Walford, the Cave Valley pipeline extension project is coming and it's estimated to benefit some 20,000 persons. Mr. Speaker, I have visited this constituency and I am confident that work will begin soon. Designs are now being completed - (Applause) - and we expect that once started this project will take some 18 months to be completed. Also in Southwest St. Ann, we will be upgrading the raw water intake and treatment plant which will take eight months for construction. Mr. Speaker, all this is subject to approval from WRA.

In Southeast St. Ann, the constituency of MP Lisa Hanna, we will be working on five projects, these are: Moneague to Walkerswood water supply interconnection project which involve the construction of approximately 4.5 kilometres of 155 millimetre pipeline between two communities at a cost of $90 Million. This project will benefit 8000 persons and is expected to start the end of 2014.

The Grierfield/Gibraltar pipeline project which involves the construction of approximately two kilometres distribution pipeline at an estimated cost of $7 Million. We expect that some 600 persons will benefit from this project which is scheduled to start in the next two months. Construction of 100,000 imperial gallon in Phoenix Park estimated to benefit 3000 persons at a cost of $60 Million. (Applause)

The NWC has initiated orders under its Tank and Pump Programme with actual construction to be completed over a four month period during 2015.

The Davis Town Tank Rehabilitation which is estimated to benefit 1000 residents, at a cost of $5 Million, Mr. Speaker. Actual construction is expected to be completed over a three month period, starting in the next three to six months.

Harrison Town Tank Rehabilitation which is estimated to benefit 800 persons at a cost of $4 Million with actual construction to be completed over a three month period starting in this calendar year.

Construction on approximately 600 metres of pipeline in Parry Town and interconnection with Shaw Park water supply. The project will benefit 1200 residents at a cost of $2 Million. (Applause)

In Western St. Mary the constituency of MP Jolyan Silvera, the Boscobel Tank and Pump Replacement Project will cost $28 Million and benefit 3000 persons. Actual construction is expected to be completed over a three month period for completion during 2015.

Pump replacement activities at Frontier, Gibraltar, Trinity, White River, Hamilton Mountain and Gayle Springs at a cost of $55 Million to benefit thousands in the first instance. Actual construction to start in the first quarter of 2015.

In addition, we are replacing a major pump at Canoe Hall which supplies Mason Hall. This will improve the water supply to residents. Construction of approximately three kilometres pipeline to replace the existing leaking pipes in the Arcadia House Scheme will…

Mr. SILVERA: See me here, sir.

Mr. HAYLES: It's on its way. MP Silvera.

The project will benefit 4000 persons at a cost of $8 Million and should commence at the end of this calendar year.

(Applause)

In East Rural St. Andrew the constituency of Damion Crawford, interconnection to the Yallahs pipeline and construction of a treatment facility at St. Benedict at an estimated cost of $40 Million to serve some 3000 persons. This project is expected to be constructed over a seven month period.

Constitutional Hill supply of equipment and pump replacement project at an estimated cost of $5 Million. An order has already been made with the actual construction schedule for the first quarter of 2015.

In West Central St. Catherine the constituency of Dr. Kenneth Baugh, pump replacement will be done at Frazers Content, number one and two in St. Catherine, at a combined cost of $10 Million. This serves more than 8000 persons. Work will be carried out in early 2015.

I know Goldmine is very important to the Prime Minister. Upgrading of Goldmine spring source and treatment plant, replacement installation of pump and storage tank rehabilitation will better serve 6000 persons at a cost of $48 Million. This project has been tendered, is being evaluated and is set to commence this year for completion early next year.

In North Central St. Catherine the constituency of Natalie Neita-Headley, refurbishment and installation of tanks on the Richard Hall, Mount Dawson water supply at a cost of $15 Million to serve thousands of residents. The pump is already on order and works are scheduled to commence by the end of this calendar year for completion during the latter half of 2015. (Applause)

The Sligoville pump replacement is estimated to cost $10 Million to better serve 10,000 persons. The pump is already on order and works are scheduled to commence in 2015, first quarter.

In Central St. Catherine.

Miss GRANGE: Ah, ah, ah, Lime Tree is not in my area.

Mr. HAYLES: It's not -

Mr. DALLEY: Minister, proceed.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Miss GRANGE: The rest of it is to put me on pause for two years. Don't even read it.

Mr. HAYLES: Well, well -

Miss GRANGE: Don't even read it.

Mr. HAYLES: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member didn't write the speech so I will read it.

(Laughter)

In Central St. Catherine the constituency of Olivia Grange…

(The Speaker gavels)

…initial works for finalization of design, costing and finance resource are on the way, with a request for a proposal to be issued in the next three to six months for the upgrading of Eltham Park waste water treatment plant. To accept pumping from the proposed Tawes Pen waste water pumping station.

Miss GRANGE: For two years!

Mr. HAYLES: This project will require a 24 month construction period.

Miss GRANGE: Another two years.

Mr. HAYLES: In South West Clarendon the constituency of Noel - Mr. Speaker, the constituency of Noel Arscott, Rhymesbury well, pump replaceable, and Toll Gate pump replacement at a combined cost of $10 Million to benefit more than 5000 Jamaicans. (Applause) Pump orders have been made already with actual construction schedule for the first quarter of 2015.

Toll Gate tank rehabilitation at a cost of $6 Million to benefit 1500 citizens. The pump is already ordered and works are scheduled to commence before the end of this year, completion in early 2015.

The replacement of the existing Ebony Park storage tank with new storage tank at a cost of $30 Million to serve 4000 persons. The pump for this project was ordered and works are scheduled to commence within the next six to eight months for completion in early 2015. (Applause)

In North Central Clarendon the constituency of MP Pearnel Charles, pump replacement at Rock River, Curatoe Hill at a combined cost of $10 Million, to better serve over 4000 Jamaicans. Works are scheduled to commence and be completed during 2015.

Replacement of 17 kilometres of leaking pipes from Soursop Turn…

Mr. McKENZIE: What happen to Kingston and St. Andrew? Wha'pen to we?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: You have water. You have water.

(Heckling)

Mr. HAYLES: Mr. Speaker, replacement of 17 kilometres of leaking pipe from Soursop Turn along the Chapelton main road to Trout Hall, will cost just over $130 Million and will benefit more than 4000 citizens. This project is expected to be completed over a seven month period in collaboration with NWA and works will continue during this calendar year.

In North West Manchester, the constituency of MP Mikael Phillips, we will be undertaking - and Mr. Speaker I speak here about Porus also, Mr. Speaker, about the two

kilometres of pipes that you have been lobbying for, for quite a while, and we are working on it to try and start the project this year. (Applause)

In North West Manchester, the constituency of Mikael Phillips, we will be undertaking a series of pump replacement in Broadleaf, Comfort, Porus No. 1 and Porus No. 2 at a combined cost of $20 Million. Installations are scheduled to commence in the first quarter of 2015. In addition the Member from North West Manchester will be pleased to know that water is coming to Mile Gully - (Applause) - in this financial year, and we are going to be doing it in two phases. We intend to spend millions on Phase 1 of this project, this financial year, which will encompass the development, construction and installation of a well and pumping station in Mile Gully.

In North East St. Elizabeth, the constituency of MP Raymond Pryce. The Old Pepper and Rosses Valley tank rehabilitation project.

Mr. SHAW: What was that? Kern Spencer? What you say? Kern Spencer?

Mr. HAYLES: Raymond Pryce.

Mr. SHAW: Oh, oh, Raymond Spencer. I mean - Sorry.

Mr. HAYLES: The Old Pepper and Rosses Valley tank rehabilitation project will serve a combined total of more than 7000 residents a combined cost of $9 Million. Works are scheduled to commence before the end of the year with completion in early 2015. A series of pump replacement at Union No. 1, Union No. 2 Bouge, South Hampton and Siloah at a combined cost of $25 Million, to better serve some 14,000 residents. Works are scheduled to commence in the first quarter of 2015.

The completion of the Santa Cruz water supply and rehabilitation and upgrade project, Phase IB, at a cost of $40 Million to better serve approximately 20,000 residents. This project is expected to be mobilized before the end of the year and be completed during 2015.

In North West St. Elizabeth, the constituency of MP J.C. Hutchinson.

Installation and relift station, transmission and distribution pipeline and storage reservoir at Carris Brook, is estimated to cost $120 Million.

Mr. PARCHMENT: How much?

Mr. HAYLES: One Hundred and Twenty Million.

Mr. PARCHMENT: How much?

Mr. ROBINSON: No, repeat that, repeat that.

Mr. HAYLES: One Hundred and Twenty Million and will benefit some 15,000 persons.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Derrick, you hear that?

Mr. HAYLES: The engineering designs are to be revised by Rural Water Limited for implementation during the 2015/2016 financial year.

Development of the White Hall well and construction of a well pumping station. Installation of transmission and distribution pipelines, construction of a relift station and storage reservoir, Minister, at a cost of $145 Million.

Mr. PARCHMENT: How much?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Who that?

Mr. HAYLES: J.C.

(Heckling)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Again?

Mr. HAYLES: Yes. To better serve 30,000 citizens of his constituency. Designs for this project are to be revised…

(*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Speaker gavels)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HAYLES: Designs, designs, designs for this project are to be revised by Rural Water Supply Limited for implementation over a 24-month period beginning in 2015/2016.

In Central…

Mr. McKENZIE: Now let me hear Kingston.

Mr. HAYLES: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say something.

When we first got to the Ministry, Mr. Speaker, we saw approximately 120 projects on the books that needed to be implemented and executed. It so happened that the Administration led by the Honourable Prime Minister won 40-odd seats, so it's not skewed in any way, shape or form, Mr. Speaker, we won 40 some-odd seats and we are just executing the projects that we have found on the books, a couple of them, Dr. Chang, so I want to explain to the Member from West Kingston that these are projects…

(Heckling by Mr. McKenzie)

Hold on no, man. These are projects…

(Heckling)

These are projects that we came and we saw.

In Central Westmoreland, the constituency of MP Roger Clarke:

- replacement of the Venture River and the Roaring River tanks to better serve 2,500 residents at a cost of Five Million ($5M); works are scheduled to commence and be completed during 2015;
- laying of one kilometer of 400mm pipes from Dunbar's Crossing to Big Bridge, at a cost of Thirty Million ($30M), to benefit thousands of residents in Central Westmoreland. (Applause) This project is in the procurement stage and is to be tendered within the next few months.

In Southern St. James, the constituency of the Honourable Derrick Kellier:

- construction of two pump stations, pipeline and tank in Comfort Hall, at a cost of Fifteen Million ($15M) to benefit 2,000 residents; this has been completed and is now in operation;
- a series of tank replacement at Mafuta, Niagra, Tangle River and Vaughnsfield, at a combined cost of Twenty Million (S20M), to better serve 12,000 residents; work is scheduled to commence by the first quarter of 2015 with completion four months after commencement.

In East Central St. James, the constituency of Member of Parliament, Edmond Bartlett:

- a series of pump replacement at Canaan, Portobello and Appleton Spring will be carried out at a combined cost of Twenty-two Million ($22M). We are still waiting on that letter to deal with...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. HAYLES:

Yeah, yeah. The Portobello project is already completed and serving more than 2,000 persons, while the pumps for Canaan/Appleton Springs project are on order, with expectation for completion during the first half of 2015.

- The Rhyne Park Upgrading Project involves replacement of existing pumping equipment, with six new units to adequately meet demand in Rhyne Park and surrounding areas, at a cost of Fifty Million Dollars ($50M). (Applause) This project should benefit more than 20,000 residents. Installation works are scheduled for the first quarter of 2015.

In Central St. James, the constituency of MP Lloyd B. Smith:

- upgrading of the Salt Spring Number 1 and Number 2 pump station at a cost of Twelve Million ($12M) to better serve some 7,000 persons. Works are scheduled to commence during the first quarter of 2015, and to be completed around mid 2015.

In South Trelawny, the constituency of Marisa Dalrymple Philibert:

- Barns... to Ulster Spring and Troy Pump Replacement Project at a combined cost of Fifteen Million Dollars ($15M) to benefit more than 20,000 residents. Works are scheduled to commence in the first quarter, Mr. Speaker, of 2015.

Mr. Speaker, these numerous water supply and waste water projects being implemented by the NWC, are a clear and tangible demonstration of the commitment of this government to improve the lives of ordinary Jamaicans. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. HAYLES: Even in the midst of the most difficult financial challenges with the tight financial space in which the NWC will be operating in this financial year and going forward, the NWC has decided to make a strategic shift in operational procedures by allowing much of its work to be done internally at times by the National Water Commission.

I therefore appeal to all the Members of this Honourable House to not only support the NWC in its scheduled implementation of these projects, but also to be understanding and supportive of the enterprise, in addressing its mandate. From operations to collection and delinquency management, from maintenance to infrastructure protection to community interaction, the NWC is willing and ready to serve under the Honourable Minister Robert Pickersgill.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I trust my presentation has highlighted the importance of managing, protecting and preserving our environment and natural resources. In this regard, I commend civil society for the work it has been doing and continues to do, to advance the country's environmental agenda and in highlighting national environmental issues of importance to all Jamaicans.

I could not close, however, without expressing the Government's appreciation for the technical and financial support that has been provided by our donor partners. And I say thanks. This support, Mr. Speaker, has assisted in building the capacity of the public sector, and in many cases the non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations in effectively responding to national, regional and international environmental issues.

My colleagues, it cannot be business as usual in addressing the issues and challenges associated with the management of our environment while at the same time we strive to achieve economic and social development goals. Therefore, I call upon all Jamaicans, please partner with us in a constructive manner to advance the country's environmental and development agendas to ensure the quality of your own life as well as that of your children.

Mr. Speaker, I end with a plea to my fellow country men and women. Jamaica, this island, all its beauty is all we have. It cannot mash up and buy back, unlike a cell phone or a car. None of us can lay individual claim to the beach or to the air or to the forest. Jamaica is all we have. Jamaica belongs to all of us, even the unborn. This responsibility to protect and to preserve is ours, we ignore at our own peril.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you. And may God bless Jamaica continually.

(Applause)

(The Speaker leaves his Chair at 4.57 p.m. and the Deputy Speaker presides)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we now take the final contribution for the evening, the MP from Eastern St. Andrew.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. André Hylton. (Applause)

Mr. André HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, kindly permit me to speak from a seat other than my own.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Permission granted.

Mr. André HYLTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In my personal business and now in my political life, I believe I have and have always believed in transformation. This kind of transformation means profound change for the better. It means making the best of one's life and circumstances.

In the sphere of good governance it requires a transformational leader, like our Prime Minister, who has a vested interest in the people of this country. (Applause)

Transformation does not merely happen, rather, it is driven by a clear vision, foresight and dedication. It is the act of visualizing realistic possibilities and actualizing them, and dedicated to working with the people to realize these possibilities.

I have had many opportunities, Mr. Speaker, to leave this country. However, I have made my decision to take ownership of Jamaica and be a part of the transformational journey. I declare that this is my home. Mr. Speaker, me nah lef yah. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: A who you did have a tell you fe leave?

(Laughter)

Mr. André HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, Members of this Honourable House, it is with much humility that I stand before you again this year to make my contribution to the Sectoral Debate as Member of Parliament for Eastern St. Andrew.

I want to firstly thank the Most Honourable Prime Minister, Portia Simpson Miller, for her guidance, her leadership and support in my endeavours. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. André HYLTON: Madam Prime Minister, I salute you.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yes!

Mr. André HYLTON: I also wish to thank my fellow parliamentarians on both sides of the House...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Especially me, because it is my seat.

(Laughter)

Mr. André HYLTON: ...for their advice and encouragement, and I look forward to our continued positive relationship.

I must thank the people of Eastern St. Andrew - that great constituency - who have elected me to continue the vision for our constituency on this transformational journey.

Mr. McKENZIE: Part-time!

Mr. André HYLTON: Within our constituency and within this House, we must make our lives better, as a people, because we are a transformative team.

Without fail, I must recognize the hard work of the Councillors who have consistently showed commitment to their divisions. We have Miss Venetia Phillips of the Papine Division - Councillor Venetia Phillips, and Councillor Carl Lyttle from the Mona Division. (Applause) I thank you.

Mr. McKENZIE: Part-time da one dey, just like yu.

Mr. André HYLTON: To my family, I wish to thank you for your continued support and encouragement and belief in me.

I also wish to thank the many workers, the workers in my office, my cluster managers, the many volunteers who, on an ongoing basis keep the constituency organized and going. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, giving service to ones country is one of the most rewarding and fulfilling task that anyone can undertake. Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Indeed, I continue to find myself in serving the great constituency of Eastern St. Andrew.

Mr. Speaker, last year in my maiden presentation in this Honourable House, I outlined my vision and plans for the constituency of Eastern St. Andrew. One year later, Mr. Speaker, I am here to present my Report Card, a summary of my successes and the challenges which have hindered the transformation, and with your permission, share a few thoughts on the way forward.

In reviewing the past year, Mr. Speaker, much has been achieved. Some of the things we started last year were completed. Example, we did three stoplights in our constituency which was completed just recently. We have one in Papine, one at the top of Wellington and Mona Road, one across from the US

Embassy, and of course, adequate pedestrian crossings - traffic signals were constructed.

Secondly, through the Universal Access Fund, Mr. Speaker, we were able to realize our Computer in Community Centers project. Under this project three computer labs were installed in Tavern, Hermitage, Top Range. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Working! Working! Working!

Mr. André HYLTON: It is further anticipated that individuals trained in these centres may be able to secure employment in the nearby Call Centers. And I want to thank the Ministers of MSTEM, Ministers Paulwell and Robinson.

Mr. Speaker, last year we announced the Read for Life project - and I'm sorry Minister Omar Davies is not here...

A MEMBER: What for life?

Mr. André HYLTON: Read for Life. If you read by five you will read for life.

Mr. Speaker, we targeted 26 basic schools under this programme. We've commenced training of our teachers and training of our parents in proper parenting skills.

Another segment of this programme, Mr. Speaker, is the Spanish in Basic Schools. It is a critical component of our programme, and today Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to say that we've identified financing. And with partnership with PEDAC, the SAE development foundation, this project will be implemented. The funding will provide audio visual equipment to facilitate the learning and teaching process. And I'm committed to this initiative, as Spanish is positioned to be the second most widely used language by the year 2030.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. André HYLTON: We are exploring also, Mr. Speaker, the inclusion of Mandarin in our Read for Life project. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Eastern St. Andrew we are cognizant of the socio-economic position of China in Jamaica and the world over. But, how can we truly maximize the benefits of these relationships unless we speak the language? I'm therefore suggesting the inclusion of Mandarin in our schools' curriculum; it is one of the languages of the future. And I'm sure Minister Hylton can agree. (Applause)

Investing in people is a language that transforms lives. Mr. Speaker, we continue to support a variety of sporting and social development initiatives. We continue to promote talent, constructive occupation and education. The support, Mr. Speaker, has borne fruit, and I'm here to report, Mr. Speaker, that one of the primary schools in my constituency, New Providence Primary, recently won the National Primary Schools Championship. Big up New Providence Primary School!

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we in Eastern St. Andrew believe in the creativity of our people as a means of expression and a connection to who we are. That is why, last summer we launched a programme called Yard Art. This project targeted over 120 young people. Here, children were exposed to craft making,

jewellery design, dance, as well as drama, music and visual arts.

In addition to the cultural expression, the children were taught attitude adjustments, discipline and acceptable values and norms. I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to a young lady, Miss Kim-Lee Campbell, the granddaughter of the famous painter Ralph Campbell, who lives in August Town, she along with her friends from Edna Manley College, also community members, were able to stage a successful camp last year, and I'm so proud of this young lady.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a special point to you on this young lady - and your Prime Minister speaks to it all the time - the importance of engaging our youths.

Here's a young lady in August Town who has absolutely no interest in what happens in her community. She goes to school and she comes back home; has no interest in government nor politics, but the fact that I engaged her, motivated her to put on this Yard Art camp, this was such a motivation for this young lady; she's now interested in government, she's interested in the politics of our country, she asked me to get her enumerated. Mr. Speaker, we must engage our young people or we're going to lose them! (Applause)

Mr. ROBINSON: Yes, hear, hear!

Mr. André HYLTON: And this is an example, Mr. Speaker, of what can happen when we engage and educate our young people.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, speaking of creativity, let me draw your attention to the work of the UWI Mona through their Township Project. Last year I spoke about our support for the work of Professor Boxhill at the Centre for Tourism and Policy Research at the University...

A MEMBER: Better days now.

Mr. André HYLTON: …who seeks to expose and train young people in film making. Well, Mr. Speaker - as my very good friend and MP from South East St. Andrew, announced in his speech - not only that he trained these young persons, but I'm proud to say, that the cameras did not only roll, but the films were produced and showcased at the Greater August Town Film Festival. Great initiative! And I believe in the Prime Minister's constituency also the project has expanded. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this is true inner city renewal and the kind of work that transforms inner cities to winner cities. In Eastern St. Andrew we stand proud of our winner cities. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. André HYLTON: The constituency of Eastern St. Andrew has a rich historical heritage and a community that provide a myriad of untapped artifacts which should be used for cultural heritage tourism. The very name August Town has significant and historical meaning. It was named August Town in recognition of Emancipation Day in 1838.

Mr. Speaker, last year we spoke about the move to cultural and heritage tourism and I'm therefore pleased to say that this venture has

already begun. Through the Centre for Tourism and Policy Research we have experimented with two tours which have hailed a tremendous success.

Mr. Speaker, the tour should've lasted one hour in August Town, and by the time the tourists were taken to Bed ward Healing Stream and Sizzla Studio and mingling with the people, they did not want to leave. I say the greatest resource of our country is in our people. We need to connect our people with the tourists, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

And of course, Minister Crawford made mention of his Community Day. Well we in Eastern St. Andrew we are ready for the Community Day!

Eastern St. Andrew could very well be the next Mecca for cultural tourism much like the Minister of Tourism and Entertainment envisions that Trench Town would be. I invite Ministers McNeill and Crawford and their teams to explore the possibilities that lie in Eastern St. Andrew.

Mr. Speaker we have achieved much, despite the challenges. Last year, through the National Works Agency and the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, we were able to bring hope to the Hope River. The Tavern to Kintyre Bridge was completed, and I thank the Prime Minster for opening it a few months ago. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, our success in the infrastructural development is also evident in the completion and construction of a road in Mountain View called Spanish Town - and Babsy, this is a Mountain View/Spanish Town.

(Inaudible comment by Ms. Grange)

Mr. André HYLTON: Yes.

And now the community is proud, they can walk on a road for the first time and the ladies complained that their slippers and their high heels don't get muddied.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to commend some of the embassies, one of which, the US Embassies in our constituency for participating in our constituency. And recently we had a meeting with the former US Ambassador, looking at the entire sidewalk Mecca and to ensure that they met the standards suitable for persons with special needs.

I also want to thank the Japanese Government through our Ambassador, for the projects that they have implemented in our constituency. One of which is an interesting one called Child Resilience, done by the programme at Hope United, which we support.

Another great gift I think the residents of Eastern St. Andrew can be proud of and the country, is a gift from the Republic of China. They will be constructing the Chinese Gardens in Hope Gardens, valued at approximately $300 Million. This has great implications, positive implications for us in this country, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. André HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, you may recall, Mr. Speaker, last year we spoke of the University Town.

A MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. André HYLTON: The main facet in which to create a space with the five tertiary

institutions within close proximity to Papine, out of which will flow benefits to the residents, students and businesses. In keeping with this concept, Mr. Speaker, we are very happy to report that talks with the various agencies, whether it be the Ministry of Local Government, the Universities, the KSAC, those talks are well underway.

Mr. Speaker, we've also been able, through the National Works Agency, fund the sidewalk project in Papine, where sidewalks were redesigned, constructed; slip roads were constructed, also it provides additional parking. This, Mr. Speaker, better facilitates pedestrians and the ease of flow of traffic in the Papine Square.

In transforming Eastern St. Andrew, on my report card I must highlight the support of the University of the West Indies in our plan to redevelop the community of Mona Commons - and I'm sure my friend from West Kingston is interested in this. Mr. Speaker, I'm excited to say that the Land Agency has approved, in principle, the application for the acquisition of the Mona Commons lands. Mr. Speaker, it is no small feat! It now paves the way for the full scale reorganization of the Mona Commons Community. What a feat indeed, Mr. Speaker? If you think this is great, then what is here to come?

(Applause)

Under this project, Mr. Speaker, a team headed by the University Principal Mr. Archibald McDonald, will design housing solutions, shops, widening of the roadway of course, Mr. Speaker, will ease the congestion in front of the access to the hospital gate. This, Mr. Speaker, I believe is a move in the right direction! (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this is not about winning votes, or gaining political mileage.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. DALLEY: Shut up yuh mouth ah nuh sey nutten!

Mr. André HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, this is not about winning political votes. This is and has everything to do with my sense of obligation to the people of Eastern St. Andrew and the wider Jamaica. This is transformation at work; transforming lives and transforming communities.

A MEMBER: Working, working, working.

Mr. André HYLTON: This, Mr. Speaker, is just the beginning, we're just getting started.

A major road work is to begin in Rocky Road, and this has been toured by Minister Azan. This road, Mr. Speaker, connects Gordon Town Road to Old Hope Road. So the persons who are - residents who are travelling from Mavis Bank, Gordon Town, Irish Town, will no longer have to go through Papine Square.

But, Mr. Speaker, importantly, this road will serve a variety of important institutions:

A MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. André HYLTON: Danny Williams School, Lister Mair School for the Deaf, UTech, MIND, NWC Basic School - Mr. Minister of Water, and you have a big treatment plant around there.

The redevelopment of Rocky Road will assist with the current expansion dorms at

UTech also, Mr. Speaker. This will reduce congestion in Papine Square, and I say, Mr. Minister, I'm depending on you to get to organize and start this as quickly as possible for us in Eastern St. Andrew.

I also wish to recommend, Mr. Speaker that we build this road with cement, as this will utilize our local resources and extend the durability of the road. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to highlight the constituency of Eastern St. Andrew per capita or per acre, the constituency with the largest grouping of intellectual and academic minds in Jamaica - a feat which we have yet to fully utilize.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, with such a diverse group of intellectuals, Eastern St. Andrew remains the hub for job talents. This is fertile ground for investment to facilitate the Growth Agenda in Jamaica. With the presence of these intellectuals in this space, it provides a reservoir for which employers can recruit potential employees for their companies. For example, Mr. Speaker, Sutherlands Global Services which operates on the University Campus, employs approximately 1,000 persons.

But I am here to tell you, Mr. Speaker - and this is hot off press - in the next three months, Sutherland Global will employ an additional 350 persons, Mr. Speaker. This is growth in the constituency, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

It is also important to note that another landowner in the constituency has indicated - and Minister Robinson, you should make note of this - that his 32,000 square-foot property is now available for BPO, and is willing to enter some sort of the business arrangement with a prospective investor. Mr. Speaker, Eastern St. Andrew is open for business.

Mr. Speaker, there is more to be done, and we will come to do more. Challenges in the constituency, Mr. Speaker, are many. In Eastern St. Andrew, like many other constituencies, we continue to face the subject of limited employment and limited success in entrepreneurial ventures. The fact, Mr. Speaker, for real and effective transformation to occur, whether in Eastern St. Andrew or in Jamaica, persons must be given the requisite tools and opportunities to become productive. But equally important, persons must learn to seize the opportunities when they come. This, to me, Mr. Speaker, is the beginning of opportunities, and as I quote from Minister Kellier, he said: "productivity equals prosperity." So, Mr. Speaker, I am pressed to speak to these two issues which continue to be a challenge in the constituency, and in Jamaica.

Both Minister Kellier and Minister Hanna spoke about the declining productivity in Jamaica and the growing feeling of dispossession among our youths. In this regard, I wish to expound on two areas which can be explored to facilitate a reduction in unemployment.

Firstly, to increase opportunities for skill development and skill level proficiency of our youths so that they can better take advantage of the overseas employment opportunities, especially in Canada and the United States. (Applause)

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, to encourage more youths towards IT tertiary development. Mr. Speaker, I remember it was last year Minister Kellier noted that considerable work was being done to grow the Overseas Employment Programme while training our people to meet the demand for global job market. The jobs and opportunities for employment exist, but as Minister Kellier notes, we must begin to look outside of our jurisdiction.

In May 2013, Bloomberg news reported that Canada was on a massive drive to recruit skilled workers. It was reported one specific programme is poised to recruit approximately 3,000. The Global Talent Survey Shortage shows that the most difficult jobs to fill were those in the category of skilled trade workers, and as such it was ranked number 1. This category has also remained in the top five most difficult categories to fill, Mr. Speaker, for the past five years.

Mr. Speaker, Canada has shown itself to be an excellent commonwealth partner to Jamaica, and... (Applause) ...we can big them up, yes... and this is evidenced by the ongoing Farm Work Programme. Mr. Speaker, I just returned from Canada last week.

MEMBERS: From Farm Work Programme?

Mr. André HYLTON: No, no, not on the Farm Work Programme. (Laughter) I should try that though.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. André HYLTON: We were looking a job. We must continue to capitalize on the partnership, through the creation of another programme, which will actively seek to place more of our skilled people in these jobs. Let me commend our Minister for his efforts in these endeavours. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, recently, Chris Alexander, the Canadian Immigration Minister noted that under the new immigration system, express entry will be granted to immigrants who meet their required qualifications. The Minister also noted that the new Express Entry Programme will provide a swifter path to Canada that will select immigrants based on their skills and attributes that Canada needs.

The new system which becomes effective January 1, 2015 - and I ask you to pay attention - will see a widening of the available jobs for immigrant workers under the Federal Skilled Workers - Federal Skilled Trade Programme and the Canadian Experience Class. Under these programmes, immigrants are given the opportunity to become permanent Canadian residents, and other benefits. Mr. Speaker, they have the gap; let us prepare our people to fill them. (Applause)

To take advantage of these opportunities in overseas employment, Mr. Speaker, I am proposing to this Honourable House, a programme to allow our youths to fill these gaps strategically, and expand the number of skilled Jamaican workers who are overseas. This programme is to be called the Jamaica Labour Export Advanced Programme, JALEAP. (Applause) Already, Mr. Minister - already the Minister has identified employment gaps between Jamaica and its facility in certifying trained skilled labourers and professionals to fill these opportunities.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. André HYLTON: Now, we see wider employment gaps opening up in Canada. A systematic JALEAP would internationally deploy human resources based on existing demand. JALEAP workers would be in a state of readiness to seize employment opportunities as they arise, and would also serve as a national skills bank. The proposed JALEAP, Mr. Speaker, covers three categories: certified trained skilled workers, certified professionals, certified workers for emerging employment gaps, such as the IT sector global trends and their viral Webscape. JALEAP, Mr. Speaker, would have the...

Mr. SHAW: What it name?

Mr. DALLEY: Go to sleep; don't tell him. Listen... you must listen.

Mr. André HYLTON: JALEAP, Mr. Speaker, would have the unemployed in Eastern St. Andrew, in St. Mary, in Manchester, in Westmoreland and the unemployed in Jamaica, leaping to employment. To capitalize on JALEAP it is recommended, Mr. Speaker, that a Memorandum of Understanding similar to that which entered into by the Government of the Philippines and Canada, we are recommending that this be pursued by us here in Jamaica. The research shows that the MOU facilitates employment for temporary Philippine workers.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. SHAW: I agree with you; you can't find jobs out here, you might as well go look it abroad. What you say it name again, JALEAP?

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we ask that the Member's time be extended, sufficient to complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time for speaking be extended so that he may complete his presentation.

Put to the House and the agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Hylton.

(Applause/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. André HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, under this MOU, approximately 14,000 jobs will be reserved for temporary workers from Philippines, and the Asian countries. An MOU such as this would enhance the arrangement which Jamaica has with Canada and reduce the level of unemployment in my constituency and the wider Jamaica. Mr. Speaker, under JALEAP, Jamaica will develop by leaps and bounds. (Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: A *nuh rey-rey*, a good something you a talk.

Mr. SHAW: You go pay the nurses the money you owe them.

Mr. André HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, under JALEAP, Jamaica will develop by leaps and bounds. Mr. Speaker, Canada has the gap; let us prepare our people to fill them.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. André HYLTON: Mr. Speaker... Information Technology, Mr. Speaker - which I am sure my Minister here from South East...

Mr. McKENZIE: The police want you to come in and give that statement about what happen up a Queen Hill.

Mr. André HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, within the JALEAP, there will be

opportunities for the export of information technology personnel. We must prepare more of our young people to fill these jobs in the growing and expanding sector which is ranked seventh most difficult job category to fill.

In December 2013, Forbes Magazine reported:

> "The information technology industry is one of the ten fastest growing fields to watch in 2014, with projected growth of 16 per cent."

Mr. Speaker, as reported in November 2013, IT Business Edge:

> "Although the US Economy remains stagnant, the field of computer science continues to grow."

In fact, Mr. Speaker, according to Bloomberg Technology, Technology Companies in the US has been pushing to increase the number of temporary H1B visas, raising the current ceiling from 65,000 to 110,000 immigrants in order to fill these jobs in the technology sector. Where the demand exists, Mr. Speaker, We must prepare our people to fill them.

Mr. Speaker, I know that we have the capacity to fill these jobs as our young people have shown their academic abilities in this regard, as evidenced by the 2013 CSEC results where 79 per cent of the 11,000 students were successful in the IT subjects. Mr. Speaker, JALEAP is here is to start, and now we are on the blocks and ready to go.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn now to entrepreneurial building for a few minutes. Mr. Speaker, I am a businessman, and more than this I am a businessman who believes in Jamaica. At age 19, I started my business with a mere $40 on a bicycle. You know how long that is, Horace? Several years later, Mr. Speaker, I have turned that small business into a successful venture.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. André HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, I am living proof that your background does not determine where you end up in life. However, my story is not unique. Other Members in this House, on both sides, have their own stories of having started from a humble beginning. Jamaicans have a natural affinity for entrepreneurship, and an innate talent for making much out of little, and as country people say, every *mickle meek* a *muckle.* (Applause)

For that reason, I want Jamaicans to think much bigger than this; to envision a large - themselves as a larger enterprise to bring significant contribution to the society and the economy. Too often, Mr. Speaker - too often individuals are not cognizant of the way in which their little can help to propel this country forward. It is for this reason, Mr. Speaker, that for this year in Eastern St. Andrew, we will commence our constituency-wide Entrepreneurial Training Programme. We will be working with the various government ministries, the various agencies, to train our constituents in business development and expansion.

Mr. Speaker, I dare Marcus from Mountain View with his community's tailor shop to think big and see himself as a contributor to the economy. I dare Miss Marcia from Standpipe who sells her home grown chickens to see herself as a contributor to this economy. Mr. Speaker, I see the peanut

man in Tavern to see himself as a contributor to this economy. They are all part of this big picture and should be recognized as such.

Mr. Speaker, we need to encourage our small business operators, our small entrepreneurs, to have larger visions for themselves as active participants in the Growth Agenda of this country, Mr. Speaker. (Applause) The innovativeness of our Jamaicans knows no bounds. The diverse use of things like ginger, sorrel, cassava, and recently the creation of ackee - ackee wines, and not to mention...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. André HYLTON: ...soon to come. There is proof of this, Mr. Speaker. As old time people say, and country people say, Jamaica knows how to *tun yuh han an mek* fashion.

Mr. Speaker, our young people have found even more creative ways to make use of the technological advancement. They have found ways to engage in legitimate e-commerce practices in the use of eBay, Facebook, and Instagram. So Member Grange when you want to buy dress next time you can get your dress there and Desmond may be able to get his suit on Instagram.

(Laughter)

Imagine with me, Mr. Speaker, if you will, a business hub in Jarrett Lane, where people are given an opportunity to create unique Jamaican items for sale while simultaneously working together in a cooperative where products are designed, created and marketed by the young people on the World Wide Web. Mr. Speaker, it is optimizing the value chain from raw material to marketing to the potential end user. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, if we can picture it we can achieve it. If we can picture it, Mr. Speaker, we can achieve it. What the mind conceives we can achieve.

Mr. Speaker, my unequivocal vision for this country, for every Jamaican is to be great and to see themselves as being great with great things to contribute to this nation. Let me state emphatically, Mr. Speaker, that greatness is not about how much money you make. It's not about how many cars you have, it is not about the size of your house, some of you may disagree but hear me out. Greatness, Mr. Speaker, is about taking whatever little you may have and doing the most with it.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Indeed.

Mr. André HYLTON: It is about seeing the opportunities you have, exactly where you are, and making the most of them. Mr. Speaker, this is how greatness comes about.

In Jamaica, Mr. Speaker, if can repeat what we witnessed with Tessanne Chin where 3 Million Jamaicans stood against 300 Million people and won, just imagine what we as Jamaicans can do if we unite and rally around our growth agenda, Mr. Speaker. (Applause) As Jamaicans we must take ownership of this lovely country. We must become nationalistic in our thoughts and actions. We must now actively participate in the transformation of Jamaica. Mr. Speaker, this is the land of my birth; this is my Jamaica, your Jamaica, our Jamaica. Mr. Speaker, it is in this way that I

urge all of us to continue the transformation started by our Most Honourable Prime Minister.

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. André HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, imagine an Eastern St. Andrew with all our children reading by five. They will read for life. Picture it, Mr. Speaker. We can achieve it. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, in Eastern St. Andrew where all persons of employment age are engaged in employment through JALEAP; productivity will boom, Mr. Speaker. (Applause) Picture it. We can achieve it!

Mr. Speaker, imagine the concept of a university of a university town.... being materialized; the positive effect it will have on the employment and the economy of Eastern St. Andrew. Mr. Speaker, picture it. We can achieve it.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear, hear!

Mr. McKENZIE: Dream on my brother, dream on.

Mr. André HYLTON: Imagine a Jamaica where entrepreneurs are equipped with the right tools. What a success it would be for our MSMEs sector, Mr. Speaker. If we picture it, we can achieve it!

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. André HYLTON: We must do this, Mr. Speaker, with courage, conviction, and strong commitment. We must, therefore, unite as a people around the agenda of transformation. Mr. Speaker and Members of this Honourable House, help me to transform Eastern St. Andrew as we work together by the power of God Almighty to transform Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

(Cross talk/the Deputy Speaker gavels)

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, it s not intended to do any further business today. I, therefore, ask for the adjournment of the House to be resumed tomorrow, June 18, at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House adjourns until tomorrow Wednesday, June 18, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House accordingly adjourned at approximately 5:40 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, June 18, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:45 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central
HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern
DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern
MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern
MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern
MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western
MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern
MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western
MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern
MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central
MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern
MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western
MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern
MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Mikael Phillips

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

PUBLIC BUSINESS

The SPEAKER: Dr. Guy.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to have the Bill shortly entitled: The Road Traffic Act, 2014 refer to a Joint Select Committee for consideration and report.

However, before the Bill can be referred to a Committee it must be read a second time. Mr. Speaker, I therefore move that the Bill be read a second time.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Bill entitled:

An Act to Repeal and Replace the Road Traffic Act; to establish the Island Traffic Authority as the Licensing Authority for the regulation and control of traffic on the roads, to create new categories of driver's licences and for connected matters,

read a second time.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, I now move:

Be it Resolved notwithstanding Standing Order 76(1) this Honourable House of Representatives appoints a Special Select Committee comprising the following Members:

Dr. The Honourable Omar Davies, Chairman
Honourable Dr. Morais Guy
Mr. Fitz Jackson

Mr. Richard Parchment,
Mr. Joyce Denise Daley
Mr. Derrick Smith
Dr. Horace Chang
Mr. Delroy Chuck
to sit jointly with a similar Committee to be appointed by the Senate to consider and report on the Bill shortly entitled; The Road Traffic Act, 2014.
Put to the House and agreed to.

SECTORAL DEBATE

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we will continue with the Sectoral Debate contributions. We have a contribution from the Attorney General.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. McKenzie)

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie, hold it down.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: The Attorney General is the Member from North Trelawny, he will be followed by the Member from North Central Clarendon and he will be followed by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, St James West Central constituency.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Atkinson (Applause)

(DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. ATKINSON: May it please you, Mr. Speaker.

There are soft copies on all tablets of my presentation.

Before I commence my contribution to this year's Sectoral Debate, Mr. Speaker, I wish to give honour to God for his Grace in allowing us to meet in this Honourable House at this time. Whenever we meet in this House, Mr. Speaker, when we take our seats we are really standing on the shoulders of the people of Jamaica who elected us to be here. (Applause) And they and each one of us together, are really supported by the grace of God and to God we give the glory. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, like everyone else, my life is subject to many twists and turns and to the vagaries which living in this world brings, and like everyone else, I need to and continue to need to have constant and consistent support because even in the good times life is never easy.

Mr. Speaker, my wife of over 40 years, Beverly. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. ATKINSON: Yes, she is actually in the Gallery and I wish to thank her for the constant support. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, she has always been my refuge and my place of safety. I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller for bestowing this significant trust and honour upon me when she advised His Excellency the Governor to appoint me as Attorney General of the Jamaica (Applause) thereby making me, Mr. Speaker, the principal legal advisor to the Government pursuant to Section 79 of the

Constitution of Jamaica. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the Prime Minister.

Daily, Mr. Speaker, the voice of a colleague of mine, the Honourable Senator A.J. Nicholson, QC, resonates in my head when I recall at the very first Cabinet meeting I attended, he said to me, you will never work as hard in your life as you will as Attorney General. And he was right, Mr. Speaker. However, what Senator Nicholson omitted to tell me that at the end of the day there would be, indeed, a tremendous feeling of pride and fulfillment for serving the people and the country of Jamaica. (Applause)

(MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

The work in the Attorney General's Chambers is voluminous and of great significance to the country, every memorandum of understanding, every contract for every business enterprise the Government enters into, whether through a ministry or a public body, every lawsuit against the Government, and any legal issue that involves a constitutional question passes through the Chambers of the Attorney General. And indeed, Mr. Speaker, most of the Cabinet submissions also follow that route.

The staff in the Chambers is limited, but the work ethic of the team in the Chambers is limitless.

I wish to place on record, the selfless and invaluable service the attorneys and the support staff of the Chambers perform for this country every day, day in day out and in fact, Mr. Speaker, sometimes at nights and sometimes on the weekend. (Applause)

I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the service of the Solicitor General Mrs. Nicole Foster Pusey, Queen's Council, and she is here in the Chambers... (Applause) ....for the invaluable and indispensable service that she has and is continuing to dispense towards the service of the mission of the Attorney General's Chambers. (Applause)

The Chambers, Mr. Speaker, has several divisions each of which is headed by a Director and each director has her own team of attorneys and support staff to discharge the duties.

Opposition MEMBER: You said her… (Inaudible)

I say her advisedly, Mr. Speaker, because all the directors in the Chambers are women.

(Applause)

Miss Carlene Larmond is the Director in charge of Litigation. Miss Althea Jarrett is a director in charge of State Proceedings; Miss Deborah Newland is in charge of the Commercial Affairs Division. Miss Candice Rochester and Miss Heather Dawn-Brown are the Directors in charge of General Legal Advice.

Mr. SPENCER: All of them are married?

Mr. ATKINSON: The Director in charge of International Affairs is Dr. Kathy-Ann Brown (Applause) and I think the Members of this Chambers will be familiar with Mrs. Marlene Aldred, who is the Acting Deputy Solicitor General and is the head of our Constitutional and Legislative Affairs

Division and Mrs. Simone Pearson is Acting Director serving in both Constitutional and the Commercial Divisions. I'll point out, Mr. Speaker, that Mrs. Foster Pusey is the first female Solicitor General in this country. (Applause)

I also wish to acknowledge and thank my consultant/legal advisor, Mrs. Michele Champagnie. (Applause) Mrs. Champagnie assists me with her tremendous legal skills and her reliable and consistent assistance.

Of interest, Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Champagnie was initially contracted as consultant/legal advisor to my immediate predecessor, the former Attorney General Mr. Ransford Braham, QC. Upon my taking office, Mrs. Champagnie offered me her resignation; this was to allow me to select a consultant/advisor of my own choice. Mr. Speaker, I did make my own choice, I asked her to remain. (Applause)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. ATKINSON: And not just that, Mr. Speaker, not just that. When her contract expired, I sought and had it renewed. So much for tribalism, it does not exist in the AG's Chambers. (Applause)

The building of camaraderie amongst the staff and the reaching out to others are two things that the Attorney General's Chambers tries and achieves.

In this regard, Mr. Speaker, there is a Social Affairs and Staff Welfare Committee in the Chambers and these work both inside and outside of the Chambers to make contributions to deserving persons and organizations. The staff organizes treats to children's homes and other deserving places. And last year they visited the Jamaica Christian Boys' Home and many other such visits are planned for this year.

Mr. Speaker, we also have a Building Committee, a Training and Seminars Committee, an Orientation and Mentorship Committee, a Library Committee, an IT and Registry Committee and a Newsletter Committee.

The Chambers, Mr. Speaker, continues to be one of the most heavily sought after places where young graduates leaving Norman Manley Law School wish to work. The Chambers is known to be an excellent training ground for young attorneys due to the breadth of the work that we do and the importance of it. The more senior attorneys in the Chambers try and do succeed in providing continuing guidance to the more junior ones and the work in Chambers is usually carried out by team.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Team not teams, team.

Mr. ATKINSON: The Chambers is a place, Mr. Speaker, that provides training and development opportunities both in Jamaica and overseas and this has assisted in the quality of service which we provide to the people of Jamaica. (Applause)

Attorney from our Chambers, Mr. Speaker, has made valuable contributions to the jurisprudence of this country and they have been involved in cases touching and concerning previously unchartered waters in our jurisprudence. The Shanique Myrie case and the Maurice Tomlinson case are examples of these. (Applause)

The Chambers also facilitates, Mr. Speaker, the development of law students who work there in the summer holidays.

(DR. KENNETH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine West Central, entered and took his seat.)

As the initiative for Public Sector Transformation proceeds, Mr. Speaker, it is contemplated that one day we'll have a Shared Services Environment for the delivery of Legal Services. The Attorney General's Chambers is likely to have even a more pivotal role with regard to advice required by Ministries, Departments, Agencies as we would then liaise directly with the legal officers from those entities.

We are working still, Mr. Speaker, on the establishment of a Commercial Task Force, which I mentioned in my contribution last year. (Applause) And this Force would be mandated to expedite important commercial transactions.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. ATKINSON: While I understand the fiscal constraints facing the country, and I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that we must all sacrifice, but we are indeed understaffed both at the attorney and support staff level.

(MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western, entered and took his seat.)

We are cramped for space, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the last Conference Room that was available to me upstairs is now being used to house an attorney, and we could use some upgraded IT equipment.

Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, we will soldier on until such time as the economy can accommodate us.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. ATKINSON: The work must be done and we as a team will continue to prioritize the cases as we place the interest of the country and its growth in the forefront.

(The Speaker left the Chair at approximately 3:08 p.m. and the Deputy Speaker presides)

Mr. Speaker, the Constitution and the Laws of the country must be enforced but they must first be correctly interpreted and we must never allow our laws to be misinterpreted to create obstructions and bureaucratic difficulties in the path of growth. (Applause)

It is true, Mr. Speaker, that corruption exists and we all have a vested interest in wiping it out of the Jamaican landscape, but to achieve these ends, we must employ appropriate modern law enforcement strategies, (Applause) and not use obstructive bureaucratic methods which avoid dealing with corruption but instead sets up obstructions in doing business. We must find a way to eliminate corruption while we expedite urgently the business projects that the country needs to grow. (Applause)

(HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the great constituency of Northern Trelawny.

I wish to acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, the presence of some of the representatives from that constituency who are here in this Honourable House today.

The Mayor of Falmouth and Chairman of the Trelawny Parish Council, Councillor Garth Wilkinson. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: He's a good man. Is one a de best PNP….

(Laughter)

Mr. ATKINSON: Councillor Phillip Service from the Martha Brae Division. (Applause) Miss Lorna Thorpe, the CDF Officer for the constituency. (Applause)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. ATKINSON: My administrative assistant, Mr. Damion Jarrett. (Applause) My office assistant, Miss Tamika Moody, and of course, Miss Christine Scott who assists. And there are several others too many to actually name.

North Trelawny, Mr. Speaker, is a place, is the birthplace of distinguished young Jamaicans such as Ambassador Usain Bolt, (Applause) Mrs. Veronica Campbell Brown, (Applause) Mr. Warren Weir, who was born there before he moved to Kingston, (Applause) Mr. Michael Frater who is from the parish. (Applause) The current world 400 meter hurdles youth champion Mr. Marvin Williams, still lives there (Applause) and Mr. Ben Johnson.

(Inaudible comment by Opposition Member)

Mr. ATKINSON: I beg your pardon?

(Inaudible comment by Opposition Member)

Mr. ATKINSON: I think it's the water not the yam.

Mr. Speaker, Falmouth also is a place of much history. In fact the Elizabeth Barrett Browning House is still there. It's a house that was built by her father and willed to her and in her poetry she lamented that she could not visit because of her ill health.

A MEMBER: Where were you born?

Mr. ATKINSON: I was created not born.

(Laughter)

Falmouth, Mr. Speaker, is the home of the finest pier in the Caribbean and a major part of the Cockpit Country is situated in North Trelawny.

Mr. SHAW: Pier, thanks to the JLP Government that developed it.

Mr. ATKINSON: The mighty Martha Brae River and the Queen of Spain Valley which accounts for 40% of Jamaica's water supply is in North Trelawny. The Greenfield All-purpose Stadium is there, Mr. Speaker, and the future center-piece of Jamaica's tourism product is there.

(MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine Central, entered and took her seat.)

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, I should point out a few of our significant achievements in the past year, and let me unhesitatingly thank the various Ministries and Agencies who have assisted us.

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, who has portfolio responsibility for the National Housing Trust, has provided well over one hundred (100) starter homes in the Tilston-Wakefield area and another forty (40) in conjunction with the Sugar Transformation Unit at Steelfield in Spicy Hill.

I wish to thank and acknowledge the Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport and Works with responsibility for Housing, Dr. Morais Guy, who handed over 100 titles and keys to persons at Hague in the constituency, with the promise of more to come in several areas of the constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge and thank the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Honourable Roger Clarke, who through the Sugar Transformation Unit heard the pleas of the Member of Parliament and yielded to his advocacy for the improvement and rehabilitation of two significant stretches of roadway. (Applause) The road between Duncans and Crawle which leads all the way to Long Pond and Clark's Town, and which had been in a state of disrepair for over 20 years, now, Mr. Speaker, the vital stretch between Duncans and Crawle has been barber green and work is on the way to complete the rest all the way to Clark's Town. The roadway, Mr. Speaker, Hampden had significant work done although more is needed.

I wish to thank, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Omar Davies, the Minister of Transport and Works who has provided significant relief to the unemployed persons in the constituency through the JEEP Programme. (Applause) I will also be grateful, for a long time to come, to Dr. Davies for setting up the Falmouth Committee which meets regularly under the chairmanship of Dr. Paul Robertson to address the divide or the lack of nexus of the town of Falmouth from the pier of Falmouth. The Committee includes representatives from the following entities: The Port Authority, the UDC, the Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Enhancement Fund, the Trelawny Parish Council, the NWA, the NWC, the Jamaica Heritage Society and me as Member of Parliament.

The results arising out of that committee, Mr. Speaker, are significant and promising. The Falmouth market and transportation centre is finally to be relocated further south in the town and the procurement process is underway and ground is expected to be broken this year. (Applause)

The Minister of Tourism is currently in the process of having Falmouth declared a resort area. The questions of the defined area is what is yet to be settled.

Mr. Speaker, the drains along the two major streets of the town, just outside the pier, has been an eyesore for years and finally they are to be addressed and it is expected that the contract to approve that project will be going to procurement.

There is a streetscape enhancement project which the Minister of Tourism alluded to, and that will involve, in the areas of the town, around the pier, to have shaded and covered walkways and sidewalks, to have significant improvement in traffic management. The erection of proper signs to

assist tourists to find their way, overhead lighting to replace undecorative light posts, hanging plants and baskets, major facade improvements on several buildings, and attractive and colourful shops and kiosks are scheduled to be opened. (Applause)

All this, Mr. Speaker, will take place on Harbour Lane, Market Street and Tharpe Street. In addition, Mr. Speaker, the old Hampden Wharf will be developed to provide a clean artisan and craft village and a small park. (Applause) Falmouth indeed will be spruced up and for that I thank the Honourable Minister of Works and of Tourism.

Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech, as well as in the contribution of the Most Honourable Prime Minister, and also in the contributions of the Ministers of Finance, Agriculture, Tourism, Transport and Works, and several others, there has been one common feature, and that is, Mr. Speaker, while this Administration has taken corrective measures to halt the negative slide of the economy, which we inherited…

Mr. McKENZIE: You don't see where the Jamaican dollars is?

Dr. WHEATLEY: What you talking about? Retract that statement, please. You misleading the House.

Mr. ATKINSON: We as a country must work for growth and development.

(Applause by a Government Member)

(Heckling)

Dr. WHEATLEY: We 30 per cent poorer as a people because of that administration.

(Heckling)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Thirty per cent devaluation of the Jamaican dollars.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Promises. A lot of rubbish!

Mr. McKENZIE: Rubbish you talking about!

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Wheatley and Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. ATKINSON: Control your hooligans, that's what you need to do.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Allow, allow -

(Heckling)

Mr. McKENZIE: Why are you calling my name, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER: I call both your names, you and Mr. Wheatley!

Mr. McKENZIE: We are the only ones speaking?

Government MEMBERS: Yes, yes.

(Heckling)

The Deputy SPEAKER: You are the only ones who are not supposed to be speaking at this point. The Minister is on the floor. The Attorney General.

Dr. WHEATLEY: The Minister cannot be misleading the House. He is misleading the House.

Mr. SHAW: Just tell him to speak to subjects that he knows.

A MEMBER: He is misleading the House.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, but I am not going to allow any insulting or denigrating remarks coming from any Member, from either side. If not I will apply the rules. Okay?

(Applause by Government Members)

Attorney General, continue.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. ATKINSON: Perhaps one day, Mr. Speaker, somebody will look at the Japanese yen and see that its value is against the United States dollar is almost the same, and that the value and rate and differential in exchange rate is not necessarily the only criteria to judge growth and improvement.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, every one of us must recognize that we are all in this together in trying to achieve growth for this country. Every district, every constituency, every parish must contribute to growth. Every Member of Parliament, Mr. Speaker, I would submit, should focus on how her or his constituency will contribute to the country's growth.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

The Deputy SPEAKER: The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I recommend that the Member's time be extended sufficiently enough to allow him to complete his presentation?

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time for speaking be extended so as to allow him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Continue.

(Applause)

Mr. ATKINSON: Every Member of Parliament, I submit, Mr. Speaker, should focus on how his or her constituency will contribute to the country's growth, and should focus on what she or he can do and will do to achieve it.

As far as North Trelawny is concerned, Mr. Speaker, I will take steps to change the paradigm of how spending of the CDF or of whatever other funding as MP we have influence over, to change it from the traditional political path to a path that will lead the constituency to growth,

(Applause by Government Members)

We, Mr. Speaker, will be placing an increased focus on agriculture in the parish. We will assist the farmers of North Trelawny to produce those items which can assist to reduce the import bill of the country. We, Mr. Speaker, will adopt programmes which will contribute to the already burgeoning growth of Jamaica's agricultural sector and in this regard I am in discussions with the Minister of Agriculture and with RADA.

EDUCATION

Last year, Mr. Speaker, I focused on education and this year I am going to continue to do so. Basic schools and tertiary students will continue to receive special W attention and assistance but there will be a new additional dimension added in North Trelawny.

HEART TRUST

Earlier this year, Mr. Speaker, I negotiated with the HEART Trust for some 150 young persons who, for one reason or another, had not managed to graduate from high school with any subjects, and these 150 persons are to receive training towards achieving Level 2

Certificates in Construction so that they might benefit from the expected building boom in Trelawny and the rest of Jamaica.

In addition to that programme, and as a result of our discussions, the HEART Trust is also designing an entrepreneurial programme for some small business people in Trelawny, and this is to prepare them for the expected increased inflow of visitors to the town consequent upon the tourism improvements that are planned.

What I inherited, Mr. Speaker, was a town and a constituency where a pier was built before the town was prepared to accommodate it, and so now we have to correct it. We now have to work feverishly to get the town ready to receive these visitors.

Mr. SHAW: You see how you ungrateful.

(Applause by Government Members)

You see how you ungrateful. You get a whole pier and you a talk 'bout…

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker…

Mr. SHAW: You a complain how you inherited it.

Mr. ATKINSON: I propose to assist small businesses -

Mr. SHAW: You see how you ungrateful! Ungrateful!

(Heckling)

He is ungrateful, that's it.

(Heckling)

Mr. ATKINSON: No. On the subject of gratitude you should be the most grateful man in this House.

Mr. SHAW: Him ungrateful.

(Heckling)

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker, consequent upon the expected tourist improvements, I propose to give assistance to some small businesses but there is one *quid pro quo* and that is, that in order to get that assistance they must get themselves enrolled in the entrepreneurial classes for training.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to encourage and assist the sports programmes, and will continue to seek assistance from the relevant agencies to refurbish our community centres.

Mr. Speaker, I wish timorously to join with the voices that seek to increase the CDF as it becomes available to MPs. (Applause) Our job is hard enough, Mr. Speaker, and less than Fifteen Million ($15M) is woefully inadequate.

(Applause)

We, Mr. Speaker, are elected by the people, and our work is long and our work is hard. We, as MPs, Mr. Speaker, take the blame for everything that goes wrong in our constituencies, whether it is water, roads, hospital services, schools, police misconduct, we all, as MPs, take criticism.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, occasionally in our constituencies there is a voice or two that will simply say, thank you. (Applause) And those words make our task that much easier and seem worth it.

Politics is not for the faint of heart, Mr. Speaker, or the thin-skinned, it is for the dedicated and the committed.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Desmond, you agree?

Mr. McKENZIE: Repeat that!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: You agree?

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker, as I close, I take this opportunity to remind this House once again that in the quest for the growth of Jamaica's economy, all of us are in it together.

God bless Jamaica, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. House Leader, Acting.

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Members to receive the Members in silence. We will continue the Sectoral Debate, and we will now hear from the Member from North Central Clarendon, who will make his presentation.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles.

Mr. McKENZIE: Words of wisdom.

Mr. SHAW: All right, Chief, your time.

(*Sotto voce* comment from Mr. Dalley)

Mr. SHAW: I don't want to hear a peep from you until the nurses get their money! And you owe them and won't pay them!

Dr. DAVIES: You mustn't raise the nurses...

Mr. SHAW: Him owe the nurses money and won't pay them.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles, please, sir, go ahead.

Mr. CHARLES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a contribution in the Sectoral Debate. I owe this privilege to the people of North Central Clarendon. And I must confess I didn't know that the Attorney General would be speaking so short, as such, they will arrive a little later when we will be able to pay the respect that I have for the people of North Central Clarendon and my Executives.

However, Mr. Speaker, it gives me an opportunity to say a special thanks to my family...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CHARLES: ...who have sacrificed most and sacrificed much, for releasing me to serve the people of Jamaica. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I must ask permission to expose something to this House that not very many people know. I am privileged to be married to one of the good women of this country. (Applause)

MEMBERS: True! True! True!

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles, you didn't have to seek my permission to say that.

(Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, I know you would contribute to the history of the **Hansard** for the future. People will know that you know that too.

And I say that, sir, because we have produced a professional family for the country. And because she is not here she has asked - oh, she is here. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, she doesn't like me to talk about her in public, but I am going to ask her

permission. Because **Hansard** should record that we have been married for 44 years... (Applause) ...and she has put up with me for 44 years.

Mr. DALLEY: She is strong, really strong.

Mr. SPENCER: Forty-four years! She deserves a medal!

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, we have seven children. And at one stage while five of them were at university, a certain Minister of Finance called me - and he is no longer Minister of Finance but he is in this House - and he said that I may have to make a contribution to the Government. I said, for what? He said, I understand you have five children at the university, which we are subsidizing. Of course, he was actually praising me. He didn't want the money, but he recognized that my wife was able to help me to school all seven children, all seven are professionals. One engineer, one attorney, five doctors… (Applause/Laughter) ...because I am going to tell you how one come in. If you have a Masters in Business and you are in the Doctoral Programme, we generally call you a doctor, so that's what I actually would want to say.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: The truth is, sir that the praises must be given to my wife... (Applause) ...and it must be an example for other young men who want to choose a future. And my daughter who is up there works now with the Government in the Parenting Commission. And...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Is she married? (Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: You want to know that? What you want to know that for?

Mr. CHARLES: I know that a number of you want to claim her, but she is doing a job on behalf of the country.

Mr. Speaker, at a later stage I will let you know of my Councillors, Councillor Stewart, Councillor Mitchell and Councillor Simpson. My Executives and my secretary, and a number of other people are on their way. I have a special programme that I would like to talk about so I will go on to the other business. Mr. Speaker, North Central Clarendon has serious problems. We have problems with water. Sixty per cent of my constituency has no continuous running water or no water at all.

I have 17 schools in one division, maybe all 17 have flush-toilet, only 7 have running water; the rest go by black tanks that run out at 10 o'clock and the children have to run home. And this is in Mocho that contributes billions of dollars to the Consolidated Fund through mining. I am ashamed; I am hurt as the people are hurt.

And today I want to make another appeal to the Government. The present Prime Minister when she was there at an earlier stage asked that a study be done as to how to get water to these areas. The study was done. And today I am not blaming any side; I am just making an appeal that these people deserve to get some of what was created for them. Life, water is life, and I am appealing to the Government to let us have some.

Mr. Speaker, we have problems with roads, we have problems with unemployment, we have thousands of graduates in Clarendon, we have a college and 30 or so high schools. We have graduates all over the place but we have no jobs for them.

Mr. Speaker, back to Mocho, and the Minister. I spoke to your Minister of State a while ago and he heard of the plight of the schools that were closed today. And he made an offer that some money should be dispatched immediately so that water can be trucked to these areas tomorrow. And I am happy for that. And I am going to have to come back to you, because when you quench the thirst of a thirsty person, it's easy for them to get dry back quickly so you have to, you know, continue it, keep wetting it.

Mr. Speaker, the mining operation in the Mocho area is a problem. Some - call it the normal name - holes that have been left there...

Mr. SHAW: Caverns!

Mr. CHARLES: ...if a goat slip at the top of one, there is no way it can have life when it finishes rolling. I visited the Bauxite Institute yesterday in tears.

Mr. SHAW: Those are not holes, those are caverns, okay.

Mr. CHARLES: Yes - and they said to me, we are able to present to you a programme that will start early, almost immediately, to the reclaiming of these lands. Mocho, as you are aware, Minister, was the Garden of Eden of Clarendon. It used to feed Manchester, Clarendon, St. Catherine and Kingston with food. I said in this House - it's in **Hansard** already - I saw a bulldozer breaking down or pushing down a breadfruit tree with hundreds of breadfruits on it, and a woman was crying. She said, I used that breadfruit tree to school all my children.

ENVIRONMENT

Minister of Environment, I appeal to you, when these lands are reclaimed start a fruit-planting programme. No fruit trees have been left that wasn't pushed aside for mining, and it's a desert, the Garden of Eden is now a desert.

The Minister of Finance told the House other day that no money is left in the bauxite kitty, no money. But I am appealing to Members of the Cabinet to make sure that something is done for these people. We cannot continue this way.

I'm making the appeal again and again for water. I'm making the appeal to help us in the road situation and I'm putting before you an army of young people, graduates from college and university, high school who are unemployed. And everyone of us in here knows, when these students graduate and go home to sit on the wall - and I'm being encouraged that ganja is going to be legalized...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Decriminalized.

Mr. CHARLES: Whatever you waan call it.

A MEMBER: The perfectionist.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. CHARLES: ...when you do it, you will see. I've already made my position clear

that I'm against that, but let's go out and going.

I want to say in this House, to back up what the Minister said earlier, if it weren't for the CDF - and this is against the editors of the various newspapers and their staff who is against the CDF and has made it clear...

(Heckling)

...if it weren't, if it weren't for the CDF that we could give a little water, give a little assistance, fertilizer to the farmers, weedicides, clean this and clean that, some of us couldn't go into the constituency. So I join the Minister, Attorney General, in asking that the programme be continued. This former Minister of Finance before me - sitting before me - is responsible for giving the green light to such a programme that many of us are today reaping.

Mr. Speaker, the students are going to arrive, but I have to just say this to you. I have made a pledge in my constituency three weeks ago, any child born in the 21st Century that can't read in my constituency, is my responsibility to make sure they read; any child. No child is supposed to be born North Central Clarendon in the 21st Century that is six and seven years old and is illiterate and that child is normal. Caan work! I will never live with it!

I've established a Reading Programme in my constituency that inspires and stimulates teachers and children in the schools. Two hundred and twenty-seven of them were awarded certificates last two weeks - reading programme - and the teachers have said to me, this sort of inspiration every child wants to read. But it is a personal feeling.

Mr. Speaker, when I was Minister of Labour I see three, four hundred young men come up to travel and they cannot sign their names for the passports. They cannot sign their names for the passports. How could we have - we caan have a country like that. And people can't make X for you on cane farm abroad anymore. Police don't stand up and tell you to turn right, they write it. And they will also tell you, do not enter in this zone, if you enter you're likely to be killed; the man sey, 'What a way di light pretty'. Cause him caan read it. Yuh caan send dem, yuh caan do that.

And, Mr. Speaker, in the pursuit of happiness, or the pursuit of help for these people, I wish to recognize the organization Food For The Poor. Food For The Poor has assisted with thousands of chairs and desks, school supplies, books throughout Jamaica. (Applause) And because I was one of the Ministers around when that organization was being established and because I had consultation when it was to be established, I think it is fair to put on the **Hansard** of this country, that the Mahfood family, it was Ferdinand Mahfood who came to Jamaica and said he was giving up his job to join what he called the Lord's Mission. I said, you're mad. He wasn't mad, I was mad. Food For The Poor, I think, is the third largest organization of its kind in the world today and I wish to say, hail to the Mahfood family and to Food For The Poor for what they've done.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I have a few topics that I wish to just comment on - one paragraph - education and training for persons seeking jobs. You know, you're told you cannot travel to the United States if you were involved in drugs, if you have a criminal record, if you can't read and you're eliminating probably 70% of those people who would want to travel.

A MEMBER: Travel on the farm work programme.

Mr. CHARLES: On the farm work, yes.

I have a suggestion. I travelled to Canada when I was Minister and I discovered that Mexico, India and these countries, in their embassies they had a position for somebody seeking employment for their people back home. Our embassies must have that, have a staff that visit these big farms and these big industries and seek out jobs in Canada, in Canada.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. CHARLES: What's that?

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. CHARLES: We must... Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SHAW: Everybody wants to... (Inaudible) leap out of Jamaica; they want to run.

Mr. CHARLES: ...as far as - I heard somebody said we're going to be sending our labour outside. Drained. Now, I'm going to tell you what I think about that. It is better to export than to have them here in the drain.

Mr. Speaker, one of the topics I want to touch on, and just a little paragraph, it's the question of Guidance Councillors in high schools, teaching children to walk nice and talk clean and dress nice. As the Minister of Labour I discovered a big problem. When you tell a child look, you're going up for CXC you must choose your subjects. I'm calling today for not the abandonment of Guidance Councillors, but for career guidance; career guidance. You sit down, you look at the child, you look at his grade and you help a child.

I was privileged to have a wife who has career guidance of our children. Some children who didn't want to do Maths were taught and was told they're going to do Maths. When you tell some children to choose, they choose scripture, they choose sewing, they choose - they have distinctions in all of these things and they can't get a job. So I'm calling for career guidance councils to be in all schools; whether it's by the Guidance Councillors who are there now or additional, but the children must be guided in a career.

Mr. Speaker, the former Minister of Education talked about zoning of schools, and I'm touching it because it affects my constituency. I am not opposed to zoning of schools, but I am saying to you, how can you zone schools where some schools don't have three passes while some schools have fifty passes? And, Mr. Speaker, until you bring the schools up to a standard, of par, that you don't have to pass JC, to go to KC or to go to BC or the others, because you have level of intelligence and teachers and thing. You can't zone out people who trying to go to school. So we must first lift the standard of our teaching; lift the standard of our schools and make sure we have something that will prevent the child

from going after a parent taking - I'm taking you to that school because that school has graduates; that school has this, has that, this one doesn't have it. You have to carry them out.

The other little point I wish to touch on that affects me is the question of agriculture. I'm sorry the Minister is not here, because we were fortunate not to have a hurricane last year; fortunate not to have one the year before and probably one this year and if you go to Coronation Market or to Linstead Market or to May Pen Market and you see food, you feel proud of our farmers.

And, Mr. Speaker, when you look around you see millions of dollars of imported - the same food. Irish potato, onions, if the local is for $60.00 they sell for $50.00. It can't work. It can't work. It can't work. You have to say, look here, this year our farmers plant Irish potatoes nobody bring in any. This year we plant - you know sey it went so bad that a man from St. Elizabeth used to plant onion and his field was doing - come to town and pick up some imported ones to give his customers. We have to change. We have to make a very serious effort how we're going to run this country.

Mr. Speaker, I go to the next little one that affects me, the question of security. My father was a policeman for forty-one years, a District Constable, and within that district my father knew everybody, bad man, good man, Christian, the other one.

A MEMBER: Yuh never have no bad man dem time deh.

Mr. CHARLES: And I have spoken to the Commissioner of Police; I've spoken to the Minister and those of you who are from these districts know that crime was literally zero, because the DC know yuh and the DC can even tell yuh what gwine happen before it starts. I can say the police has lifted the standard, took the DC out of the district and put the DC in police station to write books - write up books, keep records. I am appealing to the Minister, appealing to the Commissioner; if you're going to break crime get the district to say, who is the man. Is the district choose who? Miss Bertha will always talk to Mr. Brown; Mr. Brown know di bad bwoy.

I tell you something about the District Constable without even calling name. They broke a shop in a district that I know and the police from afar came and arrest a man and sey he heard is that man break the shop. And the man ask him where was the shop broken? Him sey him tek off the window. Him sey is not that man. Him sey dat man don't bruk shop through window him go through di roof.

The District Constable man know, and I cannot get the Government to instruct the Commissioner or the - to let us go back to our District Constables because they are chosen by the people, known by the people, fear by the people, love by the people. Please, let's go back there.

Minister – Transport. I understand the students are here now. Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. CHARLES: The right time. Minister, this Member of Parliament sitting before me, heard an appeal - I have said it already, but I am going to officially put it to

you again. I feel embarrassed when my people in my constituency pay their taxes and you get it to run a bus company. And you run a bus company in Kingston, charging the students $40 a trip, and my children in my constituency where their parents have contributed to that bus, we can't get a bus out there. We have to be paying $300 a trip...

Mr. SHAW: And $400.

Mr. CHARLES: ...and can't go to school, because in the second day, it runs out. It cannot be fair, Minister. I put my life on that; it cannot be fair.

Mr. SPENCER: It cannot be right.

Mr. CHARLES: It cannot be right. We are running an imbalanced country and an unbalanced economy, and developing people's lives in an imbalanced way. I am calling on you and I am begging you - I know it's under pressure; it's not just an event, it is a process. But I want to know that... for example, if you go into May Pen, hundreds of children... from Pennants to May Pen it's $300. The child can only beg drive two days. If he goes outside and he doesn't get a drive he has to go back home.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. CHARLES: We can't run a country like that. Give us a bus; give us a bus. Send some of the buses into the rural areas. They were marked for that. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the next little one I want to tell you is Water man.

Mr. SHAW: All the big busses that have blue marks on the back of them were for the rural bus system. Look at the buses with the blue on the back of them. They were for the rural bus system.

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, I hear - and Minister of Water - I hear the crying from some people who I am telling you, don't know. They are crying for a new dam. Minister, won't you build a dam; build a dam and give us some water. Jamaica needs some more dams. And let me just tell you something. When I was Minister of Water, years ago...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: ….we have a problem, and the problem we have is that the water that is mobilized, treated and distributed, sixty-odd per cent of that water, leaks - go away. So, if we are having what we have now, and you could even save 50 per cent of the leakage, we would need no extra water for the next 10 to 15 years. If we cannot re-pipe the system...

Mr. CHUCK: Unaccounted for.

Mr. CHARLES: No, they know it's leaking; *dem* have a system that they put over *dem* ears and you hear the water a run *weh. Dem* know... not stand-pipe.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Speaker's time to make his presentation has expired.

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the Member's time be extended to allow him to complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time for speaking be extended so that he may complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles.

Mr. CHARLES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to say to the Minister - and, I am asking you... you are a candidate, you are a senior Member, and I am saying to you, once we can stop even 50 per cent of what water is wasting, we don't need any - we have enough water.

Mr. Speaker, I touch a little subject that you are not going to like, but I have to because I don't think it is fair to some of us in this House when I listen to what people are saying. There is no man - no household in my constituency that steals electricity.

Mr. FAGAN: You don't know of any.

Mr. CHARLES: I don't know of any.

A MEMBER: You don't know of any.

Mr. CHARLES: There is nobody in North Central Clarendon stealing electricity that I am afraid to talk to, or that if I go and talk to, I will lose vote. It is a lie. And when the Paper says so, it is a lie. Well, I should say, nobody is stealing that I know of.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. CHARLES: Minister, let me say this to you. It is the Government's responsibility to stop most of what's going on in this... How can we expect to invite people to come and invest in our country, and man can just take it, and we say hold it and pay $2,000. It is the worse statement that has ever been made by a Minister, that man is stealing electricity, work with him and charges him $2000. Then why would I want to pay $50,000. I thief too and pay $2,000. Why would I want to do that? So, you need to stop that.

How do you invite an investor to come into your country and have 70 per cent of your people in one community stealing that investment, and you can't do anything about it; the police can't do anything about it; the politician can't do anything about it? It is a lie. We are living a lie. It is because we don't want to do it. And I make it clear that in my constituency, nobody that I know is stealing light. And if I see anybody stealing light and I go to them, I wouldn't lose no vote because I would tell them... where I was born, and lived for 19 years, I never had electricity, I never had paved roads, I never had running water, and I am in Parliament. You don't have to steal to do that.

But, you are encouraging it when you tell a man say, *cho* man, the man *dem* poor; *dem* a thief little light, charge them two thousand. It is not the little man alone stealing. When I was Minister, some steal millions in their big, big houses... come through concrete. So don't blame no poor people for that - criminals. And I have no apologies, so that that in my constituency if I see a man, I could deal with him.

A **MEMBER:** What you mean by that?

Government MEMBER: How you deal with him?

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce entered and took her seat.)

Mr. CHARLES: How I deal with him?

I will tell you how I deal with him. I will go and if - and I will speak to him about stealing, and I will assist him to get his metre because you cannot - you soon turn to a supermarket, you know, and say bwoy, go take some food cause man poor.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

(MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, the next point I want to touch on is the question of health and education, and security - one paragraph. Minister - Mr. Speaker, it is going to be a problem for me... it is going to be a problem for me to see a little old man, hungry and poor, who cannot go to the hospital and get some treatment. Are you going to cut out free health care? You going to stop that? It is not Labourite one sick. Sickness doesn't choose Labourite and PNP. I am telling you that - I had not consulted with my colleagues on this, but I would be embarrassed not to take a stand if the Government tells poor people they cannot go back to hospital for some free medicine...

Mr. SHAW: They start already.

Mr. CHARLES: Tell them that they can't go to school if they can't pay, and tell them about security. I will lead it, because it is taxpayers' money that those people are involved in.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I am saying and showing that there is hopelessness driven by economic factors. There is no sight of relief right now. I will tell you better than that. Somebody says that - and I will talk about it a little later - somebody says that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Mr. CHUCK: It is train.

Mr. CHARLES: Well, guess what, every time we getting to the end, you extend the tunnel, so there is no end; there is no sign of any end there. There is despair and visible fear, and no hope of relief in sight. It is said that the poor and the unemployed, the most vulnerable, must have someone to give them relief - somebody side and side. We, on this side, Mr. Speaker...

A MEMBER: Tell them.

Mr. CHARLES: ...we, on this side, are committed and offered hope in the past, and will offer it again. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: Not picky, picky.

Mr. CHARLES: We have the team; we have the leadership; we have the vision. Some of you are dreamers. The reason for that, you say you have a dream. You have a dream because you are sleeping - sleeping, sleeping, sleeping. You have to plan, to have a vision. You have to sleep, to have a dream. So, we have a vision to continue to uplift this country.

Minister... he is not here, but I want to ask him: where is the growth strategy you are pursuing? That is fundamental because without growth, it is impossible to achieve even the target set by the IMF, much less the wishful hope and aspiration with the Jamaican people.

Minister, where is the package of working strategies between the Government, the

private sector, and the rest of us? The strategy for law and order, reasonable energy cost, not to speak about training, Minister? Where is that? The one-liners and the press conferences where people clap and say you are doing well, don't believe it. You are not doing well, Minister; you are not doing well. And I am not talking about only the man who goes and buy a tin of condensed milk for $240. That's car money in the past. And when you shake it, it is going *chup, chup, chup;* it water; bully beef, almost $500 a tin, and you are happy about it.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, I say to the Government, action now, not a bag 'o mouth. We want some action.

You see, I am going to tread on a ground that my colleague - two colleagues - three colleagues... the Leader... and Finance has spoken already - I have to say a few words because it affects my constituency. The IMF wants to change and wants change to be an event; they must be told that it is impossible. Social change must be a process, not an event.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. CHARLES: The difference in my interpretation, it looks like revolution and evolution. They will end up the same place at different times. I have said that creating more hardships to relieve us of hardships does not add up. We must find a way. (Applause) It is a process Ministers, not an event.

As we seek to make adjustment, we must protect not only the poor, but all the people. We can't squeeze an egg out of a hen before she lays. It has to go through a process. You know if you squeeze out the egg what *gwine* happen, it either comes out soft, or break.

A MEMBER: You might kill the hen.

(DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. CHARLES: You can't make the rich poor in order to enrich the poor. There is no way. That is why we have leaders and followers, Government and Opposition. Together... the Member has asked - together we must pledge that Jamaica comes first and we are going to work on it. You cannot use the medicine to kill the patient. What I mean by that? I learned this from my son who is a doctor.

A MEMBER: How you do that?

Mr. CHARLES: Take one tablet three times a day, not three tablets one time a day. If you take three tablets one time a day, you die.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Government Members)

Mr. CHARLES: Take on tablet three times a day.

(Cross talk)

If you take the three tablets one time a day, you die.

(Heckling)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. CHARLES: Let me repeat it. You heard who I say I learn it from.

(Heckling/Laughter)

The blue one... the blue one *weh* you use... the blue one.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles... Mr. Charles...

Mr. CHARLES: You go and try it. You take three one time.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles... Mr. Charles... Mr. Charles...

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Charles)

The Deputy SPEAKER: ...your prescription... the prescription that you mentioned a while ago is subject to some amount of...

Mr. CHARLES: Medical advice.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Appraisal, yes. So, can you please continue...

(Applause/Laughter/*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, the democracy that we're pursuing - the way we are going about it gives some people the impression that we are one step forward two steps backward. I continue a few more lines on the IMF. The IMF must be part of the solution and not the creator of the problem. Any system that causes more pain than joy cannot be good for the people.

Mr. McKENZIE: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHARLES: And this that you are pursuing says that you have been instructed by the IMF to do so is causing more pain than happiness. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Sufferation, sufferation.

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, when I listen to the joy, the praises being showered by the IMF Chief on the Minister of Finance.

Mr. PARCHMENT: It upset you.

Mr. CHARLES: It doesn't upset me. A sorry *fi* him because guess what, him believe them laughing wid him. Him don't know dem laughing after him. Mr. Speaker, I listened to these praises and they remind me of when Columbus arrived in Jamaica.

Dr. DAVIES: You were there? You were there?

(Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: It is said that Columbus arrived with bells and trumpets and beads and they were so well received. They were so happy. For those of us a few years after like the Member from Hanover knew it was the beginning of colonialism. You cannot, I am making this based on my experience as one of the most senior Members of this Parliament, I have at least heard you if I'm not able to say it, you cannot balance the books in this hostile financial environment and at the same time balance people's life. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHARLES: You can't do it. Don't fool the people. Minister, you cannot balance the books using taxes and not economic growth; taxing the people and say you are doing well. You're not doing well. Listen to what one of your former colleagues said. He said - I want to quote one of them, he said:

> *"...to achieve economic competitiveness is not an unworkable strategy nor is it new. But the manner in which it is now being implemented defies elementary logic as it negates the possibility of realizing its intended purpose".*

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Source?

Mr. CHARLES: Sir, in achieving economic competitiveness, if that is the purpose. The crawling devaluation that is taking place and I apologize for - this is my

own impression - is being done by the PNP Government.

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes, then nuh dem in a power.

Mr. CHARLES: It is the - yes, I know is you in power. Of course, I know.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. CHARLES: I know. It is the Government and the people of Jamaica must know this. Every night you see the television sey it gone up one cent and two cents, is the Government that do it.

Mr. McKENZIE: Yeah, PNP.

Mr. CHARLES: It is the Government that says when to buy and how to buy. It is the Bank of Jamaica leading the price in the market. It is you and you as Ministers. So I ask the question, Minister, where are you going to stop it $120, $130 or a $150? In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth...

A MEMBER: Get up, rise up and walk.

Mr. McKENZIE: Say it again, say it again.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CHARLES: Every time you do that you kill off some people. You can't do it.

Mr. D. SMITH: Wicked Government.

Mr. CHARLES: A major concern must be shared by all of us is the failure to achieve satisfactory level of economic growth. Something that has eluded us for the past forty years; seventeen of those forty years recorded negative growth and except for the period 1987 to 1990 we have not reached three per cent (3%) growth in any one year. Now, how can you balance the economy?

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Dr. BAUGH: '87 to '90.

(Cross talk)

Now, the former Minister asked, where is the growth package? I ask, where is the beef? Hamburger without beef.

Dr. DAVIES: ....vegan.

Mr. CHARLES: You're searching for a silver lining. For example, we are told that if we eliminate fiscal deficit and reduce the debt, we can expect growth to follow. Important though that is, it is not a panacea some people would like it to be.

(The Speaker returns to the Chair)

Let's take Trinidad; the debt is thirty-four per cent (34%) of GDP. The fiscal debt is less than two per cent (-2%) but its economy of last five years has fluctuated from a low of -4.4 to a high of 1.6. What's the deal? Another search for a silver lining is the one that will reduce cost of electricity. We compete with countries where the cost of electricity ranges from ten per cent (10%) per 1 kilowatt hours. Ours is 44 cents – 10 cents, sorry. US$0.10 (10 cents). Ours is 44 cents and let us not forget our 44 cents per kilowatt hour split 50/50 between generation and transmission. So even if you succeed to getting generation down to 10 and half cents you will still be paying 30 cents per kilowatt hour. Where is the deal? I'm not the only one who went to basic school. You have some big doctors over there. The point I'm making there is no one silver lining that will fix our problem. We need many and I want to focus on one that we need to pursue with much greater urgency.

Mr. CHARLES: By taxing this, taxing that and you have no growth.

Listen to this one, Minister. 60 per cent of our work force has no formal skill training, ten per cent (10%) have some level of training but are uncertified, even then, there is a mismatch between training and job opportunities; twenty three (23%) per cent of the unemployed are persons who have been trained and certified, including university graduates. Data from the Jamaica Productivity Centre indicates that the labour productivity in Jamaica has fallen by an average of 1 per cent per annum over the last forty years. It means that our productivity value is sixty per cent (60%) of what it was 40 years ago. All the efforts that are being made to reverse this trend have been like trying to mop up water squeeze it into a bucket. But Peter there is a hole in the bucket.

Government MEMBERS: Dear Liza, dear Liza. (Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: There's a hole in the bucket.

Government MEMBERS: Dear Liza, dear Liza. (Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: We turn out fifty thousand school leavers each year, less than thirty per cent (30%) manage to pass English, less than thirty per cent (30%) manage to pass Maths, 50 per cent manage to pass no subject at all. These make up the majority of the persons that swell the labour force. HEART Trust was set up to provide avenues of opportunity for them to acquire skills. Mr. Speaker, seventy-five per cent (75%) of those who apply to HEART fail to meet the minimum requirement; seventy five per cent (75%). We are facing human resource crisis. Fiscal consolidation and cheaper energy will not provide path to economic growth if we do not have the labour force capable to drive that growth. We need, as one Minister said, divine guidance. But guess what, if you don't have human leadership you can't get guidance. We have a problem.

The Minister of Labour acknowledged this predicament during his intervention in the debate. However, erecting billboards and staging annual productivity fairs in schools are not likely to have any dramatic effect on productivity levels in the short and medium term. So, when we speak of labour and social security in this Parliament, we have to recognize that we're dealing with two critical aspects of growth: development and social harmony, which are not just crucial to the success of the economy but they also go hand in hand. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is important that in addressing labour issues, we understand that, essentially, human development is about much more than salary increase and salary reduction. Human development is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential, and lead productive, creative lives and balancing peoples' lives, as the Prime Minister promised in her election campaign of 2011.

I recognize that a holistic approach is needed. One that tackles the problem from home to school to work but in addition not in place of, we will have to be more deliberate, strategic and targeted. Even within the struggling economy that we have, there are thousands of jobs that cannot be filled because qualified persons cannot be found.

Mr. Speaker, thousands of jobs advertised one week, thousands of people applying for jobs and many of them caan cross. They don't match. Why? They are not qualified for those jobs. Goes back to what I said earlier, calls for career guidance. That somebody - the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education in the previous Government recognized that. The Leader of the Opposition and myself we sat and we planned what do we need to change the curriculum so that we produce graduates for jobs that will come, are here and it has changed.

Dr. DAVIES: In what way?

Mr. CHARLES: Not really?

Dr. DAVIES: In what way?

Mr. CHARLES: We don't hear anything 'bout it. We don't see anything. For two and a half years you have been there, if we were there half more years you would have seen it. So if it takes you two and a half years and you don't see it we have a problem. But if you just tell me, cool P things coming, I will wait.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Dudus.... do that.

Mr. CHARLES: Even in the struggling economy that we have there are thousands of jobs that cannot be filled as I said because qualified persons cannot be found. Just look at the pages of the paper, as I said earlier. When a factory is shut down because they can't find a skilled person to fix it up and the one person that do it is fixing another factory. We have problem.

Dr. DAVIES: Is that a hypothetical....

Mr. CHARLES: If we were training people for these jobs we wouldn't have that problem.

The Ministry of Labour has the capability to identify these skills, skills that are in short supply. It must also take a proactive stance in collaboration with the Private Sector, especially the Jamaica Employer's Federation, and the PIOJ. It must identify the skills that the economy will require in the medium and long term to support and training existing people for the investments to come. The Ministry of Labour must be virtually twinned with the Ministry of Education as we were doing to determine how schools, vocational and other specialized institutions and training programmes, can be mobilized and managed and produce these skills.

We bemoan the poor achievement level of most of our school leavers. We would love to see every one of them graduating *summa cum laude* how you call it, you are a French man.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Same thing.

Mr. CHARLES: That is not possible; we are not likely to get even near to that in the future. What we can do to ensure that we have enough of these people to provide the necessary jobs for the industry and the investment to come. How can this be done? I have a proposal. Let us identify students at Grade 11, and even those that have already left school. As the former Minister of Education was doing, and to have achieved academic level that makes them good, trainable candidate for these jobs. Let us channel these selectees into training programme, specific training program. We used to hear that in some communist countries they use to put all the mathematics students one place, all the scientists students one place,

all the scientists, and work on it. Let us sit with the private sector and develop a new apprenticeship programme under which some of these selectees can be trained on the job at the workplace leading to certification. This programme would have to be funded.

And I want to make a suggestion, Mr. Speaker. The budget of the Ministry of Education is already stretched and I am being told that they are unable to accommodate it. So I want to suggest for discussion, suggest for discussion if possible, to find a programme through which the National Insurance Fund, in a way, that can meet the needs and objectives of a programme which provides a return to the fund as part of the investment portfolio, let us examine it, let us discuss it.

The Minister refers to a loan funding of the NIF Fund to currently provide for small business - small and medium enterprise business. What I am proposing is a similar concept to provide new opportunities for our young people and boost the quality of the labour force.

Mr. Speaker, my presentation - in my presentation I raised primarily the context of current economic climate which has become a major matter of concern, not only for the Government and the Opposition but for the entire nation.

Mr. Speaker, as the Government between 2007 and 2011, the JLP faced with all kinds of disasters, both manmade and natural including the worse global economic crises that the world has experienced since World War II. The former Minister of Finance made a presentation and advice I made notes. It was because we realize the level of poverty and frustration that was creeping upon the people, the impact it will have on their lives and the danger that the level of depression could create on our democratic system while we were reluctant to be instructed by any foreign agents, IMF or otherwise, to proceed taking these programmes forward that would destroy our people.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I want to use this opportunity to - I want use this opportunity to look at what is being done in Barbados. Dr. Laurel in response to literally either a directive as we are having here, or a suggestion by the IMF, that they devalue the Barbados dollar. He said no, in fact, let me quote. Further to his response published in the Advocate

> *"To most of us in the Caribbean it does not seem rationale to impoverish ourselves to grow our devaluation does. We did what we know we should do because we recognize the need to reduce the debt and grow the economy just like we do now. But we refuse to do some things that others would have wanted us to do because we recognize that there is a limit to the human tolerance.*

No Government should seek to push its people beyond its limit, no Government and you are pushing the people beyond their limits, you are pushing them in the street. And I warn you, ease up, ease up off the clutch because it is hurting. I have never seen my people suffer, I have never seen it. And what is frightening I hear nobody from that side except the Member from St. Elizabeth who recognized that he has a little problem.

Everybody said things good, so I need to find out which divine intervention is taking care of all of you that is not taking care of us.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Come over here. (Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: I tell you something, I may - would help you because I would tell you the truth you are living a life that don't go right. If you believe that the people are happy as you are saying it, let's go in Half Way Tree and look up on the clock and when you take down your eye see how many people start looking up. It is because the leadership of this party and the leadership of this side is not like you were. If PNP was in opposition and we in Government, and do what you are doing now there would be no country.

Mr. McKENZIE: They would mash it up.

Mr. CHARLES: There would be no country.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Opposition Member)

Mr. McKENZIE: You do it already.

Mr. CHARLES: Nightmare, it would not be nightmare.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize as I said that there is a limit to the human tolerance, no government should seek to push the people to that limit. And I warn this Government that they are pushing the people to a limit, where they will not be able to take it and to survive. (Applause)

The current Administration must have or should have recognized, but we saw it more an opportunity to gain political mileage by promising jobs, and when you hear, the Minister, and the Prime Minister say, we have given forty thousand jobs and I said to my colleague, Desmond, you see any job? I asked. And then I heard how the forty thousand jobs come, it is the bushing job, the clean drain job, three days, fifteen hundred dollars a day you are a good mathematician multiply that.

Mr. SHAW: And job done.

Mr. CHARLES: How on God's earth you can look on people and tell them - when Bustamante was cleaning the Sandy Gully with thousands of people you call him gully government. And now you are telling the IMF that you have given out forty thousand jobs and when I ask Bobby, Bobby said, well you did not get a little money to clean you drain. You are dishonest, you know, you are misleading the people, you know you are lying. (Applause) Because when you tell people say you give out forty thousand jobs, my friend call me and say, 'but man, you guys are doing good. (Laughter) Man, I see that you guys have a lot of factories coming out and you have forty thousand jobs.'

(Laughter)

Minister, I am not lying to you, I deliberately lied, I could not tell him that the forty thousand jobs was two two-day clean up for Christmas, I could not do it, I save you. (Applause/Laughter)

Mr. Minister, I am pointing at you because I know your mother, your mother come from Clarendon and she is a very nice lady. But, Minister, would you honestly go and tell her that the little work I gave out for

two days, of cleaning the drains is one of the jobs you are talking. You would tell her that. (Laughter) Oh, your mother died.

Minister, I beg you, tell the Prime Minister, don't embarrass herself, tell all your Ministers to stop lying about forty thousand jobs because the Minister of Labour, cannot go to Canada and tell where are these jobs and say, boy it is a little cleaning. How can you talk about balancing people's life, I could tell you, I don't have the time, I was going to tell you about the five thousand dollars, the five thousand dollars - three days, four thousand five hundred, well I tell you something, Minister, Minister, three, fifteen - three five, fifteen, five carry five carry one (Laughter) three one three and one make four. I know you don't understand three five fifteen set down five and carry one, three one three and one four, four thousand five hundred. (Laughter) It is all right that is politics you are not involved in politics.

Mr. Speaker, who is now able or unable to balance people's life, Minister I know you will tell her. I am sorry she is not here because I would like to tell her. We met long ago and we have not been hostile to each other, but please don't tell people that your Minister of Finance and former Minister of Finance said you can balance the book and balance lives or that the little cleanup work, bush work and drain work you call that jobs, no.

Mr. Speaker, we do not intend to use the failure of this Administration for any political benefits. No one can say that we have been uncooperative. This Leader of the Opposition, this Leader of the Opposition...

A MEMBER: Which one?

Mr. CHARLES: ...will not, will not say like you, will not say, like you, that he is going to bring nightmare in a you; he is not saying that he is thinking about Jamaica. How can we work with you to build a better country? And we, his colleagues have joined with him, if it were you, you all would be stamping the ground, marching up and down saying he must go, pack your bag and go. No one can we say we have done that, we have been very cooperative.

Mr. Speaker, we have always been a party from 1943 that believes that Jamaica is a great little country. It was the words of Bustamante that '*we should remain in that guiding principle'* is one of our motto.

There are some things, Mr. Speaker, which we as Opposition cannot ignore, because we have been elected by the people to represent them. One such issue, Mr. Speaker, is that we don't believe any Government ever put itself in a position where it has to raid the deductions of the employees' salaries to meet the bill to pass IMF Test. (Applause) And as a former Minister of Labour and spokesman on labour, 'a cyan support you on dat'.

Mr. SHAW: All now, the nurses at KPH, ask them!

(Heckling by Government Members)

Mr. SHAW: They not paying over their deductions! They not paying over their deductions!

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, the Opposition spokesman on Finance said that there are some $50 Billion outstanding in arrears, which are not being met by this

Government. We are concerned about that and we have to speak about it.

Mr. Speaker, we have had complaints in the past about statutory deductions from salaries of public sector workers that the Government has not paid over to its own agencies, including the NHT. Now, it has gone a step further and deductions from workers' salaries to pay their loans on their homes, their motorcars, their insurance, critical areas, have not been paid over to the bank and other financial institutions, causing them to be left at the mercy of the institution and the bailiffs.

Mr. SHAW: Shame! Shame! Shame! And sey you pass IMF Test!

Mr. CHARLES: There is no way to treat the employees that way, Prime Minister.

Mr. SHAW: And sey you pass IMF Test!

Mr. PARCHMENT: You ever tek one?

Mr. CHARLES: The Prime Minister knows, as well as I do, that our people are a proud people and making their loan payments on time is something which they hold on to as a basic principle. So when the Government deducts from their salaries funds which they have asked them to deduct and pay to their creditors, something which they have no right to do in the first place, it raises some serious questions about governance and about the basic principles.

I am surprised that the Minister with responsibility for the Public Service did not see it necessary to speak in this Debate.

Mr. McKENZIE: 'im run wey, im don't come bak! 'Im run wey im don't come bak!

Mr. SHAW: You a try pay di bill first!

(Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: I had expected that he would have been in Parliament. He says he is going to speak. This Minister has glorified the public servants for giving up their fee. Every time he speaks, oh, they are such lovely people; they give up their salaries for us to pass the IMF.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the Public Sector Monitoring Committee, which the Minister chairs, has not been meeting regularly.

Mr. SHAW: Okay!

Mr. CHARLES: The trade unions which are represented on the Committee are still in the dark about the timelines for the various actions that are to be taken this year in the public sector, under the current IMF Agreement.

The trade unions say their members are disgruntled about Government's failure to implement commitments in their last agreement, especially in the health and education sectors, especially in the health and education sectors.

I would have thought that, in light of that, the right thing for the Minister without Portfolio should do is to address us. But he has just promised that he will address that shortly.

We must remember that these workers who are described as "heroes", very patriotic Jamaicans to have agreed to another three-years of wage freeze. Is this how we repay them?

Let me say this because, you know, I am a trade unionist. Let me tell you, you would never allow a JLP Government to do what you have done to the Public Sector. You would mash up this country than allow it to happen!

I noticed that not only did the Minister fail to speak, but as I say he says he is going to speak so let's not get into that.

Mr. Speaker, we are not going to conclude the debate without his contribution and I expect him to come and praise the Public Sector workers in their hardship, call them heroes and how great they are.

Mr. Speaker, earlier I made some statements about the Barbadian Government, standing up to the IMF on the proposal to devalue their dollar.

I want the Government to understand that the situation is so bad now that even when a union representative sits down with the employer to sign salary agreement, he is taking a huge risk, because he doesn't even know what the exchange rate will be by the time the ink dries on the paper. What he knows is that the exchange rate is being driven by the Government, and the Government knows where it is going.

The people of this country are suffering, and it is being reflected in the level of crime and violence being experienced. (Applause) The growing number of suicides, the behaviour of our children, especially young girls and boys resorting to prostitution and other crimes, the increase in child labour, the lack of regard of moral values and family traditions.

Families are unable to send their children to school because they can't find even the lunch money. And I should stop here and ask the Minister. Minister, try your best to see if you can work out with the Minister of Education an allocation to allow our children to go to school five days a week. (Applause) I'm not criticizing you because it happened under my watch too, but it is wrong, we must make the sacrifice that children can get some facility to go to school five days a week.

The people are buying bread by the slices now, can't buy a loaf anymore.

Mr. PARCHMENT: Long, long time! It started under you.

Mr. CHARLES: But them never go and buy three slices.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: From your time!

Mr. CHARLES: Never in the history of Jamaica, not even under the Arawaks.

(Laughter)

Not even under the Arawaks that de go buy bread by the slice! Under this PNP Government, they can't buy a loaf of bread they have to buy three slices.

(Heckling)

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker....

A Government MEMBER: Egg by the one.

Mr. CHARLES: Egg by the one. Dem boiling egg now and cut it in a half. Mr. Speaker, they buying toothpaste by the squeeze.

(Heckling)

A man a walk round and sey, 'tek a squeeze'.

(Laughter)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: Look here, you don't say much, you don't say much because at least in your parish no hurricane fell and you have some food. Thank God. But listen to this. Listen to this. It is not that most families don't want to be legal in some of the things they are doing, you know, but the hardship forces them to get into illegality.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. CHARLES: Is not only the poor who is feeling it. The Managing Director of Grace Kennedy, one of Jamaica's most successful companies was on radio a few weeks ago and he said, he confirmed that he's contemplating opening a production line in Guyana because he cannot afford the cost of electricity in Jamaica. So, just imagine what is happening to the poor and the unemployed people.

The Government won an election in 2011, by promising to balance the lives of people. We never know that it meant put everybody in the grave. Kill haf everybody!

Mr. McKENZIE: Wicked, wickedness!

Mr. CHARLES: They said that the Government at that time was only focusing on IMF Agreement, one Audley Shaw and Bruce Golding was only focusing on passing IMF Agreement, ignoring the plight of the poor, so that when they take over they would balance the lives of people and balance the books. One day you must tell me what that means, because if I am wrong - you are a University man. In fact, they said they would 'turn up the ting'.

(Heckling)

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people are saying 'dem burn up the ting'. The Economic and Social Survey of 2013 tells us that the unemployment rate rose by 1.3 percentage points to 15.2 per cent during this year. Is that balancing lives?

The current statistics indicate a need for policies and programmes to increase and train a number of persons in the labour force. Sixty-eight percent of the labour force, as I have said, have no training or certification. How will a Global Logistics Hub proposed by you help the people, when they have to compete with people from abroad with proper certification? And you know why it is hard, gentlemen and ladies, Members of Parliament, because that Minister will tell you that he has an application from foreign investors to carry their own workers. Why? We don't have them and those that we have gone, because we had nothing to give them.

The Minister of Labour shaking his head in sorrow, because he has to sign hundreds of work permits for people to come in. Why? Because you can't bring an investor, set up him factory and im caan find anybody to work, you have to let him bring people come. We are in trouble.

The number of professionals with a Degree or Diploma is recorded as being 13.5 per cent (176,225) of the labour force of just over 1.1 million, while only 11.0 per cent had received Vocational Training with Certification.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the Minister of Labour that in 2011 we started

discussions with the ILO for a school-to-work transition survey, that would have identified the labour market issues facing the young people, especially those impacting their transition from a study environment to a work environment. Those who are going from school to work.

That survey should have provided the information to design policies and programmes to reduce the iniquities between youth and adult employment in the labour market. I did not hear the Minister mention anything about it but I will ask him and I'm sure as he is, he will advise us shortly.

We need to train young people to adapt to work by developing the kind of work discipline that will ensure that they are not overlooked by employers, simply because they fear that they will not be able to perform in an adult working environment.

Mr. Speaker, in his presentation, the Minister spent a lot of his time on two basic issues: Productivity and Labour Market Reform. Productivity is what you say, Minister? Productivity is what?

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Kellier)

Mr. CHARLES: You forget? No man, you cyaan forget.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. CHARLES: Well, I tell you what, 'we don't have productivity....

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. CHARLES: So, no Productivity, no productivity means poverty. No productivity means we don't have no job we can't entertain no job, we can't work.

If Jamaica's labour productivity continues to decline by an average of 0.14 percent annually, how are going to be able to compete with our neighbours like CARICOM much more the rest of the world. This must be a cause for concern for all of us.

But, Mr. Speaker, here again we have to admit that one of our main challenges is culture and I am happy that after two years of tinkering with the so-called Productivity Revolution, the Minister has finally come back down to earth and has admitted instead of simply promoting the value of productivity, he has to focus as well on changing the culture and the mindset of the people as a prerequisite for the success of this transformation.

I am not too sure what he expects to achieve in erecting major billboards, one at Norman Manley International, one at Trafalgar Road, and a third in Montego Bay. Minister, let me say something. Let me change and say something to you. There is some flashing pretty light, that people must drive and read, that's part of the accident situation taking place. Be careful of these. Be careful of these flashing pretty billboards that you must read when you are driving, and you are forced to read because of the impact of the light on you. And, Minister of Transport, I am calling on you, publicly, and I say it to you already and you expressed your concern too, but I have to put it on record because is all of us think so, up at Barbican Square you have about 15 two-tonne concrete, saying you're dividing road for people not to break the rule. They are not road situation.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: But the police no have no authority to do that either.

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, Minister, is you I holding responsible.

Opposition MEMBER: It is illegal.

(Heckling)

Mr. CHARLES: Minister, that is not traffic revolution; that is people's lives and their property being threatened. Every time I go around the square and see one of those things turn around, I know somebody crashed in it. I know somebody crashed in it, and I am making a public appeal. If I were the Minister, it would be my responsibility to see that people are safe. There is a sanction, if you don't go on the right side of the road you pay for it. Why you put these rocks in the road that threaten the life and property of people?

Mr. SHAW: Put arrows in the road.

(Heckling)

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, Minister, I am asking you, if you want me to come with you we will lift them out the road.

(Heckling)

Mr. Speaker, I know that it is important to have people follow the rules but the rules cannot threaten a little lady coming home, know her road and come around the corner to see these massive concrete in the road, say that they are there for traffic. That is threatening the lives of people, and Minister, they should sue you. They should sue the Government.

(Heckling)

But let me get back to what I was saying. I believe what we need to do is to focus our limit resource at this time on school productivity improving programmes. We are not going to make much change with the elderly ones; we are going to step forward with the new generation, let us focus on schools and inculcate a culture of work ethics to the young people from their primary school level. When we do that, we will grow up with a kind of attitude, discipline that is necessary, making things like a global logistic hub that is being promoted by you, effective.

Mr. Speaker, I was surprised when I looked through the Extended Fund Facility Agreement between the Government and the IMF to see what we plan to do about labour market reform. All I could see listed was tabling of the flexible work arrangement. This is something that we have discussed approximately two decades, in this very House. I inherited from the previous PNP Government, I chaired it, I tabled it in Parliament, and the Minister come back now come table it again. I don't understand it. It was tabled and the Minister, the Minister has said - just before we left office in 2011, I told the country that the Ministry was close to implementing a flexible work arrangement which I expect to improve employment opportunity in Jamaica. I said then that I hope that with the implementation of the proposals business owners would save money and more persons could be employed, even in the midst of the global economic crisis we were experiencing.

The issue has been on the table since 1998. When we came to power we were looking at a deadline at 2009, however we

were held up by a delay in transforming the Green Paper into a White Paper, to be laid in Parliament, as well as the failure to get agreement with both sides of the House, but having passed the hurdle we felt that we could introduce the Legislation in 2011.

Two and a half years later we have been told by the Minister, by the Government that they hope to pass the Bill in September this year. The impression that I have is that neither the Government nor the Minister is serious about labour market reform. When I speak to the Minister I am convinced that he is serious. There must be somebody else who is holding him back, because he has never misled me, and I will say that before him and say it publicly. But, Minister, the growth agenda, the Bill would have to be tabled now. If the IMF did not insist on doing something about labour reform it would not be tabled.

The Minister has announced that he is thinking about labour market reform commission to conduct consultation with relevant stakeholders on the issue. The Minister who has done enough discussion and consultation - we have done enough discussion and consultation, and whatever else is necessary on this issue, there are enough findings and recommendations to fill a library. This is time to collate the information from the Productivity Centre UWI, UTech and most importantly from the stakeholders represented at the Labour Advisory Committee, to start implementing a programme and a policy as well as the necessary legislative reform along with connected issues, so much as social protection, industrial relations and the relativity of educational and industrial training to available job market.

We already know that less than 70 per cent of the workforce, as I have said, is not certified. We have said that already, I am going to say it again. Let us start programmes to reduce that figure now. The Jamaican Government and the majority of CARICOM partners share ownership of UWI, UTech and the whole region agree that the tertiary institution should be geared towards producing graduates to fill the kind of jobs that are being produced. So, what more consultation do we need? Almost two decades have passed while we have been flirting with these issues. We have libraries filled with reports from consultation, findings of those consultations and recommendations which they generate, let us get cracking on them. Minister, if you have to form any more consultation consult on how to implement one of those consultations.

Seeing that the Minister is planning to review labour laws, Holiday with Pay and Minimum Wage Act, the Foreign National Citizens (Employment) Act, and the Labour Relations Industrial Disputes Act, this is something that has been ongoing. Since I was in the Ministry, I support the move but I want to ask the Minister, what about the Employment Termination and Redundancy Payment?

The Minister himself has given us information that as far as the largest number of disputes being referred to the Ministry are dismissals, many of these people are losing their jobs without redundancy payment. Why

isn't the Minister looking into this Act to ensure that people are protected from being dismissed and sent home without any money? In view of the number of workers being terminated from their jobs daily, funds to assist these workers must be found, and I want to make a suggestion. We discussed further how the redundancy fund will be funded.

I am suggesting, Minister, that we examine some of the funds that you are proposing to lend towards fixing, building a cement factory, I will speak about it in another two minutes. I had outlined a suggestion for discussion. I called for a study to discuss employer and Government and the Trade Union, how to set-up a minimum fund to assist these workers who did not contribute and have any redundancy payment but lose their jobs and have to go home. We can work out something for contribution so that everybody who lose their job that way can get something.

MINIMUM WAGE

On the question of minimum wage, both the Government and the Opposition agreed that the present minimum wage formula is wrong. When you were over here, Minister, you took me to task. I was burning because you said what we give cannot buy sweetie, and you urged and we accepted that we set up - you - that we set up a committee to look at the minimum living standard. I reported to this House, Living Minimum -

Dr. DAVIES: Liveable wage.

Mr. CHARLES: Liveable wage, and we set up a committee. Preliminary reports were given Minister. I am going to ask you to try your best and get the rest of the report so that the next minimum wage will reflect on that. We are giving people a minimum wage - you raised their minimum wage by $500 the last time. The last time I went to buy an icy mint -

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: Minister, you know how much for icy mint, Minister? I bet you don't know how much for icy mint. Fifteen dollars for icy mint, and $18 for the imported one. I have been walking the market to see how well you are balancing people's lives.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Minister, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, you didn't say much about it but I am asking you, I am asking you Minister, I am asking you, please Minister, construction - you said that the Chinese are coming and they are carrying construction. I am not going to sit here and allow us to bring in this massive construction without the workers getting protection legally, and I am asking you, Minister, while I was there it was with the people who fixed the law, get it in here so that we can get the Occupational Health and Safety Act on board.

NATIONAL INSURANCE SCHEME

Mr. Speaker, a year ago the Minister of Labour and Social Security gave us the assurance in this House that the National Insurance Fund remained viable despite the participation in the National Debt Exchange. The Minister, the spokesman on Finance

pointed it out that when you raid things like the National Insurance Scheme we are having problems, but before we left office we had set a trend for the next 20 years, how the NIF Fund would remain viable.

The Minister has said this year, the presentation of the Minister pointed out that the Fund's viability is threatened because benefits are moving too far ahead of contribution in the National Insurance Scheme. Mr. Speaker, I quote from the Minister's text. "The benefits provided under the Scheme amount to 14.7 Billion for the year April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014, but for the same period the contribution to the Scheme was totalled 12 Billion". If the National Insurance Fund is to remain viable, the Minister said, this untenable situation where the benefits continue to outweigh the contribution must be curtailed. As I have already established, the NIS is an important element in the growth agenda providing as it does only protection for the contribution of the dependents.

Minister, this is a 180 degrees swing. Last year it was going well, this year it gone wide and you won't admit that it is because of the Government withdrawing from the NIS a certain amount.

But what I don't understand, if this is the case why is the NIS Fund considering, Minister, investing in a new cement plant, lending the SME through the Development Bank of Jamaica and investing the ICT sector development through JAMPRO is another thing. But investing in a new cement plant when the one we already have is unprofitable, does not make sense to me. I advise caution. I advise caution.

The CARIB Cement plant at Rockfort has excess capacity and has been seeking export market. It made a tiny profit last year after some five years. It has accumulated loss of some Seven point Five Billion Dollars ($7.5B). Having two cement plants is likely to lead to a price war, compete domestic market. That may be good for the consumers but highly risky for the shareholders. And I am saying NIF should think twice on becoming one of those shareholders. I suggest that we abandon that idea.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that we examine that invest money, instead, invest it in people. And I outlined a while ago how I would like us to do it as a window to help like the Students' Loan Bureau into a fund that the management - the workers are going to employ you guarantee...

So Mr. Speaker, we face serious challenges, our resources are severely limited. This is one way we can use those limited resources to address some of the crucial challenges that we have.

I have also taken note of the Minister's Statement and the Inter-American Development Bank for Actuarial Evaluation. We did an evaluation and we look forward to your doing that.

Mr. Speaker, the House may recall that in May, 2011, more than six years, I announced a - I had announced the National Disabilities Act. And I asked the Minister to let us look at that. Of course, events affected that time and it is time for us to remove the delay.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, I want to just - I am concluding.

(Laughter/Government Members applaud)

Mr. SHAW: Yeah man, yu happy!

Mr. CHARLES: I know that you would have been so happy to stop, like pigs screaming when the stone is thrown in the sty. Clap again!

Mr. SHAW: Clap again!

Mr. CHARLES: Clap again!

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, I sympathize with the Minister's pain in trying to meet demand of the Rehabilitation Fund. I know the experience. I know that it is the genuine wish for you to help in letting us bury our people, and I support your applying to the Government for some additional funds to raise the amount being given for burial.

PATH PROGRAMME

Mr. Minister, last but not least I am going to ask you this. A number of people on the PATH programme have been taken off. It's a general evaluation. They have been complaining. And I would like you to promise us in this House that we can set up a Committee - there is a Committee in each Ministry, I will agree, but the amount of people who have been taken off the PATH programme who are claiming that they are dying of poverty, I am sure you would like to know. We want to meet with you to find out some way...

Mr. SHAW: In this time of sufferation you a tek people off de PATH programme? That's evil and wicked!

Mrs. ROBINSON: No, appeal don't work.

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, before I close, I want to get back to North Central Clarendon.

Mr. Speaker, I told you that I had promised my constituency that anybody who can identify a child in North Central Clarendon born in the Twenty-first Century, seven years old and cannot read, it's my responsibility.

We have a massive Reading Programme to see that every child born in North Central must read! (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes! All de PNP pickney dem can read!

Mr. CHARLES: And we don't ask children who their family vote for. Sitting up there, Mr. Speaker, the children are here as a prize trip, they are in Parliament today because they are winners of the Reading Competition. Give them a round of applause! (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the children - the teachers have advised me that the inspiration to read comes from the fact that there is a competition, there are books being given out, cups being given out, exposure, and they can come to Parliament. I want to say thanks to the teachers. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I want to announce that from our CDF, we were able to assist some 237 high-school, college and university students in

going back to school. (Applause) Over Four Million Dollars ($4M). We weren't able to give anybody a full scholarship, but some were not able to go back because they owed a little, some were not able to go back because they wanted to start a little, and we were able to give, as I said, two hundred and thirty-odd students. And that is why I say those who are going to university got up to Fifty Thousand Dollars ($50,000.00) to assist them in going back. We are not wasting the people's money; we are investing it in the children. We are buying books for them. Some don't have shoes, but I didn't go to school with shoes, I didn't have paved roads to walk on, there were no buses, one higgler truck only ply one time a week. These are different days so we have to help them.

Mr. McKENZIE: And Bata used to have a shoes name Bugga.

Mr. CHARLES: I want to recognize Mr. Russell, who is leading this programme and is sitting here. (Applause) Miss Scott, my secretary, (Applause). I said my secretary, Jenese Scott, she is here and carries the burden from the office, recognize everybody who is having a problem. (Applause)

For the farmers, we were able to give 200 farmers - 215 farmers some fertilizers, some seeds, herbicides, and they are grateful. And that is why we beg that the CDF continues and if anything, be improved. (Applause)

We have some people, you visit them at their homes, you go into the house, if is night you look at the stars, if it is raining you have to carry your umbrella. You go into some homes where people use cardboard to prevent the rain. If we are able to give them four sheets of zinc it can help. And that is why I am happy that the CDF continues. (Applause)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Real talk! Real talk!

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to carry the Government through any more pain.

Mr. McKENZIE: You have to talk 'bout the Farm Work Programme before you close.

Mr. CHARLES: But, Minister, just one word. Help me with the water!

Mr. SHAW: And don't call the farmers thief, that them tiefing water! You mustn't say that about farmers tiefing water.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: They steal the water! If you don't want me to say 'tief, they steal the water!

Mr. CHARLES: Minister, help us with the bus, help us with the transport system. Minister, help us with the PATH thing that children can get some food and go to school five days a week, please.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: I have been advised by the Minister to announce that tomorrow morning at 9.00 o'clock, the Ministry of Transport will sign a contract for One point Three Billion Dollars ($1.3B) for a road that started - a road that was being lobbied for some thirty years ago.

(Cross talk)

Minister, I will be there.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. CHARLES: I must express - Minister, I think it is right to publicly express my appreciation that it has been there through you, through us, through you, again, it is

coming tomorrow. And on behalf of the people of North Central Clarendon, I want to say thanks, because this is the major road. (Applause) I want to say thanks to your Minister for the water that you say we can start tomorrow morning to draw water.

And, so, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for putting up with me...

Government MEMBERS: Yes!

(Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: I promise you I will not selectively hear what you are saying; I will do a little better this time.

And, Members, the first time my wife came here she was not happy when we were going home because there was pure booing and shouting. I am sure that your behaviour this time represents what my students...

Mr. SHAW: You shock them this evening, man. You give it to them!

Mr. CHARLES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. God bless you.

(Applause)

Opposition MEMBERS: Very good, Pearnel, very good.

Mr. McKENZIE: I so move for the adjournment.

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to recommit the following items, Announcements, Bills Brought from the Senate, Reports from Committees and Notices of Motions Given Orally.

The SPEAKER: Those in favour of the recommittal of the items.

Put to the House and agreed to.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
(Recommitted)

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 108**
  Grade 6 Achievement Test
  GSAT Preliminary Report
- **Ministry Paper No. 109**
  Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission Annual Report for the Financial year ended March 31, 2013
- **Ministry Paper No. 110**
  Cabinet Agenda Issues dated June 2, 2014
- Report on the deliberations of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee for the Financial year 2013/2014
- GoJ/EU UNEP Climate Change, Adaption and Disaster Risk Production Project

BILLS BROUGHT FROM THE SENATE

The Clerk read the following message from the President of the Senate.

"To the Honourable House of Representatives:

I have the honour to advise the Honourable House of Representatives that on the 13th day of June 2014, a Bill shortly entitled: the Banking Services Act 2014 was passed in the Senate with 75 amendments, for which the Honourable

Senate seeks the concurrence of the Honourable House of Representatives, and the amendments were circulated yesterday."

Signed: Floyd Morris

President of the Senate

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Banking Services Bill was taken in the Senate on the 13th of June 2014 and was passed with 75 amendments. The majority of these amendments were editorial in nature, including typographical, incorrect cross-referencing and correcting inconsistencies in terms of references, *et cetera.*

Mr. Speaker, the Banking Service Bill which has been the subject of deliberation by a Joint Select Committee, did in fact undergo a very rigorous examination over two weekends by the Members of the Joint Select Committee. And I'd like to place on record on behalf of the Chairman of the Joint Select Committee the Honourable Peter Phillips, the Minister of Finance and Planning, our appreciation for the work done by the Chief Parliamentary Counsel's team and the Members of the Joint Select Committee who worked for several hours way into the late hours of the night to complete this Bill.

The Bill went to the Senate and the Senate, as usual, after scrutinizing the Bill found several amendments. There are about eight amendments, relatively substantive.

In Clause 46 (2) (b) relating to fixed assets; Clause 45, Supervisors power to request information, and all of these things Members of the House and especially Members of the Joint Select Committee are quite familiar with because they hammered out all of these things. And the corrections or amendments - I'm sorry - to the Bill were laid on the Table of the House yesterday.

In Clause 90 (3), power of Supervisor to object *et cetera,* to a point the appointment of external auditor.

Clause 109 (8), unsafe practices; and in the Fourth Schedule, the constitution and procedures of the Supervisory Appeals Board. And in the Fifth Schedule, conditions subject to remedial action in Part C, temporary management; and in the Ninth Schedule, exemptions to the rules relating to confidentiality provisions; and in the Tenth Schedule, consequential amendments to the Bank of Jamaica Act.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, all of these amendments were laid yesterday. The Opposition I don't think have much difficulty with the amendments and therefore I'm proposing that the amendments be taken as tabled yesterday.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister has correctly indicated that quite a bit of work has been done at the level of the Joint Select Committee and membership on both sides were quite involved and there were two weekends that were committed to work on this Bill.

But you know Mr. Speaker - and I have to indicate that the final amendments that are tabled here most of which are editorial, but the Minister has noted eight substantive amendments - I think I would want to make an

observation nonetheless, that in a matter of the gravity of this Bill, the Banking Services Act, I believe that there are some concerns. And the concern I want to express first of all is that this Bill has seen in the Lower House, 268 amendments; and coming from the Senate now, 75 amendments for a total of 343 amendments to this Bill that was tabled in this Honourable House.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I want to suggest that sometimes haste really makes waste. And as is the case coming from the Senate of 75 amendments, while eight of them are substantive, 67 of them are editorial. Now for legislators...

A MEMBER: Stop it!

Mr. SHAW: ...to be involved in having to make editorial adjustments to Bills...

A MEMBER: Stop it!

Mr. SHAW: ...whether in the Lower House or in the Senate, is in my view, Mr. Speaker, unacceptable! Editorial adjustments and amendments are something that should be dealt with at the technical level... (Applause) ...and should not have to come to the House or to the Senate for us to be making minor editorial adjustments. With all due respect, that is what public sector technicians are paid for! That is what they're there to do!

And I respectfully want to submit, Mr. Speaker, that in the future, no Bill of this magnitude, no Bill of this significance - in fact no Bill at all must come to this Honourable House or go to the Senate and have to be subjected to such an extensive array of amendments and tying up the legislators time in carrying out amendments that ought to be done at the appropriate technical levels before they reach to Parliament!

A MEMBER: The Minister is rushing!

Mr. SHAW: I want to make that point!

A MEMBER: Stop it!

Mr. SHAW: And part of that, I believe, has to do with the indecent haste with which we have to be rushing some of these bits of legislations...

Mr. HOLNESS: Yes, that's the real fact, that's the real fact.

Mr. SHAW: ...in order for us to meet certain deadlines!

Now this rush is not only impacting the programme in terms of what we passed in the House. Mr. Speaker, I was in the Tax Office at Constant Spring a few days ago, and a couple taxpayers complained to me that this new business - what's it called, the Minimum Business Tax that has now been imposed, has been imposed in great haste without proper explanation to the people; there's no public information programme that has been implemented.

And one taxpayer was quite irate when he said, Mr. Speaker, that this has been implemented, the demand is that if we pay by June 15th $60,000 per year as a Minimum Business Tax, $30,000 due on June 15, the other $30,000 due in September, I believe - on September 15 or there about. But the taxpayer said to me, that when he went to pay his $30,000, against the background that he doesn't know the circumstances as to whether he will get a credit against any other payments that are due, he doesn't know the details of how the Minimum Business Tax will work.

But worse than that, when he paid it, there was no prescribed form for him to fill out; no appropriate form to suggest this is the Minimum Business Tax form that shows that this registered taxpayer with his appropriate TRN number has been appropriately registered and he has paid his Minimum Business Tax.

Mr. HOLNESS: That's a new one.

Mr. SHAW: And he asked the people at the tax office, where is my proof that I've paid the Minimum Business Tax? They say well you go over there so mek wi write a receipt for you because the system doesn't work out yet.

A MEMBER: Taxation without...

(Inaudible)

Mr. SHAW: So the Government doesn't work out the system yet, but we want to just collect the money whether we prove that it is properly registered and at an appropriate time it's going to be properly and duly accorded and programmed in favour of that taxpayer.

Now these are examples, Mr. Speaker, of absolute slackness that is being countenanced on the basis that we must hurry up and meet a deadline. I want to make these points and ask that the Minister takes them into consideration for the future. (Applause)

Mr. D. SMITH: Good point.

Mr. DALLEY: Hold on! Hold on!

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition Spokesman on Finance in his usual form, has made his comments. And as we always do, I will check to see if those comments are valid and if the taxpayer reported to you, because the Minimum Business Tax was introduced in financial year 12/13. We did not commence it until this financial year and each taxpayer who has not been caught in the tax net, who's a business operator, has to pay this Minimum Business Tax. And I will ensure, Mr. Speaker, that each of the...

Mr. SHAW: You need a prescribed form.

Mr. DALLEY: ...I will check first of all, because I know they're professional people who're operating at the TAJ, and I will check and I will report to this House when I come to speak in another couple of days, about the Minimum Business Tax raised, and the issue raised by the Member.

I'd also wish to say about amendments, this is what legislators really do yuh nuh, we who are elected to the House or appointed to the Senate, must scrutinize Bills and make amendments where we see necessary, nothing is wrong with that, and we've done that over and over. That does not take away from the point though...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. DALLEY: ...from the point though... Hold on, hold on. ...that we must be very scrupulous in drafting these Bills. The Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, let me say, has worked hard in the last couple of years and especially in the last year... (Applause) ...to ensure that every single piece of legislation that has been...

Mr. McKENZIE: But?

Mr. DALLEY: ...which would've been passed some years ago...

Mr. McKENZIE: But?

Mr. DALLEY: ...that we're committed to pass, that these are ready and with the

cooperation of the Opposition, I must say - admit, sometimes grudgingly, but you cooperate, I must admit, we've passed all of these legislations.

Mr. HOLNESS: Cooperate?

Mr. DALLEY: Sometimes you protest...

A MEMBER: Of course.

Mr. DALLEY: ...but I must say - and I've said it before - we appreciate - last December just before Christmas when we met Christmas Eve I said I appreciate the commitment and the cooperation of the Opposition to carry us through the passage of all these legislations. But I can't lambast the public sector workers who have worked so hard to have these Bills prepared each time.

Mr. McKENZIE: That is your problem?

Mr. DALLEY: And with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I beg that the amendments from the Senate be approved.

The SPEAKER: Is that the wish of the House?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Bill passed.

Mr. SHAW: Just do the thing properly.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

The SPEAKER: Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the Report...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw, I didn't hear Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. SHAW: Oh... (Inaudible comment)

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the table of the House a copy of the Report of deliberations of the Sessional Select Committee on Public Administration and Appropriations for the financial year 2013/14.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

> Be it Resolved that the Report on the deliberations of the Sessional Select Committee on Public Administration and Appropriations for the financial year 2013/14, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 18th day of June 2014, be adopted.

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, let me - I didn't get a chance to thank the Member from North Central St. Catherine for his Sectoral Presentation and all the Members of the Honourable House that have stayed with him for his presentation, a little lengthy though it might have been, and now - North Central Clarendon, I'm sorry my neighbouring colleague and Member - we will hear from the Member from West Central St. James and the Minister of State - Honourable Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce.

The SPEAKER: Mrs. Ffolkes-Abrahams.

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the theme of my presentation

today is: *Facilitating the Growth of Industries.* First of all, I would like permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: This theme addresses the need for inclusive growth at all levels of our economy, including all skilled groups and geographic areas, both rural and urban. In this context, our efforts, Mr. Speaker, are supportive of Jamaica's thrust towards becoming a logistic-centered economy which will help us to be more competitive, in terms of the ease and speed of doing business, creating new markets, and providing new opportunities for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises known as MSMEs. (Applause)

Underpinning this theme, Mr. Speaker, is Proverbs 10 verse 4: *He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.* (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, as Members of Parliament, I am accountable, first and foremost to the constituents of West Central St. James, some of whom are here today, and I wish to thank them for their support. (Applause)

I wish to thank also my Constituency Committee, my councillors, Michael Troupe, Avery Rose-Green and Barry Solomone; former Members of Parliament, Tulloch, Rose-Green and Nelson, those who work in my Constituency Office, such as, Debora Stephenson, Sandana McKenzie-Smith; my driver, JC; my officer, my special assistant, Nora Blake, my secretary, for all of your hard work and assistance throughout the year.

I wish especially, to thank the Most Honourable Prime Minister for her leadership, and for granting me this precious opportunity. May you continue to live in the favour and blessing of the Lord. Like Esther, you have been called for such a time as this.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: You are indeed an example to all of us and to the nation. Your steady hand, composure and care for the most vulnerable, have inspired us all. Your unswerving commitment to women and children in Jamaica has been a credit worldwide. Your address to the United Nations was outstanding, and your recognition and acclaim as a female Leader among many nations, has certainly enhanced Brand Jamaica, in the eyes of the world. (Applause)

I would also like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the Deputy Speaker, for your fair and wise guidance as Speaker of this House. I wish to thank the Registrar, the Clerk of the Houses of Parliament, and all the staff of Parliament. In particular, I would like to thank you for your support and assistance during the meeting of COPA, the Confederation of Parliamentarians of the Americas in March of this year, which by all accounts was a resounding success.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: I would like to especially thank the Honourable Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, the Honourable Anthony George Hylton, for your guidance and able leadership over the Ministry.

Mr. SHAW: What's his middle name?

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Your guidance to me, as Minister of State, has been invaluable. Your vision for Jamaica is big, and I have every confidence that under your able leadership, we will attain the goal of a logistics-centred economy. The vision will surely come to pass.

Most of all, I would like to thank my husband, Peter, who is here, for his love and devotion. (Applause) On Sunday, Mr. Speaker, it will be 29 years of marriage. (Applause) I want to thank my children, my parents, Greta and Eugene Ffolkes, my brother Eugene Anthony, my sisters Susan and Michelle who are here, and their spouses.

To my church family - my pastors here, and in the diaspora, who continue to pray for me and to guide me in the paths of righteousness, I could not do without your prayers and support.

Mr. Speaker, I must report briefly on some of the developments within my constituency. I make no apologies for doing so. Not only do the activities within my constituency influence my accomplishments as a Member of Parliament and as Minister of State, but I am always humbled by the fact that without my constituents, I would not have the privilege to be serving my country in the capacity that I am doing today. I am proud therefore to report on the developments in my constituency of West Central St. James.

The constituency of West Central St. James is situated in one of the fastest growing corridors in the region, which boasts the Montego Bay Free Port, the Montego Bay Free Zone, and is home to the flourishing Information Communication Technology call centers... (Applause) ...a thriving tourism enclave, trophy properties, and high end residential properties, modern shopping centres, office parks, a modern stadium. In addition to the foregoing, is the Montego Bay South projects an ambitious twenty-year Urban Development Plan that will transform the constituency into a modern 21st Century city, adding 12,000 new jobs and providing approximately 3,500 homes in the process.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Ground breaking took place in May for the University of the West Indies Integrated Western Campus at Barnett Estates in the Granville division. This will add to the number of tertiary education institutions already located in the constituency, including the Granville Heart/NTA, Sam Sharp Teachers College, and the Montego Bay Community College.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to give the impression that West Central St. James is without its challenges. For example, in the small community of Granville, where 8,000 persons live, over the past five years, approximately, 120 persons were murdered. Granville is located on the Montego Bay south growth corridor, approximately three kilometers from the coast. It requires a collaborative effort in addressing the socioeconomic conditions that have led to this unacceptable state. However, I am here to tell you that better days are ahead.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear, hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: As Member of Parliament, I have taken on the role of a facilitator of growth and development in the community. Accordingly, the urgent task at hand is:

- the preparation of the constituents through education and training to leverage the developmental opportunities,
- the collaboration of effective partnerships with the private sector, so that the communities can benefit from the opportunities,
- the giving of support to the capacity-building of community-based organizations throughout the constituency, so that they can effectively participate in the social, economic, and cultural development, in their respective communities. Also,
- to provide training for community leaders as first responders to man-made and natural disasters,
- to equip the broad citizenry with tools to establish and address proper environmental stewardship; and also,
- the mitigation of crime and violence.

The underpinning of the constituency development is:

- the broadening of the economic base,
- the development of small businesses, to revitalize the economy of the community; and,
- the security of tenure of land to build stable families, and to secure sustainable communities.

In pursuit of the above goals, I have sought to develop infrastructure, Mr. Speaker:

- train budding entrepreneurs,
- provide opportunities for work at home and abroad,
- assist in educational needs,
- provide skills training,
- develop sports in the constituency; and,
- work with the local churches and community agencies and organizations, where possible.

JEEP

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the infrastructural projects. Mr. Speaker, under JEEP Programme, Phase III, the following work was accomplished: Ramble Hill, Bogue Basic School renovation, Tower Hill football field, pedestrian crossing, cross-walk and signs at Catherine Hall, road rehabilitation at Guinep Way at Catherine Hall, and road patching at Piggot Street in Mount Salem. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: This is in addition to the work done on Phases I and II, Mr. Speaker, which included the patching and repairing of roads, bushing, and the cleaning of drains. Repairs were done on the Catherine Mount Road, Mount Salem Main Road, Barnett View Heights, Jarrett Terrace, Phoenix Avenue, Catherine Drive, Rhynie Drive, Moy Hall, Tower Hill, Bayview Drive, Granville Drive, and Gunns Drive and Gordon's Crescent. (Applause) New drains

were constructed at Crawford Street and Clarke Streets, and a main drain was constructed on Granville Drive. Repairs were done to the Community Centre and a basic school at Gutters, where the roof was leaking and badly in need of repairs.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, drain cleaning was carried out in Catherine Hall and Bogue Village as part of the disaster mitigation efforts. We also restored the badly damaged retaining walls on the Long Hill Road and on the Bogue Hill Road, contributing to road safety on the busy thoroughfares of St. James.

I would like to report, Mr. Speaker that some 750 persons were employed in the constituency through JEEP, Phases I, II, and III, and I would like to thank the Ministry of Transportation and Works for their assistance with these projects. (Applause) We are working, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, 40 persons have been interviewed for the Farm Work Programme and are expected to be deployed to farms in Canada. I would like to thank Minister Derrick Kellier for seeking these positions for us.

(Applause)

I now turn to the entrepreneurship endeavours. Mr. Speaker, in keeping with my entrepreneurship thrust, I have trained, through my Constituency Development Fund, some 88 new entrepreneurs within the constituency. (Applause) Utilizing the expertise of the Jamaica Business Development Corporation, we have trained constituents in areas such as: business management, ethics and marketing. The graduation was held in August of last year, and this year, we will be training another 50 persons.

In keeping with the overall Training Education Programme within the constituency, we have cleaned up the old post office in Mount Salem Division, which was never used, and we are renovating and creating a Centre for Entrepreneurship Training and Development in Mount Salem. It will be equipped with computers, and sewing machines, and culinary equipment. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have engaged over 110 young persons in culinary arts from a programme - from my CDF, and they have begun training and certification with the Culinary Arts Centre in Montego Bay. (Applause)

Technical, vocational education, and training, are critical areas that need a focused approach in order to reap the desired outcomes of filling jobs locally and internationally.

In seeking to address the dilemma faced by many in the constituency, the St. James West Central Culinary Skills Training Programme seeks to pay specific attention to unattached youth on a community level. They will be learning international food preparation, cake baking and decorating, and bartending. My aim, Mr. Speaker, is to increase the level of entrepreneurial skills in the constituency, and to provide a programme to continuously enhance the capabilities of residents in the various communities in West Central St. James.

In Granville alone, we train 300 persons, in partnership with the Seventh Day Adventist Church and HEART, NTA, in four skills areas; that of housekeeping, carpentry and plumbing, and electrical installation.

A MEMBER: Very important.

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: I turn now to Caribbean Maritime Institute. Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to report that we are about to sign an MOU with Caribbean Maritime Institute, Montego Bay, and HEART Institute for the provision of training in logistics for over 100 young persons in the constituency.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: This facility, located in the constituency, will provide another tier of educational development for young people in the constituency. Very importantly, Mr. Speaker, this Branch will provide an opportunity for young people in the western end of the island to help meet the skills requirement of the logistics hub.

In view of the proposed ferry operation in Montego Bay called Paradise Express Ferry, we will be training young person's to fill the positions to operate and manage that facility. I understand there will be 150 new jobs, and it was announced by the Minister in his speech as well.

(Applause)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear! Hear!

A MEMBER: Talk up the things; working, working, working.

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Education Assistance. I should also report, Mr. Speaker, we have served over 1,220 persons who have received educational assistance in the form of scholarships, uniforms, books and tuition.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: You hear numbers, Pearnel.

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that the GSAT results for my constituency were quite impressive. In 2013 the national average for Maths, Science, Social Studies and Language Arts was 62.65 per cent. Howard Cooke Primary scored 74.75 per cent, well above the national average. Catherine Hall [Primary and Infant School] scored 72.5 per cent; Bogue Hill All Age scored 68 per cent; Tower Hill All Age scored 63 per cent; Granville All Age scored at 58 per cent. I believe that we need to pay special attention to Granville All Age School and I am requesting more resources to assist the children in that area. I also assisted in the building the perimeter fence at Catherine Hall Primary and we are still working on the perimeter fence for the Granville All Age School.

For the RADA: Mr. Speaker, we continue the entrepreneurial thrust using RADA. Persons have been assisted under the Agriculture Entrepreneurship Assistance programme with chickens, wieners, medication and feed. We are also looking at 40 backyard gardeners for the Spring Garden Division, and so far we have implemented 22 backyard gardens. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, backyard gardening is also a source of employment for the unemployed.

Dr. DAVIES: Listen, Pearnel.

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: The objectives are:

- To introduce backyard gardening technology and establish 40 gardens in urban West Central St. James;
- To increase food production by approximately 20 tonnes;
- To advance the concept of national food security to reduce dependence on food imports;

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear, hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS:

- To employ and train eight at-risk youth in nursery operations (seedling production) at the RADA greenhouse nursery; (Applause)
- To create direct employment for forty persons through backyard gardening;
- To produce and distribute 12,500 seedlings to backyard gardening participants; and
- Conduct four (4) training sessions in agricultural best practices. (Applause)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear, hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Mr. Speaker, it does not end there. Mr. Speaker, we have also established apiaries for the production of honey, which is very rich in Jamaica. Eight colonies were dispersed to four persons with protective gear, hive tools and smokers and they are doing very well, Mr. Speaker. In fact they have given me some bottles of honey for my own consumption and I thank them very much. (Applause) It's very good.

I am proud to mention that we have a pepper farm in Retirement/Granville area for which we have produced and sold over 1,000 pounds of West India Red Peppers. These peppers have found their way into the export market by way of pepper sauce. We are doubly excited about the MOU that we have signed with Sunset Beach Resort to supply fresh herbs and spices which are in short supply. (Applause) This is a good example of the backward linkages that are possible with the tourism industry and the local communities. We are working, working, working.

Mr. Speaker, very importantly, and in keeping with the agricultural thrust, Rural Water Supply will be implementing the badly needed Gutters to Retirement Water Supply System this year. We are grateful to the Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change for this gift. However, there are still other areas still in need such as Wales Pond, Bowen Hill, Guava Walk and some parts of Irwin. We hope, Mr. Minister, that you will be able to give us more water in due consideration of these projects as well.

Reduction in Crime: Mr. Speaker, we have continued our efforts to promote peace in the Granville/Retirement area and as such we had eight churches in January participating in an outdoor march led by a marching band from Sam Sharpe Teachers' College. We all joined hands and prayed for peace in the area. In particular, we spoke out against the level of violence and crime against women in the area where there had been a reported number of rapes. Indeed, I am reliably informed by the police officers that since that time those persons were identified who were perhaps the

perpetrators of the crime and they have been apprehended and they have been no more rapes since we prayed in Retirement area. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that divine intervention works. When God comes in the Devil leaves. (Applause)

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Let me tell you the more we pray the more we'll have peace in our communities.

Mr. PRYCE: Hear, hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: And the more churches and the people get together and work with the police, the more we'll have crime reduced in our nation. It is important, Mr. Speaker, that we stand up against violence and crime and that we stand for justice and peace and that we stand for righteousness in our nation because God is a God of righteousness. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, sports is a critical area of education and for that we are supporting corner league football teams, cricket and basketball teams as well as the maintenance of football fields and cricket pitches. We are also partnering with public and private entities such as the CSJP and the Montego Bay United Football Team for the development of sports and sports tourism, and we are very proud of the fact that the Montego Bay United Football Team took home the trophy this' year, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations to the team and Orville Powell and I have now been asked to be the Chairman of the team and I have humbly accepted the challenge. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we are seeking the intervention of the Land Administration Management Project (LAMP) in intervention to provide titles to ninety nine occupants of land situated at Piggott and Crawford Street, Mount Salem in the parish of St. James and which is owned by Barnett Limited. The land has a registered title and the Managing Director, Mr. Mark Kerr Jarrett, has expressed the desire for the land to be transferred to the people.

(Applause)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear, hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: I would like to thank him for his efforts in this regard. The lots have been surveyed and pre-checked plan has been prepared by surveyors. The occupants have established a legal entity under the Benevolent and Friendly Society's Act for the purpose of entering into contractual agreements.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear, hear!

(Cross talk)

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Always, always.

In addition I have sought, Mr. Speaker, to assist in providing titles to 22 families in the Great River Estate area through LAMP.

Mr. Speaker we continue the work for transformation in the community following the Dan Rather Report. Crime is trending down. Mr. Speaker, the community is being revitalized with the JEEP infrastructural initiatives and the training of young persons empowered through entrepreneurial and educational skills training activities. The emphasis will remain on the training of our talented young people for job opportunities and self-actualization through entrepreneur-ship and development.

I turn now to the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear, hear.

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: In speaking Mr. Speaker, we are facilitating the building and the growth of industries. Some of the most critical ingredients are access to finance, business development services, the ability to meet international production and quality standards, a strong intellectual property, infrastructure, and the existence of an enabling environment for micro, small and medium sized enterprises. Mr. Speaker, we have been involved in a wide range of activities geared towards creating an environment in which businesses can be established, supported, and allowed to grow.

(Applause)

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Mr. Speaker, through the Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC), we served some 3,543 MSME clients during the financial year 2013 to 2014.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Yuh hear, Karl?

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: We continue, through the JBDC, to support a number of projects critical to economic growth with social inclusion. These include the Step-to-Work, a project of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security - this is joined up Government at work, for which the JBDC provides business development training to PATH beneficiaries.

(Applause)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear, hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: MSME Energy Conservation and Efficiency Project, Mr. Speaker, which is part of the JBDC's thrust to promote energy conservation management as a means of strengthening the growth and development of MSMEs. Under the Craft Biz Facility, customized training and handholding has been provided to over 30 producers of assorted craft and fashion items, including jewellery, footwear, fashion, home accents and souvenirs, to prepare them to manage their businesses, as well as improve their products and production processes. And, there is the JSIF Rural Economic Development Initiative project, for which the JBDC has been contracted to provide business consultancy services. Beneficiaries of this project are community groups located in rural Jamaica and involved in agricultural businesses.

In addition, a proposal writing intervention was conceptualized by the JBDC out of the need to increase access to funding to plug the financial gap of many businesses. Mr. Speaker, the aim was to enhance the capacity of participants to develop high potential proposals, thereby enabling them to solicit assistance for business and developmental purposes. Through this intervention, Mr. Speaker, two workshops were attended by fifty-one participants from Government, private sector, and civil society. This resulted in over SI5.5 Million in grant funding to help with proposal writing. (Applause) We are facilitating business growth and development. Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear, hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: In addition to these initiatives, other measures are being pursued to broaden the base of business ownership and growth throughout the length and breadth of Jamaica. Particularly, in the micro enterprise sector. Mr. Speaker, these include: a modern insolvency law, which seeks to avoid liquidation of potentially viable companies in facilitating their rehabilitation; ensure orderly market exit of inefficient entities in protecting creditors' rights, while safeguarding the interests of shareholders and customers.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear, hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: This also allows, Mr. Speaker, for the saving of jobs; for suppliers to keep their customers, and for owners to retain a viable company, and help to fuel our economy.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear, hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: In addition Mr. Speaker, the Secured Interest in Personal Property Act, which allows personal property to be used as security for loans, as part of the efforts to widen the base for the use of collateral, especially to those who do not own property or other significant assets. Now, goods such as property, crops, and animals, documents, debentures, shares, stocks and bonds, accounts receivables, intellectual property, and other intangibles, can be used as security.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear, hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: The Registrar of Companies is the designated Registrar of Security Interests and is responsible for its administration and maintenance. Since January 2014, over 51,706 notices have been registered.

(Applause)

(Cross talk)

They are using it, Mr. Speaker. Over $5.3 Million in deposits was made to the Secured Interest in Personal Property Registry with subscribers utilizing approximately $4 Million.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear, hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Mr. Speaker, our objective is to include growth and production in all areas of the economy and we are succeeding, Mr. Speaker, in that regard.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Hear, hear!

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: During the 2013/14 financial year, the Bureau of Standards of Jamaica implemented a number of initiatives to promote exports, foster entrepreneurship and innovation, facilitate trade and improve competitiveness. And may I acknowledge the presence of the Chairman of the Bureau of Standards, Professor Winston Davidson.

(Applause)(Cross talk)

Export promotion through the JAMPRO Enterprise Development for growth Export MAX Programme. Under Export MAX, fifteen clients in the agro industry fashion and apparel benefitted from a 50 per cent discount on selected Bureau of Standards Services. Total discounts....

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Member's time be extended

sufficiently to allow her to finish her presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently for her to complete her presentation.

Put the House and agreed to.

(Applause)

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Thank you Mr. Speaker, thank you my colleagues.

Through the National Certification Body of Jamaica five companies were certified ISO 9001 standard and one ISO 14001 standard. Another two companies are at an advanced stage of certification process of 9001 standards. Plans are on the way to seek accreditation for ISO 22000 Food Safety Management Systems Standards during the financial year 2014 to 15.

The Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation JNAAC has so far awarded eight (8) accreditations certificates to six (6) laboratories, four (4) of which provide food testing services to the domestic and export markets. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this will help to increase Jamaica's capacity for accessing export markets in North America, South America, Europe and other parts of the world. In fact, this gives us access to about 65 countries.

Mr. Speaker, with accreditation customers are provided with the assurance that Jamaica's export meets international standards. All of these activities helped to facilitate the entry of our products into foreign markets eliminating the need for retesting prior to distribution for sale. As is the motto 'tested once accepted everywhere'. (Applause)

Organic Farming Certification, Mr. Speaker, I turn now to this very important and new topic. Mr. Speaker, the organically produced goods industry is a new and emerging niche market that Jamaica is seeking to access. It is a huge market in the world organically grown products. To this end, and for the first time, Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is seeking certification for organic production which will be recognized internationally... (Applause) ...organic production which will be recognized internationally under the Standards Act, the BSJ Offerings of Conformity Assessment Programmes could be expanded to include the certification of organic products. This certification, Mr. Speaker, would facilitate the international acceptance of Jamaican products while showcasing products that are authentically Jamaican and organically grown. Jamaica will be in a position to access our various niche markets in organic products which include our own bamboo charcoal. And Mr. Speaker, I would like to show you our bamboo charcoal, this is brand new made in Jamaica, indigenous bamboo for Jamaica... (Applause) ...Jamaica brand to the world.

The Organic Farming Certification framework includes, Mr. Speaker, the Bureau of Standards Jamaica, Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement known as JOAM plant quarantine unit under the Technical Services Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture, Pesticide Control Authority at UWI and the Fair Trading Commission of our Ministry.

Critical to the process, Mr. Speaker, is the international recognition of local component

authority and the acceptance of the standards to be used as well as the competent inspectors which will be in Jamaica.

(Applause)

I turn now, Mr. Speaker, to Intellectual Property Developments.

Mr. Speaker, the development and exploitation of intellectual property has become a key driver of economic growth, not just globally, but very much so in Jamaica. IP transactions have become a business in itself, and in Jamaica we must put ourselves in a position to ride this wave by creating more IP products and services and in building a modern vibrant IP Industry it can bring us wealth.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this is what we have been doing. First of all, we look at geographical indicators. Since 2008 we have been making significant advances in the area of geographical indications or GI's as they are known. Coming out of a partnership between the Jamaica Intellectual Property Office, JIPO, and the Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property.

Briefly, Mr. Speaker, a geographical indication is a sign used on products that have a precise geographical origin and qualities or a reputation as a result of that place or origin. It often consists of the name of the place of origin of the products. The geographical indication may also serve to highlight the specific qualities of a product due to specific local geographical factors such as climate and soil and the human factors present at the place of origin of the products, such as certain manufacturing techniques or a traditional production method, such as Boston Jerk.

In May 2014, JIPO received the first application for the registration of a Jamaican Geographical Indication or a GI from the Jamaica Jerk Producers Association. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this is a big step forward for GI Development in Jamaica. Registration of GI's provides a number of benefits including exclusive right of use, better legal protection, contributing to local employment creation and helping to prevent rural exodus function as a product differentiator on the market by enabling consumers to distinguish between GI and non-GI Products.

Other products being explored for possible GI protection include Blue Mountain Coffee... (Applause) ...and Jamaica Rum. The protection of Geographical Indications Act is also in the process of being amended to provide for a higher level of protection to non-wines and spirits such as our rum.

Mr. Speaker, we hope that the GI application made by the Jamaica Jerk Producers Association will be the first of many more application for GI designation. (Applause) I would like to encourage other commodity producers, associations to register their GI's Rum, coffee, pimento, hemp coming up...

Mr. PRYCE: Cannabis.

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: ...to name a few.

We are also looking at protection of our country name, Mr. Speaker, and this is something that we have been trying to do for

quite a while. (Applause) and we are embarking on protecting Jamaica, the name Jamaica.

The joint recommendation concerning provisions on the protection of country names aimed at harmonizing the examination and determination of trademark applications for the registration of trademarks which consists of, or contained country names in order to promote consistent and comprehensive treatment and protection of country names among Member States. The recommendation is intended to guide IP offices in examining marks which contained or are derived from a country name.

So this will protect Jamaica and Brand Jamaica going forward. It proposes uniform protection for our country names against conflicting marks, business identifiers and domain names, bad faith use and conflict with the minimum standards or protection for our country name where the mark or part thereof constitutes a reproduction and imitation, a translation, a transliteration, or an abbreviation of a country name which is liable to create confusion, if the mark or part thereof is the subject of an application for registration or is registered in respect of goods or services.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, along with the Creative Industries Commission and JIPO and myself, recently met with .the country brand Guru Simon Arnold from WIPO in an initial discussion to further Jamaica's interests in country brand name. Further work will continue for the protection of Jamaica's brand and there are some very good suggestions... (Applause) ....that he has made to us, with respect to how we can brand Jamaica and keep it protected.

Protection of Reggae is something else, Mr. Speaker that we are seeking to make sure happens.

Mr. Speaker, proponents of reggae music have consistently been calling for IP protection. JIPO and the entertainment division of the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment have engaged in dialogue with reggae industry stakeholders and how best to craft the protection of reggae. Consultations have been held with various stakeholders from the Jamaica music industry, including musicians, composers, producers, performers and representatives from the Jamaica Reggae Industry Association known as JRIA, and Jamaica Association of Vintage Artistes and Affiliates, JAVA.

Consultations were also held with academics from the University of the West Indies and from the Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts, as well as the representatives from the Rastafarian community including the Ethiopian Africa Diaspora Union Millennium Counsel. From June 10 to 11, 2013, JIPO hosted professor Rob Bowman from York University, Canada to lead a series of consultations in Jamaica related to the protection of Reggae. Through the assistance of the World Intellectual Property Organization, WIPO, Professor Bowman is undertaking a study to analyze the history of reggae as a complete art form including music, art, dance and fashion and in order to assess the role that intellectual property can play in supporting the

development of the Reggae and Music Industry. (Applause)

The strategies that are being looked at are: (a) a certification mark to designate authentic reggae and/or obtaining inscription of reggae on UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage. Secondly, a possible certification mark for reggae and our Jamaica reggae to promote use of Jamaica artists, studios, musicians and merchandise.

Mr. Speaker, it has been decided that more consultation will take place with the various stakeholders in the industry. Further the work being done by WIPO Consultant, Rob Bowman on Reggae is to be formally tied to the over national consultations.

Mr. Speaker, not only are we responding to the call from the players in the Reggae Industry for greater IP protection, but Reggae as they say, is the heartbeat of Jamaica and we have to do all that is necessary to keep that heart beating. Mr. Speaker, we are working to protect and grow the creative industries in Jamaica.

JIPO also organized an authentic Jamaican craft design competition in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment. The competition encouraged designers to enter craft creations and over 100 entries were received, approximately two million in cash prices were awarded.

We are also seeking to establish protection in the area of trademarks, Mr. Speaker. JIPO's dissemination of information has led to increased registration of trademarks by entertainers, record producers and event promoters. We have seen much greater awareness of the process of registration with the applicants searching the system to find out if the trademark that they would like to register is available before applying. This is a very encouraging development which augurs well for the future. (Applause)

As we speak, Mr. Speaker, we are conducting an Intellectual Property School with the University of the West Indies JIPO and WIPO, which is happening right now from June 9 to June 20, 2014. (Applause) This initiative covers topics such as patents and innovation, copyrights and related rights, the international trademarks landscape, IP as a business asset and much, much more. Mr. Speaker, we are facilitating the growth of the creative industries in Jamaica. (Applause)

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, in February of this year, JIPO and the World Intellectual Property Organization hosted a regional conference on intellectual property and the creative industries.

I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, the stakeholders were very impressed with Jamaica's advancements in legislations and programmes related to IP in general, as well as the creative industries. The conference was declared a success story, another success story by the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, at this time, permit me to congratulate the outgoing executive director of JIPO, Miss Carol Simpson for her outstanding work. Carol has now been appointed to the position of Head of the Caribbean Section at WIPO in Geneva, Switzerland. And we will

certainly miss her, but I want to use this platform to wish her well on her journey. (Applause) She has done a wonderful job. This is another plus for Jamaica. We will have our own representative in Geneva. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we are also protecting consumers and ensuring a competitive marketplace. The 2013/2014 financial period was marked by intensified lobbying of the Jamaica Bankers Association for acceptance of the Code of Conduct by the banking sector. This resulted in the sector developing a Voluntary Code of Conduct, which they signed and included almost all the areas of the National Consumers' League Code, with the exception of three critical areas, Mr. Speaker: non-discriminatory access; a cooling-off period; and the display of fees on the ATMs. We are still working towards a solution in this area, and we hope that we will have this done by the next time I stand up here to speak to you next year this time.

Mr. Speaker, we are encouraging competition in the business trade. The Ministry through the Fair Trading Commission continues to encourage competition in the conduct of trade, business and in supply of services. We want to ensure that consumers benefit from lower prices, greater product choices and better quality of goods and services.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, a total of 440 cases were investigated by the Fair Trading Commission. These comprised 166 cases that were unresolved at the end of the previous financial year, and 274 cases which were received during the 2013/2014. We are also seeking an Equitable Trading Environment, Mr. Speaker. The Antidumping and Subsidies Commission provides the remaining avenue for deterrence and a remedy for Jamaican producers against imports, which are unfairly traded or which enter the Jamaican market in disproportionate volumes that cause injury to domestic producers or the threat of injuries as well to domestic producers.

The role of the Commission includes:

- WTO-compliant trade defence mechanisms and processes;
- Financial impact of preserving Jamaican industry;
- supporting economic growth and international competitiveness as Jamaica opens its markets in an increasingly globalised world;
- National economic security supported by trade defence infrastructure for Jamaican production
- Preservation of jobs, such as in the case of Caribbean Cement Company Limited, where trade remedy action and analysis have contributed to the preservation of more than 300 jobs in the industry in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, we are also facilitating industrial development through the Garmex Free Zone Redevelopment.

The Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, through the Factories Corporation of Jamaica continues to spearhead the planning and development of a dynamic and innovative industrial landscape.

Currently, the Factories Corporation of Jamaica controls some 169,157 square meters

of factory space, and in excess of 193.6 acres of vacant lands plus 200 acres of Caymanas Estate. The mix of its tenants is quite diverse.

The Factories Corporation of Jamaica is now engaged on redeveloping and repositioning the Garmex Free Zone, Mr. Speaker. The necessary infrastructure improvement works commenced during the financial year 2013/2014. Over this period, approximately $35 Million was expended or committed for road improvement projects as well as for boundary wall development. The Corporation projects to spend approximately $120 Million in the financial year 2014/15 in continuation of the redevelopment of the complex.

Further redevelopment plans include:

- Continued rehabilitation of infrastructure to include roadways and parking areas,
- Construction of a redesigned entrance at Marcus Garvey Drive;
- Redesign improvements to existing JOS buildings in the Zone;
- Upgrading existing buildings and sites through identified capital projects in the amount of approximately $350 Million in furtherance of the Factories Corporation support for the MSME Sector.

During the period under review, occupancy moved from 77% to 84% with the addition of twelve new tenants employing approximately 850 persons. The new tenants include Elephant Group, Pan-Caribbean Sugar, Cal's Manufacturing Ltd., Mil & Mac Creative Producers Ltd., and Moc Manufacturing Co. Limited. We are now employing over 850 persons because of the work of the Factories Corporation of Jamaica in securing this space, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

Montego Bay Free Zone's building No. 7 will be retrofitted, converted for ICT/BPO use in phases, Mr. Speaker. This project will commence with 21,000 sq. ft. in August/September 2014, followed by another 21,000 sq. ft. in January 2015.

The Business Process Industry Association of Jamaica, Mr. Speaker, which was established in 2012, and I pause to acknowledge the President of that Association here today, Mr. Yoni Epstein, he's in the Gallery, (Applause) represents the Information, Communications Technology, and Business Process Outsourcing Industry. It seeks to emphasize the importance of cooperation, coordination as strategies to strengthen the ability of the industry to represent its interests and maintain a unified brand image.

The ICT-BPO cluster comprises thirty (30) member organizations; seventeen (17) of which are call center outsourcing type entities.

The Government of Jamaica has facilitated growth, development and expansion of the ICT-BPO industry through several initiatives such as:

I. Participating in industry meetings along with STEM, Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining;
II. Collaborating with the Industry Association to enhance the training

infrastructure and programmes geared towards the BPO industry and to increase the skills of applicants to find employment in the industry.

And I am told that this is working very well, it is in association with the HEART/NTA to raise the profile of the industry as the place of work and career advancement in Jamaica.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, US$5 Million was financed from the DBJ to support the expansion of operations. The credit facility is funded from the PetroCaribé Fund and is aimed at financing the construction of large, purpose-built ICT/BPO facilities, which are capable of generating significant employment.

(Inaudible comment by Opposition Member)

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Yes. The BPIJ recently entered into an agreement with Compete Caribbean to establish a Call Center Incubator to promote innovation, scalability and entrepreneurship in the industry. Through this initiative the BPIJ intends to strengthen the capacity of existing operators to increase productivity and sustainability to compete nationally, regionally and globally. And may I congratulate them on the excellent work that they are doing with Mr. Yoni Epstein (Applause)

The US$260 Million local ICT - BPO industry currently has approximately thirty-four (34) entities operating, providing work for some 14,500 Jamaicans in the Free Zone in Montego Bay, a very important industry, Mr. Speaker. (Applause) It helps us with our young people.

Now I turn to something that is very dear to my heart and something that's very new.

The Revitalized Industries in a Logistic Centered economy, we have two great potential areas. First, the development of a full-fledged local bamboo industry, and second the revitalization of our once vibrant fashion industry. Both within the context of the new paradigm of the logistics centered economy harnessing the power of the linkages between the different sectors of agriculture, sports, tourism, culture and industry.

Currently, the bamboo industry is worth an estimated US$12 Billion globally, and is expected to be worth some US$20 Billion by 2015.

Mr. Speaker, we need our share of that market in Jamaica. (Applause) And I just want to recognize the BMAC, persons who are here from the Bamboo industry. And Mr. Rose of the Bureau of Standards who has been leading that charge. (Applause) And they are here in the House today. (Applause)

In Jamaica we have an estimated 47,000 hectares of bamboo growing across the country, Mr. Speaker. However, in order to sustain an industry in Bamboo, we will need to increase the amount of Bamboo cultivation for production. This will be done by propagation.

The first ever Bamboo forum was held at the Bureau of Standards in Jamaica in April of this year with the Deputy Director of INBAR, which - is the International Network of Bamboo and Rattan, Dr. Li Zhi Young and Mr. Oliver Frith, also of INBAR, who is the global construction program coordinator.

Assistance was given by INBAR with respect to the technical support of the bamboo shoot production in Jamaica, which has a trade value of over US$273 Million.

Mr. Speaker, bamboo propagation in Jamaica will be done through tissue culture, facilitated by the work that has been done by Dr. Sylvia Mitchell at the Biotechnology Centre… (Applause) (and I believe she is here in the audience) at the University of the West Indies along with NEPA, with a focus on the protection of Jamaica's biodiversity. (Applause)

In Jamaica, the Bamboo Products Industry Project, housed at the Bureau of Standards Jamaica (BSJ) has demonstrated that the common specie of bamboo growing in Jamaica, which is Bambusa Vulgaris is amenable to the technologies now being used, and commercialization of a wide range of these bamboo products.

Mr. Speaker, bamboo can be used to create a wide range of products, including: bamboo flooring, corrugated roofing, furniture, hand-made bamboo woven laminates, there is a display outside - pens and pencils, toothpicks and chopsticks, edible bamboo shoots,' bamboo water, beer, bamboo pallets, bamboo paper, bamboo charcoal, bamboo panels, bamboo-mats, basketwork, pulp, furniture, value-added craft items to improve the stock available for tourism, and one of my favourites, bamboo fabric as well, and it's very, very soft, great quality fabric.

As a cleaner source of energy, bamboo charcoal provides a more sustainable source of fuel, Mr. Speaker. Bamboo charcoal can be easily produced, in fact. The use of bamboo charcoal limits the needs for firewood and so reduces deforestation. It has many uses which will be prototyped and developed in the framework of the new Bamboo Industry Board. It is in fact good for the environment, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause by Government Members)

In early 2014, following a meeting with the members of BMAC, the Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Robert Pickersgill and his technical advisers, policy consultants and the head NEPA, myself and my technical adviser, Nora Blake, NEPA reconsidered the ban of bamboo charcoal which was based on some misconceptions about bamboo charcoal. The Minister issued a letter exempting bamboo charcoal for which we are very happy, Minister Pickersgill. We thank you for your swift work in this area, (Applause) exempting bamboo charcoal from the ban on exports of charcoal from Jamaica. This occurred around the same time that Senator Norman Grant moved a Private Member's Motion in the Senate, for the Government to accelerate its support for the nascent bamboo industry in Jamaica. I wish to thank Senator Grant for this motion as well.

(Applause by Government Members)

Following the removal of the ban, a member of BMAC established a relationship - and he is here, Mr. Roger Chang. He is in the balcony. (Applause by Government Members) He established a relationship with businesses in the United States which has led to an order of six million pounds of bamboo charcoal with

an estimated retail value of US$10 Million. And we need to fill that order.

(Applause by Government Member)

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce will be focusing on developing strategies to support the policies and financing of the new bamboo sector to help take it forward. Within this broader context a new bamboo industry board will examine strategies and means of social inclusion to benefit marginalized groups particularly those in rural areas, the youth, women and the disabled. I would like to acknowledge Mr. Rose, who I did already, who spearheaded the Bamboo and Indigenous Materials Committee, and other members of the Committee here today. (Applause) And I see also Ms. Paula Perla from where I live. I would like to thank them for their yeoman service and their pioneering endeavours in this potentially very lucrative industry.

(Applause by Government Member)

Mr. Speaker, while the sustainable production of bamboo is critical for people in developing countries, bamboo certification frameworks do not currently exist in Jamaica. Therefore, the Bureau of Standards will be implementing systems to make it easy for small producers and large farmers alike to participate in the industry.

We will also be paying close attention to public/private partnerships as we seek to help rural communities in their development. Collaboration between private companies and the public may include use of some public money as well as resources of private companies to generate greater income from rural communities. Bamboo, Mr. Speaker, is a significant industry. It was for that reason that Jamaica became the 38th member of INBAR in January of 2012 and the Jamaican flag was raised in Beijing on April 5, 2012, signaling the country's inclusion in the Council.

(Applause by Government Members)

In March 2014, I led a courtesy visit to the Bureau of Standards Jamaica by the Chinese Ambassador to Jamaica. Discussions at the meeting led to a verbal agreement to provide bilateral support leading to the training of 20 Jamaicans per year in China, specifically for bamboo, as well as a willingness to help source machinery for use locally.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, MIIC will be spearheading a bamboo development strategy to facilitate the establishment of bamboo product factories in various zones throughout Jamaica:-

Zone 1:

Hanover, Westmoreland, St. James. Factories producing bamboo board and furniture, bamboo charcoal, we are in discussions with the Ministry of Local Government to establish a factory under the CARILED project with funding from CIDA in that area.

Zone 2:

St. Mary, Portland, St . Thomas. Factories producing edible bamboo shoots, bamboo charcoal and preserved bamboo sticks.

Zone 3:

St. Andrew, St. Catherine, Clarendon. Factories producing bamboo saw dust,

pellets, bamboo shipping pallets, preserved bamboo yam sticks, bamboo charcoal water and air filters.

Zone 4:

St. Elizabeth, Manchester. Factories producing edible bamboo shoots, bamboo charcoal, preserved bamboo, yam sticks and bamboo power generation.

We are seeking to revolutionize the country, Mr. Speaker, and to make sure that rural Jamaica stays apace of the world.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, inclusive development with bamboo has provided secured livelihoods for many thousands of rural producers on all continents. The same can be done for Jamaica. Our vast resource of bamboo and underdeveloped or marginalized lands provide significant potential for economic advancement through job creation and poverty reduction, industrialization and commercialization of bamboo products that are globally competitive fostering trade and development and creating opportunities for environmental sustainability.

A collaborative project between JASCEL which is Jamaica Agricultural Society Commercial Enterprises Limited, and Jamaica Agricultural Society and the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, BMAC and the Bureau of Standards, will see the establishment of a 20 kiosk prototype farmers market and a bamboo house using bamboo as the main construction material for the Denbigh Show grounds this year.

(Applause by Government Members)

The objective is to provide a permanent market venue for farmers at the Denbigh Show grounds this year.

I turn now, Mr. Speaker, to the fashion industry, many of whom are sitting in the House and have sat through all the deliberations. I want to thank you for your devotion.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to briefly mention the Jamaica Ital Fibres Institute or JAMIFI, with which the BSJ is pursuing a public/private sector partnership for the applied research and development of bamboo, hemp, coconut and other natural and vital ital fibres in Jamaica. (Applause)

The promoters of JAMIFI believe that the products and by-products of bamboo, hemp, coconut and other ital fibres can have an immediate and vital impact on creating quality employment, sustainable enterprise and much needed economic and social activity in Jamaica. (Applause by Government Member)

The first phase will emphasize bamboo and coconut as these two fibres have already established some infrastructure, industry and market penetration. Hemp and medicinal cannabis has also generated much commercial interest recently due to social experimentation and the decriminalization in two of the states in the USA and other countries. It is important therefore, that JAMIFI and Jamaica participate in the promotion and development of this vital fibre and not miss the ital boat.

(Applause by Government Members)

Revitalization of the local factory industry or fashion industry, rather.

Mr. Speaker, local stakeholders of the fashion industry including designers, manufacturers and marketers of clothing textiles, jewellery, footwear, handbags, hats have expressed keen interest in indigenous textile production in the creation of a unique Jamaican look, hence the importance of the intellectual property as well.

(Applause by Government Member)

This is needed in a revitalized industry, Mr. Speaker. This will give Jamaica a competitive advantage for locally produced and designed fashions in a world with a strong appetite for Brand Jamaica.

At the Ministry we have had meetings with key stakeholders in the fashion industry, some who are here today, including powerhouses like Ivy Ralph, Cheryl Lee Ralph, Annie Lopez who is here. Sorry that Ivy and Cheryl could not be here. Claudette Lopez, Lewis and Matthew Lewis who are textile specialists. Stephanie Warner, Sadie Soas, Paulete Rhoden, Les Campbell, Elaine Dyer, Bev Corke, Jim Prendergast, Bridgete Lawson and Mohammed Islam a textile engineer, and a young, new exuberant cadre of designers and manufacturers and marketers who are here today. Included in the fashionable line up also is the Edna Manley School of the Visual Arts and Textiles and Fashion Department. (Applause by Government Members) I acknowledge many of whom have taken out their time to be here today, showing their serious intent and desire to be engaged in this industry.

Mr. Speaker, it is the attractiveness of the Jamaica logistic-centered economy by our Minister, the Honourable Anthony George Hylton, that has moved this significant group in our creative economy into action with a focus on rebuilding the local fashion industry. Mr. Speaker, there is an understanding in the group which has come out of their own collective experience, that this is a desire to operate in a collaborative, non-insular manner which is particularly critical for their success. They seek to collectively formulate a strategy for greater inclusion in Jamaica's new logistics-centered economy.

This fashion industry revitalization group has already consulted the Department of Co-operatives and Friendly Societies of the Ministry, to consider the advantages of having a cooperative organizational structure. Based on a request for facilitation, later this week they will meet with JBDC to vision in the strategic planning process for the determination of the common goals and objectives and policies and plans as we move towards revitalizing the local fashion industry.

Mr. Speaker, from my own discussions with the group over the weeks, the following principles have been isolated as necessary for serious consideration in the way forward for the revitalization of the fashion industry. First, training is vital and there is a strong desire among these experts within the industry to leave a legacy to transfer quality, high skilled knowledge to the next generation of fashion designers. In fact, their main motivation is to leave a legacy to our young persons, and I commend them for wanting to do this, for turning back to Jamaica and saying, I want to leave a legacy to help the young people so that

we can all be productive and make a good living. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, an industrial apprenticeship programme developed in collaboration between the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, and the Ministry of Education to help facilitate training and development of the industry.

Mr. Speaker, as necessary as it is, from a fashion industry perspective, the education system needs to focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics, but not only this which is called STEM, it must be infused with art so that it becomes STEAM, which will energize our economy through the addition of creative industries through art and design. (Applause)

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, a paradigm shift in work ethics and cultural norms is necessary in order to increase the productivity needed for success in this industry and also nationally. It is significant to note that, for example, the harvesting of sea island cotton by hand is still associated with deep stigmas linked to past history of slavery, notwithstanding its ability to attract a premium price on the world market of US$10 per pound *versus* US$2 per pound for Egyptian super-fine cotton and a mere US$1 per pound for regular cotton. This should be a lucrative business opportunity to enter into by trained entrepreneurial minds based on its similarity to French Champagne and Jamaica Blue Mountain Coffee in respect of its quality and profitability. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the focus on a logistics-centered economy highlighting the power of value chains and backward and forward linkages, lends itself to alleviate the possible mindset of servitude and gives prestige to business endeavours.

Our MSME policy for micro and small businesses that are included in a policy framework that brings dignity to working with your hands, with linkages to the world in a logistics-centered economy, is a part of the solution to the nation's lack of productivity. (Applause)

Thirdly, the revitalized fashion industry is to be built on a foundation of strong, modern manufacturing principles, starting with textiles from the aforementioned ital fibres and even the use of recycled plastic.

The Role of Women. And I turn to this, also an important topic to young persons. And I want to also acknowledge the presence of Mr. Krishna Vaswani, who is a young entrepreneur in our midst as well. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, we move towards a more productive and inclusive economy, cognizant of the roles being played by those who live in the rural areas of our country, and the involvement of women entrepreneurs in the economy.

Mr. Speaker, many of our rural entrepreneurs face peculiar problems - lack of training and experience, limited purchasing power in their communities, and competition from urban entrepreneurs. Greater promotion of rural entrepreneurship is therefore critical to developing our rural areas, and more must be done to support them through our cooperatives, our business development services, and through funding. The MSME Mobile Clinic recently announced by the Minister, and scheduled to commence shortly,

will help in reaching more of our rural entrepreneurs, but consistency is also necessary.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, our women are not convinced at every level that they are receiving the support that they need, especially when it comes to access to capital. Many of our women still report that they are facing barriers in being granted loans and other financing. I would like to acknowledge Yanique Page of WeConnect, and her team, and business coach, Marcia Woon Choy and Lorna Green, and other women business leaders who are blazing a path for women in entrepreneurship and success in business. (Applause) I believe that some of them are here today.

Mr. Speaker, it has been shown that the multiplier effect can increase exponentially when a woman starts her business and begins to create jobs. Yet, there are many issues facing women entrepreneurs and their development. We have to address these issues in a very serious, urgent and consistent way. Against this background, the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce will be organizing a women's business forum this November, during Entrepreneurship Week, with JBDC as the lead agency, to deal with current issues and set the agenda for the way forward for women entrepreneurs. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I thank everyone for listening. Let us work together in building a more productive and inclusive economy for Jamaica. We can be wealthy if we are diligent.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Dalley.

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Member for a very well-delivered and well-prepared presentation, and we did not wait so late in vain. Your colleagues are very happy for the information you have passed us.

ADJOURNMENT

It is not proposed to do any further business, Mr. Speaker. I propose that the House be adjourned until next Tuesday, June 24, at 2:00 p.m. sharp. And at that time the speakers will be posted on your tablets.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do adjourn to Tuesday the 24th of June, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: I must emphasize 2:00 p.m.

The House stands adjourned.

The Honourable House of Representatives was adjourned at approximately 7:04 p.m. to resume on Tuesday, June 24, 2004 at 2:00 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015

TUESDAY, June 24, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:40 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Daryl Vaz

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL

(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Deputy House Leader.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES McLEAN THOMPSON

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, today we wish to acknowledge the passing of former Member of this House, Mr. Jim Thompson, former Member of Parliament for North East Westmoreland who served during the years of 1972 to 1980. We wish to extend as a family our sincerest condolences to his family and to his constituents at this time. There a few Members who have indicated that they would like to take a few minutes just to acknowledge his work here and to express on behalf of themselves and their families their appreciation for his service.

(MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Robinson.

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the Honourable James McLean Thompson and I'd like to acknowledge the presence of one of his sons who is here today, Mr. John Thompson, who is here to hear the tributes paid on behalf of his father.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Thompson, otherwise known as Maas Jim or Mr. T, dedicated his entire life to the upliftment and advancement of others. He was someone who served with honesty, humility, integrity and foresight. He

was a true patriot who worked passionately for the growth and development of this country and more specifically for his parish, Westmoreland.

He was first elected as Councillor for the Glen Islay Division in 1947 and served for fourteen consecutive years. He was elected the chairman of the Westmoreland Parish Council in 1961 and elected a Member of Parliament for North East Westmoreland in 1972 and served until 1980. He was also the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1957 and after retiring from elected politics he was appointed the Custos of Westmoreland and served in that position from 1990 to 2001. During that period he was credited with the resurrection of the Scouts movement within the parish and he also worked to ensure that all communities within the parish had a working Justice of the Peace. He was awarded the Commander of the Order of Distinction in 1998.

In addition to his work as a politician and as Custos, he was also a lay preacher at the St. James Anglican Church and he was a businessman. He was one of the leading cane farmers in Westmoreland. He served as a director of the All-island Cane Farmers Association, a Director of the Jamaica Agricultural Society and also he was one of the first black entrepreneurs who had the foresight to see that Negril would have become probably the hottest tourism destination in the country and established - a hotel Bar-b-bam in the early 1970s, a hotel which still exists today. He was also the owner and operator of a supermarket in Negril and well into his retirement he would often go to that supermarket and serve customers there.

Mr. Thompson was one of the persons who encouraged my own grandfather to enter representational politics in 1959 when he served as a Member of the House of Representatives for Western Westmoreland, and my family and his have enjoyed a long and close friendship over the years.

The Peoples' National Party recognized his service to the movement and he was awarded one of our special prizes in 2008, on the 70th Anniversary of the Party, in recognition of his long and distinguished service to the party.

Mr. Speaker, when Norman Manley founded the Peoples' National Party in 1938, his vision was to attract men and women who were committed to the notion of nation building not simply a narrow partisan, electoral objective. Mr. Thompson was one of those who was committed to nation building. (Applause)

On behalf of my own family and the party, I'd like to express condolences to his children, his wife predeceased him and all his family and friends who will mourn his passing. May his soul rest in peace.

Thank you.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition we would like to also extend our condolences to the family of the late Mr. Jim Thompson. I never met him in Parliament

because I came here subsequent to his departure, but I think it's fair to say that we have lost an outstanding Jamaican.

Mr. Thompson served this country very well. The previous speaker from South East St. Andrew listed his achievements both from the aspect of the church, political involvement at all levels: local level, national level. His involvement in cane farming; he was a cane farmer up to the time of his death. Mr. Thompson passed off on Saturday quite unexpectedly. The information I have is that up to around mid-afternoon he was with at least two Members of his family enjoying themselves and the fact that they left a few hours after was quite surprising.

I have met all of his off-springs, Mr. Speaker, and I met Mr. Thompson also and his wife that predeceased him and if you judge an individual by his product then it is obvious that Jim Thompson was, indeed, a true Jamaican. The previous speaker said a patriotic and I would like to use that word also, I think he was truly Jamaican and he meant Jamaica well, he served Jamaica well and may his soul rest in peace.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, entered and took her seat.)

The SPEAKER: Prime Minister.

The PRIME MINISTER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members.

I am deeply saddened by the passing of former Councillor, Member of Parliament and Custos James Thompson. He was affectionately known to most of us as Jim Thompson and to those who were closer to him as Jim T. Having outlived many of his colleagues his passing at the age of ninety-nine...

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

The PRIME MINISTER: ...reminds me of one of his favourite songs: "There were ninety and nine that safely lay". That too was a favourite song of one of his mentors, Norman Washington Manley, who was perhaps the most influential person in determining the method and manner in which Jim Thompson would contribute to the national and political life of the country.

At the height of the national movement in the late 1930s, when the country sought to find ways and means to rid itself of the vestiges of the existing plantation order, Jim Thompson found himself attracted to the leadership of Norman Manley and the ideals of the People's National Party. It was time when the oppressive condition in which the majority of people found themselves increased dissatisfaction among enlightened leaders of the time. Jim Thompson, although only in his early twenties, was one of those young, enlightened leaders. The philosophical construct of the PNP provided him with a vehicle through he could struggle for the introduction of Universal Adult Suffrage in 1944 and the country's independence in 1962. He was always of the view that everything must be done to improve the living and

working condition of the Jamaican people. (Applause)

He was not only a man of words; he was also a man of action. His activism led him to serve as the Member of Parliament for North East Westmoreland from 1972 to 1980. During this period he was appointed by former Prime Minister, Michael Manley, as Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture. He served in both capacities with distinction. Jim Thompson was a party man, but he was not partisan. (Applause)

(MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western entered and took his seat.)

He always put the country first. There are those, however, who will stoutly argue that he put the country first, he had a special place in his heart for the people of his beloved parish of Westmoreland and his constituency.

He was a man from the West, he was never afraid of reminding those who he did not know that Westmoreland was a place that no one should ignore or seek to forget. He understood yeoman service on behalf of the people of that parish. He was loyal to them and passionate about their causes. In recognition of the respect and the high esteem in which he was held by the people of Westmoreland, he was appointed and served from 1990 to 2001 as their Custos. He took the job seriously. He carried out his duties with conviction and dedication; at all times seeking to maintain the tradition of that office. The country has lost one of its most loyal public servants. For most of his 99 years he gave everything and did everything he could on behalf of the people of his beloved Jamaica.

As his family mourns his loss, I say to them, his son Bishop Robert Thompson and his siblings be comforted in the fact that his deeds, that his contribution will never be forgotten.

May his soul rest in peace.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Buchanan.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I too would like to extend condolences to the immediate and extended family of the late James Thompson, Mass Jim, on behalf of the constituency of Eastern Westmoreland which bordered the constituency of North East Westmoreland for which he was MP.

Mass Jim served the parish of Westmoreland with distinction. He was very humble and approachable as a human being. It seems then that his satisfaction came from the commitment to advancing Jamaica by way of impeccable service. He served the parish of Westmoreland as Custos, JP, businessman, and a loyal faithful servant of the People's National Party. He also served nationally as Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, and as local - and locally, Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Westmoreland Parish Council and Councillor of the friendship division.

He ran in 1967 for the PNP but was defeated. He however, stood firm and ran again in 1972 at which point in time he

enjoyed the sweet taste of victory up until 1980. And during those years his wife and one of his sons served under his watch as Member of Parliament as Councillor in the Westmoreland Parish Council. But during his tenure, he impacted the constituency of North East Westmoreland in a very positive way. He secured the lands for the Bethel Town Housing Scheme development to take place and pioneered that. He ensured that the housing stock in North East Westmoreland was significantly improved. He brought potable water into Bethel Town and other districts. He was passionate about educating the nation and so he added to Bethel Town All Age School a new wing and he also had the completion the building of the Barney Side All Age School among the many other education programmes he championed.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that Mass Jim was physically short but tall in statute; but life is not measured by how tall you are but by the number of lives you have impacted, and he impacted many.

Mass Jim CD, Jim T, M.P, Mr. Westmoreland, may your soul rest in peace and may light perpetually shine upon your face.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will convey to the family of Mr. James Thompson our appreciation for his contribution and our condolences on his passing.

May we stand for a moment of silence.

(A moment of silence observed)

May his soul rest in peace and light perpetually shine upon him.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table on the House a copy of the following:

- **Consumer Affairs Commission**
  Annual Report and Audited financial Statements for the Financial year ending March 2012
- **Office of the Public Defender**
  Annual Report for the calendar year 2011
- **Auditor General's Department**
  Performance Audit Report on the Management of the Jamaica Fire Brigade

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: Dr. Guy.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will be move:

> Be it Resolved with reference to the resolution approved by this Honourable House on the 18th day of June 2014, appointing a Special Select Committee to sit jointly with a similar committee to be appointed by the Senate to consider and report on a Bill shortly entitled; The Road Traffic Act, 2014 that the name André Hylton be added thereto.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today I will move for the suspension of Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith.

FORENSIC EXAMINATION

Mr. Derrick SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days it is my intention to ask the Minister of National Security the following questions.

Question 1:

Will the Minister outline what obtains regarding the storage and handling of bodies that are the subject of forensic examination pursuant to investigations by the police?

Question 2:

Will the Minister indicate whether he is satisfied with what currently obtains as per his response to Question 1?

Question 3:

Can the Minister state whether complaints regarding the quality and reliability of forensic evidence in relation to bodies handled and stored by the public have been lodged with his Ministry?

Question 4:

If the answer to question 3 is in the affirmative will the Minister advice of his response to said complaints?

Question 5:

Will the Minister say what is the intention of the government regarding the construction of a national/public morgue?

The SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda.

ENERGY WORLD INTERNATIONAL

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, I wish to give notice that at the expiration of twenty-one days I intend to ask the Minister of Science Technology and Energy and Mining the following questions.

Question 1:

Will the Minister state what is the present state of negotiations with Energy World International (EWI) for the construction of the 381 MW power plant?

Question 2:

Can the Minister indicate whether the license issued to EWI has been cancelled?

Question 3:

Will the Minister advise as to

(a) When the House will receive an update relating to where we are in reprocess of having gem 381 MW power plant constructed;

(b) The steps that are being taken to get the project on track?

PUBLIC BUSINESS

The SPEAKER: Dr. Guy.

Dr. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I now move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion, notice of which I gave earlier.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow the Minister to take the motion notice of which was given earlier.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Guy.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, I now move that the motion be approved.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Motion carried. House Leader.

SECTORAL DEBATE

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, today we are going to continue the Sectoral Debate and we have a couple of presentations lined up. And leading the charge this afternoon is the very charming Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sport, and also Member of Parliament for North Central St. Catherine... (Applause) ...and Deputy House Leader. And I am inviting Members of the House to hear her in silence.

(Laughter)

The SPEAKER: Mrs. Neita-Headley.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, governments exist for purpose of good and form part of the divine order. It was God himself who established this divine institution of governance for the maintenance of order and for improving the quality of our lives.

It was the Romans which read, **'For there is no authority except from God and those which exists are established by God'.**

Mr. Speaker this is indeed a humbly reminder of the importance of our role as public servants and I am profoundly grateful to God for the opportunity to serve. (Applause)

It is He who has empowered, enabled and led me these past 17 years as an elected representative of his people.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Prime Minister, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller for her continued belief in me and for her unflinching support and mentoring over these years. I thank you, Prime Minister for your continued confidence... (Applause) ...in my capacity to undertake the responsibilities in a portfolio so close to your heart. Your selfless leadership is inspiring and it is an example of true commitment to the public interest.

Thank you my Parliamentary colleagues on both sides, each of you has contributed to my growth in some way, and I want you to accept today my appreciation for being so generous to me with your time, your input, your wisdom and encouragement as I tackle the task entrusted to me. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I extend a special thanks to my constituency staff whose commitment to the cause has remained steadfast regardless of the challenges. You fight for what you believe in, and I am the beneficiary of your efforts. You have my back, and often you face the disgust and complaints of my constituents when I am not there on the ground. You have a vision for your families and for Jamaica, and have you opted to participate actively in the process, this I believe is responsible citizenship. (Applause)

I express heartfelt congratulations to the councillors of North Central St Catherine for their support: Councillors Marriott, Burke and Harris and the divisional chairman Julius 'Blue' Thompson for your support, cooperation and team spirit that has characterized our working relationships.

I look forward to accomplishing bigger and better things together as we work in the interest of the people who chose us to represent them. To my supportive executive members, cluster managers, heads of CBO's,

church and school families, many of whom are here today in support, I say thank you. (Applause) Today, because of the sacred trust placed in me by the people of North Central St. Catherine, I stand here as a proud Parliamentarian. I do not take this for granted. I am always acutely aware of the many challenges that families face in my constituency, and I wake up each morning searching for ways to help to make their lives better. I am grateful to you, the people of Bog Walk, Sligoville, Above Rocks and Angels, for choosing me to work on your behalf and for the patience you have shown while I also manage my ministerial responsibilities. I will continue to tackle the issues that are important to you and seek, as much as possible, to implement solutions to improve your quality of life.

I thank my family for its support, guidance and understanding and for making the sacrifices which my public service demands of our family life. My daughters Sydney and Morgan and my mother, who flew in today to offer her support, thank you. (Applause)

Mr. D. SMITH: Make sure you don't shame her.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, sport is a significant component of Brand Jamaica. There are countries with far larger budgets, much bigger facilities and equipment that marvel at the results that Jamaica has been able to produce at international competitions. (Applause) This does not happen by chance, Mr. Speaker therefore I take this opportunity to recognize and thank the thousands of volunteers in small rural districts and in urban centres who have brought glory to our country by working tirelessly to inspire and prepare young Jamaican athletes to perform with excellence. I know that when fundraising drives fall short of their target and that when there are no sponsors or any additional financial assistance from the Government, many volunteers used their own resources to assist our athletes. Amidst the negativity, Jamaicans should know that there are heroes and heroines like you among us who represent our highest ideals. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the importance of the private sector in national development cannot be overstated. In sport we recognize that the Government will never be able to provide all the support needed to advance sport development. For this reason, the sponsorships and endorsements that are provided directly and indirectly by the private sector are such an important part of what has helped to make us achieve the kind of success we continue to enjoy. I thank all the members of the private sector who give time, money-technical support, innovation and ideas to sport development. Many of you serve on our Boards of Directors and bring your wisdom and insight to the process, and for this we are eternally grateful. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me if I did not take the time to thank the members of the diaspora and friends of Jamaica who quietly assist our athletes with gears, equipment, meals, scholarships and in-kind financial support to promote their

development and that of sport. Many of these individuals are unsung heroes and heroines who share what they have because they believe in the good and the potential of our people. On behalf of a grateful nation, we thank you wholeheartedly. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am also grateful to those who serve in the public sector across various ministries, departments and agencies on whom we rely to do the work of the Government. I wish to thank my Permanent Secretary and all the staff as well as members of the Sport Unit, members of staff in the Support Unit and all the staff of the Office of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Office who collectively allow the work of this Administration to progress. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the diverse but beautiful constituency of North Central St. Catherine continues to face many challenges and I am working assiduously to create solutions and promote development in that bountiful and beautiful area of Jamaica. This is orange country. It is orange country.

Miss GRANGE: Orange.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: It is orange country. (Applause)

Miss GRANGE: It's about people.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: It is orange country because we produce and have two factories that produce juices and we are a citrus constituency. It is orange country. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the diverse constituency of North Central St. Catherine continues to face these challenges. During the past financial year our focus in the constituency was on infrastructural development, social services, jobs and small business creation, health, land development and housing, agriculture, culture, education and sport.

Mr. Speaker, historically, infrastructure deficiencies have been a major part of the challenges that rural residents face. Access to potable water, good roads and electricity are quality-of-life issues that impact our lives in very profound ways. The complaints of constituents n this regard are justified and I wish that we had the resources to do more. Despite the constraints, I am pleased to report that we have started, continued and concluded several infrastructure projects in the constituency.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to tackle water woes in the constituency. In the Cedar Valley area a community tank was repaired at a cost of $2 Million and the West Prospect Water System is now functional. The Dam Head tank and pump were replaced and an ongoing pipe-laying project is in progress.

Mr. Speaker, after 20 years without adequate access to the precious commodity, the Richard Hall Water Supply System Rehabilitation and Upgrade Project has been approved and a request for proposal for tender is now out. This project will benefit the communities of Five Miles, Mount Moreland, Richard Hall and Mount Dawson. And one major benefit, Mr. Speaker, is that we will no longer need to truck water to the Mount Moreland Primary and Junior High School. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, one of the things we complain most about in Jamaica is the state of

our roads. Many laughed when Tessanne said that Jamaica has the worst roads, and while I might not agree, we do have some bad roads. I want to acknowledge though the efforts of this Administration in making a difference and I want to commend my colleague Ministers in the Ministry of Transport and Works for the significant work they have been doing across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I promised my constituents I would advocate on their behalf for better roads. There is a lot of work left to be done but much has been accomplished and so many lives affected have been enhanced. (Applause) Fourteen urban and rural roads in the constituency have undergone rehabilitative work with much of the work completed and other projects ongoing.

Mr. D. SMITH: I am happy for you.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, last year, through the support of the Sugar Transformation Project, funded by the European Union, we were able to rehabilitate the West Prospect Road. We were able to do some work on the Church Road in Bog Walk, portions along the Linstead Bypass, Zion Hill to Parkes Road. Thanks to the partnership forged with the Ministry of Local Government and the St. Catherine Parish Council the Cedar Valley Road was also rehabilitated. Mr. Speaker, there has been a vast improvement in road quality experienced by those who travelled towards Flat Bridge, along Brunswick Avenue to Dam Head, on the Bog Walk Road to Knollis and the Five Miles Road to Sligoville. Through JEEP, we have commenced a process that I have been wanted to start for a long time. We have started to repair scheme roads, because those who live in our housing schemes pay the same taxes we all do. And so we have commenced the work on Angels Drive and Canal Crescent in the Lakemore Housing Schemes.

Mr. Speaker, major road work is wrapping up on the Bog Walk to Santa Maria Road. For those of you who don't know where that is it is the Pleasant Hill to Waugh Hill Road at a cost of over $470 Million.

Miss GRANGE: You get everything!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: This will provide a viable alternative road through Sligoville for persons coming in from the North Coast while residents of Sligoville and the surrounding areas will be able to get in and out of Kingston in 15 minutes. (Applause)

Government MEMBER: Working, working, working!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, these roadways have implications for Jamaica's economic growth as the movement of produce to market will be significantly improved.

Mr. Speaker, we are blessed in North Central St. Catherine with a number of small, medium and large businesses, which include agro-manufacturing facilities. These businesses employ many local workers thereby contributed to the improved quality of life in the constituency.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the public/private partnerships are not only important at the national level but equally as important at the local level. For this reason, I wish to express my appreciation to Trade

Winds Citrus Limited, the makers of Tru-Juice for accepting my proposal to adopt the Angels Roundabout as a project for upgrading, beautifying and maintaining over the long term. The project designs have been completed and now await final approvals from the parish council.

Mr. Speaker, we are all painfully aware of the enduring needs for investment in the creation of social service and social safety nets throughout our various communities. For my part, I have sought to undertake many projects in the constituency in order to give those most in need the chance to improve their lives.

Computers and other technologies have revolutionized the way we live and do business. Persons without access to internet, for example, will lose ground to their more informed competitors. With this in mind, we are grateful for the partnership forged with the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining to create Internet computer access-points across the constituency in order to assist young entrepreneurs in the development of small businesses. (Applause)

(MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security, entered and took his seat.)

Through this partnership, CAP sites have planned for four communities with one already completed in Commodore and three others soon to be rolled out in Cedar Valley, Harkers Hall and West Prospect.

Mr. Speaker, one of my proudest achievements this past year was the launch of the North Central Community Youth Entrepreneur and Education Programme in partnership with the Jamaica Business Development Corporation, the Rural Agricultural Development Authority, the Jamaica Social Investment Fund, the Young Entrepreneur Association, the HEART Trust/NTA, and the Social Development Commission. This initiative is a constituency entrepreneurship grant programme which encourages young people to develop their skills as they seek to establish small businesses in the North Central St. Catherine constituency.

The NCCYEEP also serves as a catalyst to promote entrepreneurship, to militate against the high levels of unemployment, to create enrichment opportunities and to give those involved the capacity to grow towards economic and sustainable development. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my profound gratitude to all the partners involved in advancing this very important project. In this regard, I wish to offer my special thanks to Custos of Kingston Mr. Steadman Fuller for donating lands to be utilized for the agriculture-related purposes of the project. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, on the matter of land development and housing, there has been progress with respect to the community of Angles Heights, a community which has had

no home for a very long time; land settlement issues. And after 30 years of intervention and advocacy the residents of this informal settlement will be able to settle permanently in this area. Plans for the settlement continue to move forward. (Applause) I express my thanks to Minister Guy with responsibility for Housing for his assistance in making this possible. The land has now been purchased from the owners and is now vested in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, education is a critical part of the development agenda. We cannot attain our Vision 2030 goals without ensuring that there is an educated population to lead this process. I made it a priority and I was able to provide, Mr. Speaker, in 2013, a total of $7 Million to fund scholarships for GSAT high achievers - (Applause) - to offer secondary and tertiary school grants and to assist with school infrastructure and schools capacity-building. Thanks to the support of the Jamaica Energy Partners, the Citizen Security and Justice Programme in vulnerable areas, and the Constituency Development Fund.

Mr. Speaker, we are nearing the end of our campaign in our constituency to remove all pit latrines from primary schools there. (Applause) We have done all except two and it's been a campaign of mine because I grew up attending a primary school where I ran from roaches every day, and so I insisted as a representative that I would never want anybody else's child to have to go through that. (Applause)

And so we have prepared detailed plans for the improvement of sanitary facilities at the last two remaining primary schools with pit latrines, the Mount Moreland Primary and Junior High and the Giblatore Primary School. Thanks to the Jamaica Social Investment Fund, the Constituency Development Fund and our private sector partners for their help in this effort.

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, we continue to upgrade the facilities and curriculum at the Commodore HEART Training Centre to allow the centre to provide courses in food preparation, pastry chef certification, data processing, level two, housekeeping and general office administration. Mr. Speaker, in Harkers Hall, RADA has given permission for us to use one of its underutilized buildings to become a resource centre. Food for the Poor has committed to assist with providing the requisite furnishing and the Centre is expected to be fully functional by September 2014. This arrangement will allow students of varying age groups to improve their academic performance while gaining greater access to information and technology.

Mr. Speaker, plans are also far advanced for the creation of a Sligoville institute which will offer CXC classes in Math, English, Biology and Social Studies. This project will be implemented through funding by the

Constituency Development Fund and the Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of culture we have commenced several projects. This year marks the sixth year of the staging of the Sligoville Emancifest Festival. Last year was a major success and over 8000 patrons attended attracting overwhelming support from the public and private sectors. There was a total budget of $3.2 Million which was made available through sponsorship and support from the CHASE Fund and the Constituency Development Fund. I also want to extend my deepest appreciation to Petrojam for their contribution. (Applause)

This event has become an important cultural festival on Jamaica's culture and entertainment calendar and has the potential to bring substantial economic opportunity and development to the Sligoville area, including tourism interest. Mr. Speaker, this year Sligoville, our first free village, will collaborate with the Ministry of Youth and Culture to host the National Emancipation Vigil. Thank you Minister Hanna for endorsing this partnership.

(Applause)

We are also in the process of undertaking a heritage tourism project in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, commencing with the Rehabilitation of the Sligoville Great House. Thank you UNESCO for training 20 tour guides who will be engaged in the project and who will stay on to conduct tours of the Great House and its environs once the restoration is completed. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, long before I became Minister with responsibility for Sport, the young people of North Central St. Catherine were fully engaged in sporting leagues. In football, netball and cricket, with over 70 teams participating annually.

Mr. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

(MR. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Working with the St. Catherine Football Association, the Institute of Sports, the league seasons were implemented successfully in 2013 with a budget of $3.5 Million and the competitions were a resounding success.

Mr. Speaker, at every level of our society sport has proven to be that unifying force that is able to build strong bonds of friendship, inspire the pursuit of healthy lifestyles and unearth talent.

Mr. Speaker, allow me a moment to update this Honourable House on the activities of the Constituency Development Fund, for which I have ministerial oversight.

The CDF was established as a designated funding mechanism aimed at increasing the effectiveness of Members of Parliament in responding to the needs of their constituents with prescribed guidelines set out by the Ministry of Finance. An equal amount is allocated to each constituency and it now

stands at $15 Million. The programme is project driven and goes through a rigorous development, evaluating and monitoring process.

Mr. Speaker, the Financial Year just ended 2013/2014, showed that the total allocation from 63 Members of Parliament for education was $301 Million, representing 48 per cent of the entire pie. This clearly demonstrates, Mr. Speaker, the commitment of our parliamentarians to the development of the human capital. We cannot go wrong here. (Applause)

The Social Development Commission is the main implementing agency for these education projects. I will convene, as I did last time, a meeting with the management of the CDF and the SDC with a view to having a reduction of the management fees from 5 per cent to 2.5 per cent. (Applause) This will ensure that we will have more funds to help more children and to allow our children to be more advanced. (Applause) That brings me to my Portfolio in Sports Mr. Speaker.

Our Prime Minister has already shared some of the highlights of the work which is in progress at the Office of the Prime Minister and the successes of our athletes that they have been enjoying in many sporting disciplines in which we participate.

Mr. Speaker, our little country has had a long and glorious tradition in sport, hailing from the great performances of G.C. Foster, the Right Excellent Norman Washington Manley, Cynthia Thompson, George "Atlas" Headley and Arthur Wint, just to name a few, to include Herb McKenley, and still we continue to blaze new trails and achieve groundbreaking performances every year. There is undeniable proof that our legacy in sport continues and expands with our sporting preparation and our sporting ambition. The last 12 months in sports were no exception.

Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that we did not qualify for the 2014 World Cup that is now underway in Brazil, and in spite of the number of adverse analytical findings among our athletes, Jamaica had yet another stellar year in sport. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, there are 42 national sport associations and federations registered in Jamaica at this time. This speaks volumes for the number of opportunities we are able to offer young people across the various sporting disciplines as they begin to see sport as a vehicle for educational, professional and financial success.

Just last week, Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of being present for the launch of our newest federation, the Jamaica Wrestling Federation. Due in no small measure to the involvement of expatriate Jamaicans, we are already able to field teams to three major competitions, the Canada Cup, the Pan-American Festival and the Commonwealth Games. (Applause)

In volleyball, we had the historic qualification of Jamaica's under-19 Boys' Beach Volleyball pair of Rojey Hutchinson and Shavar Bryan for the Youth Olympic Games, scheduled to take place in August, this year, in Nanjing, China.

Mr. Speaker, in basketball, Jamaica achieved level 3 status for the very first time,

finishing eighth at the FIBA Americas Men's Championship in Venezuela. Both the men's and women's basketball teams achieved their highest ever global ranking. Basketball also benefitted from the launch of a new national basketball league organized in regional conferences across the island.

Mr. Speaker, in boxing, the Contender Series continue to revive the local fortunes of the sport. We note that Nicholas "Axeman" Walters and Alicia Ashley had an outstanding year and successfully defended their world titles. (Applause)

Mr. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, on the heels of their successes in February 2013, Special Olympics Winter Games, Jamaica was selected to host the Caribbean Business Meeting in April 2014, and has been invited as one of only two regional nations to participate in the November 2013 first ever Special Olympics Unified Football World Cup Tournament. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg that the Member's time be extended sufficiently - be given sufficient time to allow her to complete her presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently for her to complete her presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Miss Neita. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, thank you colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, the Limacol Caribbean Premier League 20/20 cricket tournament was launched. In true Jamaican form, our Jamaica Tallawahs walked away with the inaugural title. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Jamaica Tallawahs - (Applause) - on their victory and wish them all the best in defending their title in the upcoming staging of the CPL.

Mr. Speaker, we are also very proud of how well our women continue to perform in a variety of sporting disciplines. Our women cricketers, led by Stafanie Taylor continue to shine brightly both at the regional level and as part of the West Indies Women's Cricket Team. In 2013, Miss Taylor continued her dominance and is now rated among the world's best all rounder women cricketers. (Applause)

In football, the Jamaican Women's Under-20 team won the Caribbean Football Union title in October and the Under-17 Reggae Girlz were also impressive just failing in their bid for qualification to the Under-17 FIFA Women's World Cup.

In netball, Jamaica finished third at both the World Youth Netball championship in Scotland and at the Fast5 Netball World Series in New Zealand. Janhiele Fowler, playing her first year in the Australia/New Zealand League, scored 666 goals from 709 attempts, 93.9 per cent accuracy to break the league record for the most goal scored in a season. She also set a record for the most goals in a game, twice netting 65 goals during the league play. (Applause)

I must also congratulate our Under-16 netballers who continue to dominate the annual Jean Pierre Caribbean Youth Netball Championship. The tournament was held in April and our young netballers won the tournament again, for the 10th time.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica also had a star in the pool in Alia Atkinson, she set a world-leading time for the short course 100 metres breast stroke in Dubai. She also set several national records during the season. Mr. Speaker, Jamaica's team performance at the 2014 CARIFTA Swimming Championships was one of our best performances to date.

In golf, Peter Horrobin became the first Jamaican to qualify for the US Senior Open Golf Championship.

In motorsport, Douglas Gore won the 2013 Caribbean Motor Racing Championship series driver's title, the Rally Sport Promotions Limited's "Rally Jamaica". Jamaica secured the prestigious position of being selected to host the last leg of the North American and Central American Rally Championship in 2016.

In squash, Chris Binnie had the historic achievement of becoming the first player to win the Caribbean Area Squash Association's Senior Championship four times.

Jamaica also won badminton medals at the Junior and Senior Pan-American Championships.

Mr. Speaker, these successes are testament to the growth of our sport sector and increase in the overall participation in various disciplines.

Jamaica was also outstanding in para-sport, earning two superb medals at the International Paralympic World Athletics Championships, July 13, in Lyon, France. Sylvia Grant continues to represent Jamaica with excellence, earning the silver medal in the Women's F57-58 Javelin. Jamaican global medallist, Alphanso Cunningham, again won gold in the men's F52-53-54 javelin throw, incredibly setting three world records enroute to the gold medal. (Applause)

One of the Government's priorities, Mr. Speaker, as outlined in the National Sports Policy, is Sport for all. As a government, we want to continue to facilitate increased participation in sport by persons at all levels, regardless of age, gender, physical and intellectual ability or ethnicity.

For this reason, I urge parents, guardians and individuals who are interested in the Paralympics or Special Olympic sport to get involved. Opportunities for success abound for our sportsmen and women with disability.

Mr. Speaker, traditionally, track and field has had the largest level of participation among our national and international athletes. This continues to be the trend, and the performance on the world stage is unmatched by any other sporting discipline at this time. (Applause)

At the Regional Championships, Mr. Speaker, the CARIFTA Track and Field Games and the Central American Caribbean Senior Athletics Championships, Jamaica again made its mark on the record books. At the 2014 CARIFTA Games our young athletes

set a new record of medals won at the Games, by winning a total of 89 medals. In fact, Mr. Speaker, since 1990, Jamaica has won a total of 1,648 medals, with our next closest rival - I won't call the name - winning 585 medals. As I like to say, our cupboard in Jamaica is full of talent waiting to be unleashed and to burst, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, special mention must be made of O'Dayne Richards, who, at the CAC Championships won a gold medal in the shot put in a Championship record performance... (Applause) ...as Jamaica went on to win a total of 10 gold medals.

On the world stage, Mr. Speaker, our performances have been outstanding, whether at the IAAF World Championships in Athletics in Moscow, the IAAF World Youth Championship, the Inaugural World Relay Championships, the IAAF Diamond League, or the World University Games.

Mr. Speaker, permit me to highlight a few of the superb performances of our athletes who are all managed by world-class coaches and other athlete support personnel, most of whom are graduates of our premier sport college, the G.C. Foster College of Physical Education and Sport.

At the IAAF World Youth Championship, for the very first time Jamaica finished at the top of the medal table at a global track and field championship, with Yanique Thompson of Holmwood Technical High School becoming the first Jamaican in any age group to hold a world record in the hurdles. (Applause)

During the inaugural IAAF World Relay Championships held this May, 2014, in the Bahamas, Jamaica finished second in the medal table, behind the United States. All of our four relay teams qualified for the 2015 IAAF World Championships. Our male sprint relay team was impressive in winning both the 4x100 metres and the 4x200 metres, setting new world records.

In the IAAF Diamond League Competition, Jamaica produced two event champions in three disciplines in 2013. Warren Weir was champion in the 200 metres male series and Shelly-Ann Fraser Pryce... (Applause) ...took an outstanding double at both the 100 metres and 200 metres, and gaining the most Diamond League points for any athlete in 2013. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, despite all these remarkable achievements in our performance at the 2013 IAAF World Championships in athletics in Moscow, it was arguably the most spectacular. Jamaica finished 3rd in those medal tables.

(MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural, entered and took his seat.)

Of special note was the performance of 18-year old Javon Francis, who, after receiving the baton in 5th place at the anchor leg in the 4x400 metres relay, proved that he would not be denied a medal, and ran his leg in 44 seconds, to earn Jamaica the silver medal. (Applause) His time, Mr. Speaker, equaled the famous relay leg run by the late Herb McKenley, in Helsinki, in 1952, which

made Javon Francis an immediate global track sensation.

Mr. Speaker, at this same event, Usain Bolt and Shelly-Ann Fraser Pryce, both won three gold medals in the men's and women's 100 metres, 200 metres, and 4x100 metres relay, respectively, to become the most successful athletes at the event. Usain Bolt also earned the distinction of being the most successful athlete in the history of the World Championships, with eight gold and two silver medals. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the 2013 year was the year when this little country of under three (3) million people became "the home of the fastest man and the fastest woman in the world." (Applause) The achievements of both Usain and Shelly-Ann, earned them a unique double for Jamaica at the IAAF Athletics Gala, and Usain Bolt being named IAAF Male World Athlete of the Year for the fifth time, and Shelly-Ann Fraser Pryce was named IAAF Female World Athlete of the Year.

Mr. Speaker, Shelly-Ann Fraser Pryce - who is among us here today... (Applause) ...is also not just about winning gold medals, but she is also about giving back to her country and giving back to her people. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Shelly-Ann has launched the "Pocket-Rocket" Foundation, borne out of a desire to create lasting changes in the life of student athletes and children in Children's Homes across Jamaica, by providing academic scholarships. (Applause)

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Shelly-Ann, on your tremendous success. And thank you for joining us today, and insisting that our student athletes must maintain an average of over 65 per cent.

(Applause/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PHILLIPS: Yu running hot!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, having lifted your spirits a little bit, I will now speak to the Policy of Sports.

Mr. Derrick SMITH: What about softball and rugby and all them things there? Volley ball? They play them in my constituency. (Laughter)

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: I would stay here all day.

For the 2012/2013 fiscal year, the Government focused its attention on the development of a framework for improving the effectiveness and collaboration and accountability in the delivery of sport policies and programmes. This was achieved through the completion of the National Sport Policy that was tabled in Parliament this year. I have here today a copy of the popular version of the Sports Policy for all the Members here today.

The vision articulated by the National Sports Policy, is:

> "To create a dynamic and enabling environment in which persons enjoy and excel in sport at all levels, while building strong bonds of unity in their communities and benefiting from the economic opportunities to be derived from sport."

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to reiterate. The National Sports Policy provides a framework for the coordinated development of

sport, through the realization of some key objectives.

Mr. Derrick SMITH: From sport.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: From sport, through the realization of some key objectives. We want to:

- make sport accessible to all;
- we want to facilitate an environment in which there will be increased participation in sport;

Everybody should be involved in physical activity. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY:

- Promote a coordinated and structured programme that supports athletes' development, wellbeing and progression to high performance;
- to enhance and leverage the sport component of Brand Jamaica;

This sport component does more in advertising than anyone could pay for any other advertising campaign anywhere in the world. (Applause)

- to utilize sport as a vehicle for peace, a vehicle for unity and a vehicle for community development;
- to promote opportunities for economic development and prosperity through sport;
- to promote and develop private/public partnerships to include Diaspora funding support for the financing of sport; and
- to promote healthy lifestyle and wellness for all.

Mr. Speaker, we have been working at the:

- physical infrastructure development, facilitating an environment in which there will be increased participation in sport; and promoting opportunities for economic development and prosperity through sport;
- athletes' development and wellbeing, promoting a coordinated and structured programme that supports our athletes' development, their wellbeing and their progression.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of this Honourable House, first to the fact that sport and sporting activities do not only occur in the Ministry with responsibility for sport, and in the sport associations and agencies. There are sport programmes and activities being actively pursued in many other Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Local Government, through the SDC, the Ministry of National Security, through its various projects and programmes utilizing sport as a critical component of community policing and peace-building initiatives within and among communities.

The Ministry of Agriculture, through the Sugar Transformation and Community Rehabilitation Programme, has invested in the development of community sport infrastructure. And also, the Ministry of Health, through its many lifestyle programmes and initiatives, helps promote the importance of physical activity across all age groups. Physical education and training continue to be

a key component of the Ministry of Education's programmes.

Mr. Speaker, I am particularly pleased that we have been able to achieve significant progress towards the establishment of Jamaica's first National Sport Museum. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, a temporary location for that Museum has been identified after visits to several proposed sites and after much deliberation by the technical team. A curator has been loaned to assist with the development of the project.

Mr. Speaker, the physical location of the museum is crucial as the museum must be commercially viable as a venture.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yes, put Desmond in there! (Laughter)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: It must be a medium for collecting and storing artifacts. We have taken into account the need for accessibility to the public, adequate parking has been identified and this location fits that profile for this Museum. Special thanks to the members of the Capacity Building and Infrastructure Committee of the National Sports Council, led by Mr. Don Anderson, who is here with us today. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Beckwith International Leadership Development Project, is Jamaica's Leadership and Youth Development Training Project commenced in 2013.

I express thanks to the collaboration between the Government of Jamaica, our international partners international inspiration, UK Sports, Youth Sports Trust and the TOP Foundation, also to the private sector. The trust of the build is to ensure that we produce at least 600 new, young sports leaders.

These leaders will be deployed across the island and will seek to positively impact the lives of as many as 120,000 youth over the life of the project.

Mr. Speaker, over the last two years, the Government, through its various Ministries, Departments and Agencies, has spent over a billion dollars on sports development. We all know that our high schools bear the brunt of our sport development and sadly many of the recurring injuries now experienced by our senior athletes have been linked to the poor infrastructure on which they trained and competed during their early years.

Mr. Speaker, last November, we launched the high School Sport Infrastructure Improvement Project in partnership with the Sports Development Foundation and the Sugar Transformation Unit in the Ministry of Agriculture, to begin to address some of the infrastructure needs of our high schools. The Project is expected to improve fields, running tracks and courts in 24 high schools across Jamaica over two years. This is a $250 Million project which is intended to institutionalize and sustain our successes in the various sporting disciplines. (Applause)

In the first year of this project, Mr. Speaker, this fiscal year 2014/2015, work will be conducted in the following schools:

- Happy Grove High School in Portland. (Applause)
- Tarrant High School in St. Andrew.
- St. Jago High School in St. Catherine.
- Calabar High School in St. Andrew.

- Haile Selassie High School in Kingston. (Applause)
- The Munro College in St. Elizabeth. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

(HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: The improvements to be undertaken at these Schools will be done by the Sports Development Foundation.

The improvements to be undertaken at these Schools, which will be done by the Sugar Transformation Unit will be:

- The Grange Hill High School in Westmoreland
- The Balaclava High School in St. Elizabeth. (Applause)
- The Vere Technical High School in Clarendon. (Applause)
- The Kellits High School in Clarendon. (Applause)
- The William Knibb High School in Trelawny. (Applause)
- The Bog Walk High School in St. Catherine. (Applause)
- The Paul Bogle High School in St. Thomas. (Applause) and
- The Holmwood High School in Manchester.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the SDF has conducted need assessments of all 14 schools, which are to be done in this year. Six of the projects are currently being tendered, with the first project to commence at the Happy Grove High School in Portland. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank all the Ministries, the Departments and Agencies that partnered with the OPM and signed the Memorandum of Understanding to make this initiative a reality.

Sabina Park will now have lights, Mr. Speaker. (Applause) We are pleased to announce that the work on the installation of the floodlights at Sabina Park Cricket Ground is progressing steadily.

(Applause)

At the end of March, Mr. Speaker, the Government of India generously signed a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Jamaica to provide financial support for the installation of floodlights at Sabina Park in the sum of US$2.1 Million. (Applause)

The Urban Development Corporation is managing all the project managers, and awarded a contract to the Fosrich Group of Companies in the sum of $2.7 Million. Recognizing the sport tourism value of Sabina Park, the Tourism Enhancement Fund has come on board and has also approved funding for this project.

Mr. Speaker, let me once again thank the Government of India, the Tourism Enhancement Fund, the Urban Development Corporation... (Applause) ...and the team of individuals who have worked hard to make

this project come to fruition and to ensure the upliftment of the development of Jamaica's sport infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, we have finally decided, through the leadership of the Most Honourable Prime Minister, that the Trelawny Stadium will be the Stadium of the West. (Applause) It will be for the people of the West and the people of Jamaica. (Applause) Work has already commenced to improve some facilities there. We've just spent just over $8 Million on refurbishment of the outfields, the players' areas and the installation of four new pitches. Several other works were completed including installation of a scoreboard, retiling of the ground floor, replacement and addition of some furniture and equipment such as massage tables. Thanks to the generosity of the Tourism Enhancement Fund and the Sports Development Foundation. (Applause)

This initial work of course, Mr. Speaker, was done in order to host the Jamaica/New Zealand warm-up matches and is a part of that plan to attract local and international interest to this facility.

Mr. Speaker, in 2013/2014, there was-an upgrade of the National Plan for the National Stadium upgrade in order to adhere to international standards. These improvements will enhance our ability to attract more international events. The overall cost projected for the upgrade of the National Stadium facility is $270 Million.

Mr. Speaker, these upgrades will take place in five phases. The scope of work for these phases involve the construction of concession stands, additional restrooms and the installation of skyboxes in the south and north bleachers.

Mr. Speaker, Phase 1 of the refurbishment has begun on the bleachers. Fourteen street lamps have been retrofitted with LED bulbs in order to improve IPL's energy efficiency.

New filters finally, for the National Stadium swimming pool. (Applause) This was commissioned in February of 2014. Thanks to the over $31 Million in funding provided by the Sports Development Foundation.

(Inaudible comments)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, the long awaited upgrade of the Leila Robinson Netball Court is finally here. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: The new surface has already been laid...

Mr. PARCHMENT: It's about time.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: ...and markings are now completed. The goalposts were installed yesterday and I'm told the courts are now ready for a good game of netball. (Applause)

Mr. ROBINSON: Working, working, working.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, the contract for upgrading the seating was signed on Friday, so there'll be new seats at the Leila Robinson Court and the material is expected to arrive in Jamaica within the next three to four weeks. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, this is all being made possible at a cost of $34 Million, a significant investment by the Sport Development Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming year we plan to further consolidate gains of the past year, complete unfinished projects and embark on new ventures in our sport infrastructure development.

The GC Foster College, we will now ensure that we present First World facilities to our visitors and provide for our homegrown, home-trained athletes with the same standards they would have encountered had they gone overseas. Mr. Speaker, we want to keep them here...

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: ...so we're doing everything possible to ensure that they stay here. (Applause)

The College remains the only one of its kind in the English-speaking Caribbean and currently serves student athletes as well as Physical Education Teachers and coaches in training. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, in March of this year, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, we recommissioned the gymnasium floor at the GC Foster College. Minister Thwaites will agree with me that the gym is now a First World facility that will inspire First World performances. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Sport Development Foundation has also undertaken to underwrite the cost of the replacement of the running track at GC Foster. (Applause) This is estimated at a cost of US$1.5 Million. It is expected that the track will be replaced and ready for use by the end of 2014.

Mr. Speaker, a total of $247.8 Million was contributed to 42 national sporting associations through the SDF. They're expected to provide reports annually; quarterly reports for periods ending March, June, September and December; and an annual development plan and budget for the following year by October 31.

Mr. Speaker, in 2013, the SDF enforced its rule by withholding subventions to National Associations that had not submitted their quarterly reports. At present, there's a 90% compliance rate, and this has been achieved because of our insistence.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time, our national athletes will be insured. During the fiscal year 2013, the Office of the Prime Minister commenced work on the development of a health insurance plan for our athletes. (Applause)

The Jamaica Athletes Insurance Plan is designed to assist, in the first instance, approximately 1500 national athletes enrolled in a national sport programme of a registered Sport Association or Federation, with access to comprehensive medical insurance. Cabinet has endorsed the plan. Additionally, the development of the procurement document for the entity which will execute the Jamaica Athletes Insurance Plan is underway.

Mr. Speaker, the Athletes Insurance Plan will be a landmark achievement for Jamaica and in particular for sport development. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, with the support of the Sports Development Foundation, the Tourism Enhancement Fund, the National Health Fund,

the full roll-out of this project is scheduled for the 2014/2015 fiscal year. Special thanks to the members of the Athletes Development and Well-Being Committee of the National Sports Council led by Mr. Christopher Samuda for your invaluable work.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, many of our athletes are using supplements as part of their training or competition routines. This practice may stem from the belief that a normal diet is not sufficient for optimum performance. Unfortunately, there is no substitute for good nutrition and a balanced diet. Additionally, an over-reliance on supplements can result in the athlete neglecting his or her core diet.

Mr. Speaker, sports supplements have also been found to contain ingredients that are not stated on the labels and some have been linked to the cause of death among athletes worldwide.

Mr. Speaker, given the recent increase in the number of Jamaican athletes who returned adverse findings, I must take this opportunity to once again encourage our athletes, juniors and seniors, to avoid adopting this trend of reliance on supplements and to focus instead on building a diet based on good nutrition and healthy practices; bearing in mind that the giving of one's best is always good enough. (Applause) Let's get back to the cornmeal porridge and the arrowroot and the Trelawny yam.

Mr. Speaker, legislation is being considered to address the illegal importation of banned supplements. Let me admonish coaches, administrators and athlete-support personnel, that you are equally culpable if you're found guilty of providing banned substances to junior athletes.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. WHEATLEY: Senior athletes also.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, JADCO has been engaged in the collaboration with the Jamaica Athletics Administrative Association, and hosted a series of five anti-doping workshops under the theme 'Junior Athletes Anti-Doping Education' in different regions across the island. The training workshops focused attention on the Doping Control Process, the WADA Prohibited List of Substances and Methods, the Testing process and other elements that are critical to understanding and appreciating the Anti-Doping process.

Mr. Speaker, in an effort to help athletes avoid the problems associated with Adverse Findings, the 2013 list of prohibited drugs was produced in late March. One thousand copies were printed and 500 copies were distributed to the clubs and associations.

A medical declaration card was created and was printed for distribution to the athletes who were selected for the 2013 IAAF World Championships.

The new website, e-learning and video production platform for JADCO is now being completed and will be ready for testing shortly.

JADCO also participated in sensitization and awareness incentives at five events at the end of the second quarter, 2013/2014.

(MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western, entered and took his seat.)

A partnership has also been established, Mr. Speaker, with the Canadian Center for Ethics in Sport, to develop a joint initiative that focuses on the following objectives: to have JADCO's anti-doping programme meet the full requirements of the 2015 World Anti-Doping Code, and the Mandatory International Standards by January 1, 2015; and to have JADCO successfully address the recommendations outlined in the WADA's November 2013 Report.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to conducting the Junior Athlete Workshops, JADCO has also conducted several other workshops with a number of sport associations and federations. Additionally, there were specific interventions for the parents and the guardians. These interventions will set the stage for the introduction of testing of our junior athletes across various sporting disciplines.

Mr. Speaker, workshops will also be conducted for elite athletes and their support personnel to ensure that they are familiarized with the current rules, as well as the changes that will come into effect on January 1, 2015. We intend to be ahead of the game in this important process...

Mr. L BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: ...because as a country, we are truly committed to the integrity in sport. (Applause)

Mr. L BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear! That's right.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: A brand new Board of Commissioners was appointed in January this year. I take this opportunity again to thank the out-going members of the Board for the invaluable service that they provided, and welcome and thank the new Board, led by the Honourable R. Danny Williams. (Applause)

Since this year, JADCO has increased the number of tests; 203 tests have been administered so far; 69 out of competition and 134 in competition. A 63 per cent increase, despite the financial constraints, Mr. Speaker, in the budgetary allocation to $105 Million for JADCO was granted, even with the IMF Agreement.

Increased staff compliment of trained professionals have been assigned. We are now in the process of reviewing the Anti-Doping in Sport Act and JADCO rules to ensure that they are fully aligned with the 2015 WADA Code which was commenced. Mr. Speaker, we are not just talking sport, as a government, we are maximizing the benefits to be derived from Sports. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, one of the imperatives of the business of sport is to ensure its integrity. Globally, match fixing and sport gambling have become major problems threatening the fairness of sports, and corrupting athletes and officials alike, in the rush to make easy money.

Mr. Speaker, the OPM - the Office of the Prime Minister intends to commission a study in order to determine how we should deal with these issues, and identify the legislative measures needed to dissuade participation,

and punish violators. We cannot wait for the first major match fixing, or sport gambling scandal, to respond, Mr. Speaker. We need to take an appropriate pre-emptive action now. (Applause)

While we are heading towards ensuring that all schools are elevated to standards conducive to growth in all areas, we might consider, Mr. Speaker, that on the forms for GSAT, that children be given an option to name their interests, to select their hobbies...

A MEMBER: Yes, true.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: ...so that in deciding where to place a child, his interest is also taken into consideration. It is difficult for a child, topping the primary school championship that is hosted by In-Sports to attend a school at which there is no sport programme. And so, while I believe that they can grow where they are planted, we must place them where the soil is fertile. (Applause)

On another sensitive issue, Mr. Speaker, we are also looking seriously at - we also are looking seriously at the issue of mandating across all sporting disciplines, an on-sight medical team to give the okay, before athletes who have been injured during competition can continue to participate. This, Mr. Speaker, is currently the practice in professional boxing. No junior or senior athlete's career, or physical well-being, should be threatened by the over enthusiasm of the athlete, the coach, the supporters, or the schools, or the fans, in order to win points, to score medals, or to win games. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: And so, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, the four leading causes of death at this time are: hypertension, tobacco, diabetes and physical inactivity. A sedentary lifestyle, especially among our youth was something rare, as Jamaicans, when I was growing up. We played dandy shandy and bull-in-a-pen, and ring games and stuckie and lick-and-run, in the schoolyard and on the streets.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we made bats out of coconut boughs, and we made balls out of drink boxes. Indeed, things have changed. Today, we spend more time in front of our televisions and our computers, playing on our tablets and iPads and iPods, and smartphones, and less time outdoors engaged in physical activity. The dangers associated with physical inactivity have become alarmingly real. Culturally, Mr. Speaker, we have come to celebrate, and admire persons who are on the fluffy side, like myself.

(Laughter/*Sotto voce* comments)

(MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: We have.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: There was more to love; there was more to love. We are not giving sufficient thought to potential health implications of being over-weight and

unfit. We need to begin to change those mindsets, Mr. Speaker, and make the effort to combat this trend by continuing to create opportunities for Jamaicans to engage in physical activity in a safe, fun, and healthy environment, that will encourage them to continue to participate day after day. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, while sport inspires and uplifts, it is also a vehicle for economic development. Sport is a major employer. It is a major income earner; through sports tourism, through the establishment of the training and wellness centres for sport and through the development of investment instruments for our sportsmen and women that encourages them to re-invest in Jamaica.

The health insurance plan for our national athletes will go a far way towards showing them that we care about their development and wellbeing. The sport infrastructural development projects will allow every Jamaican to feel confident that their safety and security is paramount as they go to participate in, or watch the many sporting events being staged island-wide. I take the opportunity to acknowledge the presence of Olympian, Deon Hemmings, who is here with us today. (Applause)

What we need now is the development of international events that will attract the world's best to Jamaica, to provide competition for our athletes, and earning opportunities for all involved in the sport industry.

Mr. Speaker, I have the confidence in sport, and its power to enhance lives, and look forward to achieving substantial progress towards our goals in the next financial year. Mr. Speaker, we have what it takes to make our sports policy into sports reality.

Thank you and may God bless you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause and Standing ovation from Government Members)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. McKenzie.

(Applause)

Mr. McKENZlE: Mr. Speaker, this year, my contribution to the Sectoral Debate comes at one of the most critical times for the people of Jamaica. In this, my third presentation to this Honourable House, I would like to first extend thanks to the Almighty for His care and tender mercies. Oftentimes, Mr. Speaker, we project the Almighty on only occasions such as this. But I am privileged, Mr. Speaker, to be one of those persons who was brought up to recognize and appreciate the work of the Almighty, and I will always be ever thankful to our true and living God.

To you, Mr. Speaker, you continue to demonstrate that strong level of leadership, at times displaying certain levels of fear that, perhaps, is needed when things seem to be getting out of control.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. McKENZlE: But no one, Mr. Speaker, can deny that you continue to be impartial and fair in your stewardship of this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker. To my colleagues, on both sides of the House, respect is due.

(Applause)

Mr. WARMINGTON: I have passed through Whitehouse Sunday; it is a disgrace to see the roads.

Mr. McKENZIE: To my Party Leader, and Leader of the Opposition, Andrew Holness, Jamaica awaits your return as Prime Minister.

(Applause/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: Jamaicans are praying and hoping that you will return soon because your vision as a Leader is what is required to take Jamaica through the difficult period we are going through. I, personally, continue to rely on your strength and support, and I use this opportunity...

Mr. SHAW: Raymond, you say you *nah* leave. You can't *lef*

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...Mr. Leader, to assure you of my continued support in your quest to make Jamaica a better place.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: So why Aubyn never report to Audley instead.

Mr. CHUCK: Listen man, you are in Parliament, you know. Luther...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: Family plays a very important role in our lives, and oftentimes we take them for granted. The love and commitment of family, Mr. Speaker, is priceless.

(Applause/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: Success can never be attributed to any one individual. Success is a combination of love and affection built with trust.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: True, true, Desmond. True, true.

Mr. McKENZIE: For the last forty years...

Mr. SHAW: I hope you agree with everything he says today, yuh know.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...I enjoy...

Mr. SHAW: I hope you agree with everything.

Dr. DAVIES: Get him a drink, get him a drink.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...I enjoy the comfort, affection, love and respect of my wife, Marcia McKenzie. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Don't cry, don't cry, don't cry.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, she has not just been....

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Good lady.

Mr. McKENZIE: ....a wife...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yes.

Mr. CHUCK: Friend.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...a friend and a source of inspiration and strength...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yes.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...that is difficult to match anywhere in the world. (Applause)

Mr. ROBINSON: Hear, hear.

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Drink some water yah mi relative.

Mr. McKENZIE: My sons and daughters, especially Matthew who pays special attention in putting me together to come to Parliament... (Applause)

(Cross talk)

A MEMBER: Him dress yuh.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...would be disappointed because I left the green tie at home and I had to go buy this one at Ammar's a while ago. (Chuckles)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You son have sense.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Why… *kow tow*.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. L. Buchanan)

Mr. McKENZIE: Now, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned last year, Mr. Speaker, how I happy I was to have my grandson as an integral part of my life. (Applause) You know, Mr. Speaker, he's getting older. He's five years old this year, but sometimes I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether or not he is not ten years old. He has been a source of inspiration, Mr. Speaker, and I want to set an example for him so that he, Mr. Speaker, can one day contribute to the growth and development of this country.

The constituency of West Kingston, Mr. Speaker, has been my home for sixty-two years and will be my home for as long as I live. There is a quote from the Bible that says: *"Nothing will separate us from the love God*" I say to those who say otherwise that nothing except sickness or death can separate me from the people of West Kingston. (Applause)

The challenges we face in the constituency are not unusual. The constituency has always been under the microscope. When things happen in other communities, Mr. Speaker, it is not given the attention like when it takes place in West Kingston. The people of West Kingston are loyal, committed, strong and trustworthy and perhaps, Mr. Speaker, that is why the constituency lacks the support that is required in helping to change the lives of the people. I want to thank them for their continued support. I have done it before, Mr. Speaker, and I am going to do it again. I am committed, Mr. Speaker, in working to help to change the lives of the people of West Kingston to make lives better for them and I remain, Mr. Speaker, committed to that process.

The support staff in my constituency headed by the Constituency Secretary, Jacqueline King, Ms. Daphne Hurge and members of the constituency executive, the churches, the schools, the NGOs combine to make my job as Member of Parliament less challenging; my administrative assistant, Susan Wilson, for her unwavering support and my personal security detail, as well as those who continue to support my effort; thanks to them, Mr. Speaker. I have two councillors, Mr. Speaker, Councillor Donovan Samuels was just recently elected in the last Parish Council Elections he represents the Tivoli Gardens Division and Councillor Lorna Leslie, Mr. Speaker, who has the distinction, Mr. Speaker, of being the longest serving female elected Councillor in this part of the world - not in Jamaica you know, Mr. Speaker, in this part of the world. She has been a Councillor for the Denham Town Division from 1980, Mr. Speaker. (Applause) And she continues, Mr. Speaker, to give service, Mr. Speaker, and I want to pay my respects to Councillor Leslie and Councillor Samuels for their hard work.

(Applause)

I have a core of young people in the constituency, Mr. Speaker - university graduates, some still attending university that has got themselves involved in the social life of the constituency and continue, Mr. Speaker, to play their part in chartering a new course for the constituency.

I want now, Mr. Speaker, to turn to my subject areas, because I want at a later stage in my presentation to go back to my constituency. I am certainly one of those local government veterans who continue to believe strongly that local authorities or the parish councils have a key role to play in promoting sustainable development in the country.

Both my good friends, the Minister and the Minister of State, say that they hold similar beliefs but their words are not being supported by their actions. And, therefore, we have to question their commitment to the growth and development of local government in Jamaica. Even worse than that, Mr. Speaker, the Minister has questioned - we have to question, therefore, Mr. Speaker, the commitment of local government when we cannot, Mr. Speaker, say that we have seen enough to support the views that was put on the Table by the Minister. In his budget (sic) [sectoral] presentation last week the Minister said, and I quote:

> *"Local government is creating opportunities for growth and development..."*

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have been searching through his speech, throughout the performance record of 2013/2014, which he tabled on the same Tuesday and through the Ministry's development strategic business plan for 13/14 for that evidence. I am still searching and I was hoping that the Minister in the sectoral presentation would have given us more detailed information as to how much such success he and his Ministry have achieved in one year. The business plan, that the Minister spoke about that would guide us to understand whether the Ministry is moving in the right direction or not, Mr. Speaker, leaves much to be desired.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

We all agree, Mr. Speaker, that local government should be included in the Jamaican Constitution. Both sides of the political divide supports that call. This is not an issue and it is not one of those issues that the leader of the Opposition has included in package for a grand referendum. In fact, the previous Jamaica Labour Party Administration had taken the position virtually that all that was needed was to complete the process was for the approval of the constitutional changes, Mr. Speaker, of sector of the three critical Bills:

- the Local Government Act;
- the Local Government Financing and Financial Act; and
- the Local Government (Unified Services and Employment) Act.

In May 2011, seven months before the elections, the then Minister with responsibility for Local Government, Senator Robert Montague, could report with respect to several pieces of legislation on an organizational review of the parish councils that was well on

its way. I note more than three years later where we are in terms of completing the reform process that's a question. In April of 2012, the Minister assured us that it would, and I quote him from the Jamaica Information Service: *"Moving ahead full speed with Local Government Reform".* He said that the Government - at that time the working, working never come in, but I gwine throw it in. He said the Government was working, working, working, working, assiduously to ensure that the legislation is in place and that the Government was seeking to fast track the process so that the 50th Anniversary of Jamaica's Independence we would see, Mr. Speaker, this wonderful piece of legislation that would guide the process and give more autonomy to the Local Government system.

Last year, the Minister had the audacity, Mr. Speaker....

Mr. CHUCK: The man sey is pure talking.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...to state in the Sectoral Debate...

Mr. CHUCK: Pure talk. Talk, talk, talk.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...that historically we were not committed to the necessity of local government system while on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, he says that a PNP Government is strongly committed to deliver service through the local authorities as a participatory mode of community development.

(Laughter)

(Cross talk)

He went on, however, and admitted, Mr. Speaker, and I quote from his own presentation:

> *"The fundamental question has to be settled and we are near conclusion of the drafting process for the various pieces of legislation. Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be the Minister charged with the responsibility of bringing these pieces of legislation to completion".*

But one year after, one year after, he came back and assured us that the Bills would not be delayed despite certain things that was required by the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, and that the necessary steps were put in place and an experienced person was identified. That was in 2013. One year later in 2014, a Minister that has been working, working, working to reform the local government process...

Government MEMBER: ...years now.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Oh shut yuh mouth and listen. (Laughter)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...it appears that the Government is still stuck with the drafting of the Bills despite the incentives provided to speed the process.

Mr. CHUCK: Everybody working.

Mr. McKENZIE: And we are now told, Mr. Speaker, that Cabinet has given drafting instructions for the Bill, but is waiting the Governance Bill.

Opposition MEMBER: Waiting, waiting.

Mr. McKENZIE: Again, Mr. Speaker, promise made by the People's National Party and a promise not kept.

How does the Minister explain after giving the assurance last year, one year has passed since he made that assurance; two and

a half years have passed since he took office. Who has shown more contempt for Local Government? Is it the Jamaica Labour Party? No, no you went there and found the process, you were there for eighteen and a half years and you did absolutely nothing.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give a word of advice to the Minister. You don't just get up every day and spin the tail about being more committed to Local Government. Where is the evidence? This is just another failure on the part of the Minister and the present administration to live up to the commitments, promise made promise not kept.

I want to turn, Mr. Speaker, briefly to the Portmore Municipal Council. Two Councillors who are Members of the People's National Party, was elected to the Portmore Municipal Council in March 2012, as well as the St. Catherine's Parish Council. They have not been sworn in, Mr. Speaker, as Members of the Portmore Council for more than two years after being elected, Local Government Elections are due next year, Mr. Speaker, and if the situation remains as is, Mr. Speaker, those Councillors, if they are reelected again will not be able to sit in the Council because the regulation that speaks to the adjustments of boundaries, Mr. Speaker, has a time limit and that time limit has not exceeded, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, how in the name of God could something like this happen. You know why. In its rush, Mr. Speaker, to call the Local Government Elections in 2012, to capitalize on the honeymoon period following their victory at the polls, the Government did not see the need then to regularize the boundary changes. This is a gross breach of the constitutional rights of those people, Mr. Speaker. Whether they voted, whether they voted, Mr. Speaker, for the Jamaica Labour Party or they voted for the PNP, or they voted against the Jamaica Labour Party that is not issue, Mr. Speaker, they voted for these councillors to be a part, of that Municipality to offer, to make representations on theft behalf, and the people are not benefitting, Mr. Speaker. Since then, the Minister has come to this Honourable House, make some statements, and he said, and he knows that advice - he said he referred to the Attorney General, for advice - nothing has happened since then, Mr. Speaker, the people, would have to live that entire term.

As far as I understand, the Government, Mr. Speaker, has found itself in a problem. This is probably the worse breach of the rights, of our electorate that we have experienced. There is also some confusion as it relates, Mr. Speaker, as to whether the current Acting Mayor is operating constitutionally. The Acting Mayor has been in that position since October 2013, eight months and he is still acting in the position; although the law, states quite clearly what is required in the process. But as usual, Mr. Speaker, this is an Administration that shows little or no regards for the rules of law in executing its responsibility. There is technicality, there is technicality in what these two developments have shown, is that the current government has not only messed up the Local Government reform process, but

they have also set back the experiment in Portmore by their inability Mr. Speaker to solve an issue long before, Mr. Speaker. That doesn't sound like what we should expect from a Government and a party which claims profoundly, to commit itself to Local Government. There are three major issues, Mr. Speaker that are affecting the lives of the people in Portmore and I want to highlight three of them, Mr. Speaker.

Sometime ago Mr. Speaker Portmore is a community now with over two hundred thousand people, and it is growing almost on a daily basis.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Warmington, you are preventing me from hearing the Speaker on the floor.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Me alone?

The Deputy SPEAKER: He is closest to me at the moment.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I was talking to somebody.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie will continue to make his presentation.

You have been constantly speaking, Mr. Warmington. I ask that you desist and allow your spokesperson on Local Government to continue. Go ahead, Mr. McKenzie.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. McKENZIE: You hear about a thing they call stoppage time, that is two minutes of added time.

Mr. Speaker, there are two major issues, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, that is affecting the lives of the Portmore community. One, Mr. Speaker, it is badly in need of a public market, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. CHUCK: A public market?

Mr. McKENZIE: Market, market. Lands were identified some time ago, that was owned by the UDC for the construction of a market in Portmore, the Administration did nothing about it, Mr. Speaker, so the UDC eventually sold the land.

I am making an urgent appeal, Minister Arscott, on behalf of the people of Portmore for serious consideration to be given to the construction of a proper market facility. The population there Mr. Speaker, is adequate enough to support, Mr. Speaker, a public market and the Jamaica Labour Party is making that call. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Chuck)

Mr. McKENZIE: The other issue Mr. Speaker is the need Mr. Speaker. When you speak with the people in Portmore, they tell you, Mr. Speaker, that there is a need for a major medical facility, in the Portmore community. (Applause) I am again, Mr. Speaker, calling on the Minister of Health, to look at the possibility of constructing a hospital facility that will cater to the needs. Maternity, Mr. Speaker, when someone takes in to have a child it is going to be difficult, Minister, to go through the toll and to go everywhere just to get to either Spanish Town or to get to Jubilee. It is important, Mr. Speaker, that that consideration be given and the Jamaica Labour Party is calling on the Government, to fasttrack, to consider the construction of a hospital facility in Portmore.

(Applause)

The other issue, Mr. Speaker, relates to the conditions of the drains in Portmore. It is a constant cry and the Minister of State who represents a constituency over there is aware of those concerns. They need more funding Minister, they need adequate funding for drain cleaning and they need a sustained programme, to minimize the effects of mosquitoes in the community, Mr. Minister. So you know, Minister, I am not being controversial on that but when I speak to residents in Portmore these are the three main items that they mentioned.

The Minister, last week announced that he had budgeted $90 Million in 2014/2015 to construct new administrative buildings for St. Thomas, Westmoreland and Portmore. There is some cause for concern - let me not use the word concern, but there needs to be greater explanation Minister, based on what you said in your presentation. You are going to be spending $90 Million this year, to build....

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. McKENZIE: Just listen. To build the administrative building which cost at least $100 Million for each, four or five years ago, that was the cost you know, over a hundred million. Now, I need you to explain to this Honourable House and to the people in Westmoreland, St. Thomas and Portmore, how you are going to split 90 Million, constructing three buildings and mark you, you did not say anything about renovations or upgrading.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we ask that the Member's time be extended sufficiently to complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently so as to allow him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Minister did not say that this is for upgrading or renovation. He said for new buildings. The Minister needs to explain to the public what he meant when the announcement was made.

Mr. FAGAN: Even a layman understands it.

Mr. McKENZIE: You right, a layman understands it. Yeah man, okay. We must we must state what we mean. Is it that he is going to start the process and hope that next year, he gets some more money, then what would be the timeline. And you know, Minister, I have a difficult with you. In your three presentations you have never spoken about a timeline. You have never said by the end of so and so, we will do this we will do that. You just come, Mr. Speaker, and you just say, watch yah, hold this 'bam, bam'.

You need, Mr. Speaker - you need, Mr. Minister, to ensure that this House and you can give the information to the State Minister so when he speaks he can shed some more light on it, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. WHEATLEY: They don't talk to each other.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, the Minister's Performance Report for 2013/2014 states that funds from the Caribbean Economic Development, a Canadian programme, was committed to 11 projects in 2013. However, the Minister in his presentation only addressed 5, only addressed 5. So in the first year of the operations, we are talking about one project covering Kingston and St. Andrew; two for Westmoreland; one for St. Catherine, Manchester, this is the programme. This programme which the Canadian International Development Agency, used to be known as CIDA, is spending Canadian $28,000,000 within CARICOM Member States over a six-year period to support local development. Its aim is to establish economic activities, entrepreneurship in 150 communities across Jamaica and support at least 300 small and micro enterprises enabling them to attain financial viability and expand - beautiful programme. But while the other countries in the region are taking advantage, making full use of the funds, I am concerned at the pace of the programme. The Canadians themselves may soon ask why the programme is moving so slow. I urge the Minister to ensure that we don't mess up this opportunity. It would be a great loss to young Jamaicans and I would say to you, make sure that the thing happens so you can stretch some of that into West Kingston.

The Minister spoke of the development approvals, that his Ministry has placed an emphasis in facilitating much faster approval for the development applications. That is probably the only part of the Minister's speech that there seems to be any positive developments. The Minister could point to the 2013, which fully controlled his Ministry. But surprisingly since the Ministry installed the systems in July last year within the KSAC, St. Catherine and the other parish councils, it has increased their efficiency and the time, Minister, that it is taking to approve these plans, and we welcome that. You must remember also, Mr. Minister, that none of us, the two political parties, can claim responsibility for that. It was actually started by NEPA in 2005 and it is a programme that is welcomed. But, Minister, I am holding you to your commitment, to the commitment that you gave that all local authorities will be fully equipped with the system by the end of 2014/2015. I would like to come back here and say a promise made, a promise kept.

Mr. FAGAN: Not by you.

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes, I have to say it.

This leads me, Mr. Speaker, to the issue of infrastructure which falls under the local authorities. And again, Mr. Speaker, there is cause for concern when the Minister speaks, because you cannot understand what the Minister say, because today him say one thing and tomorrow him go back and say something else.

Mr. DALLEY: You are not listening good!

Mr. McKENZIE: I noticed that in March the Minister and the Mexican Ambassador to Jamaica visited the Riverton City Landfill. During that discussion they spoke about constructing or rehabilitating an access road to

the dump - welcomed move. The Minister said that the project was just under US$1 Million. However, there are two developments in the Minister's speech in the House last week. He said the project would be used for concrete solutions fixing roads. And that proposal came from a member of the Opposition in the Standing Finance Committee.

The new project, the Minister said last week, will cost J$200 Million. Minister, we all know how rapidly the Jamaican dollar is declining. *It a run* faster than Usain Bolt. But I think we are still some way off the $200 to $1 for the Jamaican dollar. The figure - this figure, Minister, don't tell me, tell the country - this figure needs some explanation. Probably the Minister should let us know whether it is the cost of using concrete that has pushed up the cost to $200 Million or whether there is some additional work to be done, or whether the cost was under assessed because a lot - that seems to be the order of the day in some public sector entities. But we have a right to know how the project moves from approximately J$112 Million to J$200 Million.

And even more importantly, Mr. Speaker, the Minister has said that the local authority is going to be used as an experimental rat in this new process. Now the experiment will come after the Riverton road expenditure. Are we going to be concreting another 20 kilometers of parochial road? Right now, Mr. Speaker, this is something that you ought not to rush in. The Minister needs to explain to the country what it is going to cost to use concrete as a means of giving us better roads. Mr. Speaker, we all welcome better roads but at what cost. Because what this is saying to us, you know, Mr. Speaker is that this will deplete the already starved parish councils of funding. Because there is no way, Mr. Speaker, any single parish council authority can afford from their own budget to spend $200 Million, Mr. Speaker. So, Minister, again we need some explanation.

I want to renew a call that I made in the Standing Finance (Committee). Ninety per cent (90%) of the road networks in this country is owned by the parish councils, owned by the parish councils, or 80%. A limited amount, Mr. Speaker, is owned by the National Works Agency. There should be no need for any differentiation between a parish council road and a Works Agency (road). Because, Mr. Speaker, as somebody who loves local government and want to see local government go forward, the only way the local authorities will be able to command that level of responsibility is if the autonomy is provided to them and the salaries that are paid in the local government system is attractive, so that they can attract the kind of persons that will come in to make the contribution in the field of local government.

But, Mr. Speaker, there has to be - they talk about joined-up government over there. Don't talk about this one.

I am hoping that Minister Davies has far advanced those discussions with Minister Arscott, because the state of roads in Jamaica, Mr. Speaker, is woefully bad. We have beautiful highways, Mr. Speaker. When you go into some communities it is a shame and I

am saying, Mr. Speaker, there is that need Minister, for some understanding between the Parish Councils and the National Works Agency. I agree with you when you say that our markets are critical to the growth of micro enterprise in Jamaica, because there are critical to the survival of farmers business, et cetera, in terms of marketing their products. But I am wondering, you know, whether the markets are so critical to survive the overall economic and the Government's overall target of achievement.

These critical targets, Mr. Speaker, under the IMF Agreement do not make it possible for the Government to focus much attention on the markets. The markets in this country are in a deplorable condition. I visited the Buff Bay Market a couple months ago. I visited the market in Port Antonio Port Antonio, Mr. Speaker, can be considered a mecca for tourism. But when you go in there, Mr. Speaker, the physical condition that the vendors - and you know what is bad about it, the office of the Mayor of Port Antonio is right across from the market and the vendors say him never one day walk come inside there and speak to them about their concerns.

Mr. D. SMITH: Him *seh* duppy driving him car.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, many people in this Parliament, many people in this Parliament, many outstanding Jamaicans, I want to call his name, Glen Christian, have a passion, Mr. Speaker, to see the development of the market district downtown. And you know what he said, he told me many nights he came into Kingston on the country truck and slept on the stall with his mother and that was what was able to make him one of our most successful Jamaicans. It is plying the trade as a vendor, Mr. Speaker, that created the foundation for his education and as a Government we cannot ignore the importance, Mr. Speaker, of upgrading the markets.

You know I could go on and speak about what has taken place in Black River. Black River was refurbished under the Jamaica Labour Party Government.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Government Member)

Mr. McKENZIE: Don't tell me foolishness. You go there and find it.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry has set aside $100 Million to be spent on markets, to install 170 stalls in the Black River Market, not 270, Mr. Speaker, 170 stalls in a market that is not the fall size of this Council Chamber - of this Parliament building, it costs the Ministry of Local Government, it costs the Ministry of Local Government $31.5 Million to build 170 stalls. What is that?

That, Mr. Speaker, is two-thirds of the entire month. When we formed the government, Mr. Speaker, we identified the Linstead Market for funding and renovation through the parish council and the UDC, because we felt that with Jamaica 50 and the celebration of the milestone it would have been a good idea to revitalize the Linstead Market because it is a recognized part of our culture. Everybody knows the Jamaican folk song, 'carry me ackee go a Linstead Market not a quattie wut sell..."

(Heckling)

Mr. Speaker, we left office, we left office in 2011, Jamaica 50 was celebrated in 2012, nearly two years after, Mr. Speaker, we have celebrated that milestone.

Finally, and I won't say finally because the Minister continue to say things and don't act on it. The Minister said last week that the project has been given new life and the UDC and JSIF and the St. Catherine Parish Council is going to be moving. So we await that.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister told the country earlier this year that there are 25 key markets that have been identified for rehabilitation, which will be undertaken in conjunction with the Ministry and the respective local authorities. I welcome that. Apart from the Black River which I spoke about, there is still no comfort for vendors, because again the Minister did not say when. I am not knocking you, you know, Minister, I am only saying that when you give the facts make sure, Minister, that you give the facts so you can reach an objective conclusion after you give the facts.

PROPERTY TAXES

The Minister told us that property taxes represent the single largest revenue source for the island's 14 parish councils. He explained that property taxes are used to fund, amongst other services, solid waste and disposal, payment for streetlights, maintenance for parks and garden, civic and civil improvement and he listed, he listed rehabilitation of parochial roads.

Mr. Speaker, the Regulation - and I have said it to the Minister, Property taxes was not set up to be used for the maintenance of roads. Roads get a dedicated fund. The Parochial Revenue Fund is a dedicated source of funding. If this is the case, Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister to advise the House when were these necessary (pieces) legislation made, to give him that authority to spend property taxes on the maintenance of roads? And I am awaiting a response from the Minister and I am telling the Minister, if I can't get that response then I will do the next best thing, I will table questions in this House for the Minister to answer.

One primary intention was to significantly reduce, Mr. Speaker, the $3 Billion owed to the Jamaica Public Service Company for streetlights. The Minister has not come back to this House this year, and explained how the funds were allocated to the various headings. However, we understand that the Government collected $5.8 Billion of the $7.6 Billion revenue targeted for 2013/2014. Bearing in mind Mr. Speaker that the target for the previous financial year was $2.8 Billion.

We are also hearing through the grapevines, Mr. Speaker, that there is disquiet within the Jamaica Public Service Company because the Government has not paid any money for streetlights to the Jamaica Public Service Company. Minister, you need to respond to those concerns.

Let us go to the National Solid Waste Management Authority.

That budget was increased from $778 Million last year to $810 Million, of which $307 Million is from the Authority's own revenue earning capacity. We have not seen

any maintenance in the parks and gardens around the country. What I would like to know, and the public would like to know the details of how this $5.8 Billion, we were told, was collected, how it was spent.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: It was sent to JDIP and the Councillors got no money.

Mr. McKENZIE: Again, Mr. Speaker, if I can't get the answers, Mr. Speaker, I will do what is necessary in obtaining those answers from the floor of the Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, as parliamentarians, Government/Opposition, when we give an undertaking to the people as to how their taxes are going to be spent then, Mr. Speaker, we have the duty to inform the House how these funds are allocated. There is a constant problem, as I said before, about the state of streetlights in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, the National Solid Waste Management Authority - and I want to say something in this Parliament, six weeks ago I spoke to the executive director of the agency. I wrote her the following day requesting from her detailed information over the last four years on the cost to put out fires at the Riverton City Dump. Up to today, Mr. Speaker, she spoke with me and promised to provide this information. I am still waiting. That is public business, Mr. Speaker, because this country must know what it cost the people of Jamaica to put out a fire at Riverton City. We can't continue, Mr. Speaker, in this way. Every six months there is a fire and we are bringing people from mid-Jamaica who we say are the only persons that have the equipment to fight the fire, and what is the political genesis of these people, Mr. Speaker? The country is spending millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, and we have not made one single attempt, Mr. Speaker, to deal with the question of fire, and then we create an environmental issue for the people who live there.

And the Minister, in response to the last fire, you know what, the Minister advised the people to move, relocate from the dump. Mr. Speaker, how would any Minister of Government with any sense - you said it on public radio, I heard you. How could any Minister, how could any Minister who have a conscience and love for the people ask people - you know people have been living in that community long before the dump was relocated there. A lot of you don't know that the dump was only relocated there in the 60s. Where St. Andrew Technical High School is now, that was where the City dump was, and it was put there as a temporary location. How can you tell people, Minister, to move and now after you have said to the people…

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: No, no. After you have said to the people "move", you know what is the next thing you come back and say now? You are now looking at relocating the dump. Now, Minister, you said this five months ago and you come back now and you say, relocate the dump. You are living in a fool's paradise.

In our lifetime in this Parliament, in our lifetime in this Parliament and the next generation of parliamentarians, we will never see the removal of the Riverton City Dump, because one, the country is not in a financial

position right now to consider that, and Minister, you made the announcement. Most Honourable Prime Minister, divest, divest. Lovely.

Mr. CHUCK: Talk, talk, talk.

Mr. McKENZIE: Madam Prime Minister, I am begging you, do not allow scarce government resources to be used on any feasibility study.

Mr. SAMUDA: Can't work.

Mr. McKENZIE: How you going to remove the dump if you don't know where you are going to remove it to?

Mr. SAMUDA: Where you moving it to?

(Heckling)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, all I can say, Mr. Speaker, the Government needs to take a serious approach to the question of solid waste, and I am proposing, I will be tabling a private member's motion shortly, Mr. Speaker, that will be calling on the establishment of a bipartisan committee of the Parliament to bring in the experts to look at and to consider how we deal with the issue of disposing our solid waste. This is not a political statement; this is a statement taking into consideration the dislocation that the people are faced with.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I had something to say on the state of the Fire Service, but after I got a copy of the Auditor General's Report then, Mr. Speaker…

Mr. DALLEY: You see how bad you guys left it? You see how bad you guys left it?

Mr. McKENZIE: I know the media have it because…

(Heckling)

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General says that 37 per cent of the 1,300 fire hydrants that were detected without water, dem can't fix.

(Inaudible comment by Government Member)

Mr. McKENZIE: Now you blaming your Parish Councils?

Mr. DALLEY: This report covers your time, you know.

Mr. CHUCK: What?

Mr. McKENZIE: As of May 2014, only one ambulance, only one ambulance was operational, the other five were out of service. As a result five of the six pilot locations are without functioning ambulance for a period up to 20 months. Minister, Minister, this, Mr. Speaker, need a quick response. 50 per cent - and I want you to listen to this.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Dalley)

(Heckling)

Mr. McKENZIE: Brigadista, relax.

(Laughter)

Brigadista General, relax.

Fifty per cent, Mr. Speaker, of emergency calls were made. Only 50 per cent response was made due to out of service ambulance. You think that is bad, Mr. Speaker?

I have spoken about the need, in my first presentation in this Parliament, and when I sat in the Senate I raised those concerns. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I am on record, when I first came into this Parliament in 2003 as a Senator, advocating for the Government to equip the country with proper fire-fighting machines.

Mr. Speaker, we have expanded cruise tourism in Jamaica, we put in new ports.

Dr. WHEATLEY: No fire boats.

Mr. McKENZIE: There is not one single fire boat, Mr. Speaker! Not one! But yet the Jamaica Fire Brigade spends Nine point One Million ($9.1M) for repairs...

Dr. WHEATLEY: And storage!

Mr. McKENZIE: ...and storage on a non-useable fire boat!

Now, Mr. Speaker, what kind of a system do we have? And yet the Minister can stand up and speak glowingly about the state of the fire service, singing, blowing the trumpet, the people's flag is deepest red, because you bring three fire trucks! Bringing three fire trucks in the country is a drop in the bucket, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: It's a step in the right direction! How many trucks you did bring come? Not even one!

(Heckling)

Mr. McKENZIE: When I spoke, Mr. Speaker, when I spoke sometime ago, Mr. Speaker, I raised the question of the state of the fire hydrants. Kingston and St. Andrew...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: They are 75 per cent improved over the last seven years!

Mr. McKENZIE: Kingston and St. Andrew, Mr. Speaker, have a total of 471 (sic) fire hydrants; 2,934 are working, 777 not working, 766 not known.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Not known?

Mr. McKENZIE: You know what it is, what is the figure here for repairs, 17.

When I spoke, Mr. Speaker, I said to the Minister, use money from the JEEP Fund to carry out repairs and maintenance of fire hydrants across Jamaica. You have to be searching for new source of funding, use some of that JEEP money! Put on some tractor wheels on the JEEP, tek off de rubber tyre wheels, put on some tractor wheels and go out and deal with the state of fire.

(*Sotto voce* comment from Mr. L. Buchanan)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, over the last three weeks, Mr. Speaker, the amount of complaints that the public has made about firefighters - people have been losing millions of dollars within the last three weeks. Have we ever checked what it costs the country, what it is costing the economy of Jamaica after a fire, Mr. Speaker? But yet we have done little or nothing, Mr. Speaker, over the last 25 years to improve the state of the fire service.

And I am not questioning the ability and the competence of the many men and women in the service, who work under trying circumstances, Mr. Speaker, but they can't deliver because they don't have the tools to deliver.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: What you gave them four years ago?

Mr. McKENZIE: You must empower them to save the economy.

Mr. Speaker, call me unpatriotic if you want...

Mr. SHAW: Too much ranting! I saw him on TV the other night! What nonsense! Jumping up and down!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Buchanan!

Mr. McKENZIE: I would say, Mr. Speaker, that even...

(*Sotto voce* comments from Mr. L. Buchanan)

Mr. SHAW: I agree! Tone him down!

Mr. CHUCK: You tink you in White House!

Mr. McKENZIE: It is easy to say, Mr. Speaker, that we have one of the worst fire service response anywhere in the world, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I say - and I am not withdrawing it! I not withdrawing it! You have travelled and you have gone to countries and you have seen where they invest in fire service. Mr. Speaker, there is a growth; there is a significant increase, Mr. Speaker, in the population across Jamaica. How can a town like Ocho Rios, a major tourism centre operate without a fire station?

Mr. Speaker, in Kingston and St. Andrew, up in August Town three weeks ago, people stood up helplessly, couldn't do anything, because by the time the fire service leave from where it is to go there - Mr. Speaker, the two nearest response points in the Corporate Area to the Papine area where we have the University of the West Indies, United Theological College and UTECH, and many other places, Mr. Speaker, the nearest response to a fire would be the Rollington Town...

Dr. WHEATLEY: What?

Mr. McKENZIE: ...would be Rollington Town, and the next one would be Halfway Tree.

How, Mr. Speaker, in modern Jamaica when we have seen migration from rural Jamaica into the Corporate Area - when you go out to Harbour View, Mr. Speaker, the people out there are living, praying every day that there is no fire, because the closest response to Harbour View would be Port Royal.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that there is a need, Mr. Speaker, for us to exercise some discipline in how we spend the money, Mr. Speaker. But no IMF, Mr. Speaker, can't tell you, as a sovereign nation, that you can't spend money to improve the state of your fire service! When Jamaica bun down none of us will be able to respond to any of the demands of the IMF!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: So, Mr. Speaker, I want to turn now to Disaster...

A Government MEMBER: Conclusion.

Mr. McKENZIE: Conclusion?

A Government MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. McKENZIE: The best is yet to come! (Laughter)

Dr. WHEATLEY: More! More!

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to Disaster Mitigation. I was really disappointed to see that the budget for the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management was slashed from Two point Six Seven last year to One Hundred and Seventy-eight Million ($178M) this year. Funding for

goods and services was reduced from Sixty-one Million ($61M) to Twenty-four point Seven Million ($24.7M).

There is a Fifty Million Dollars ($50M) allocation for Coordination and Relief activity in the event of a natural disaster. Let me not knock you there, Minister, because I suppose if it happens you will try to obtain some more money, so I am not going knock you on that, okay. But we can't gamble, we can't take the chance of saying that there will be no natural or serious disasters, so we can't put it in the Budget.

Last year, Minister, you announced the Legislative Reviews, which we expect to be implemented before the hurricane season, as it relates to, Mr. Speaker, the areas that we consider to be risks.

Mr. Speaker, we are not taking seriously - and Madam Prime Minister, I want to appeal to you. There are many volatile areas in Jamaica, in the Corporate Area, St. Catherine, St. Thomas, Portland, Mr. Speaker, that we need to look at providing the necessary pieces of legislation to ensure that we don't continue to allow buildings to be erected and people to continue to live in these locations and then, you know, we just close our eyes. These are vulnerable areas, Mr. Speaker, and they need serious attention. I tabled a motion which was debated, accepted by both sides of the House, to look at what can be done, Mr. Speaker. I am still waiting for that meeting.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister spoke about the Social Development Commission. And I am sorry the Prime Minister has left, because when the late Right Excellent Norman Washington Manley - when he established the Social Development Commission, he established the SDC as a vehicle to provide assistance to the poor of this country, in doing things for the poor to make their lives better.

Mr. Speaker, over the last three years this Government has reduced the SDC to a begging organization! They have to be living off fees! Why is it, Minister, why is it you have not made any allocation for the last two years, to support the work and the service of the Social Development Commission? The Right Excellent Norman Washington Manley, up at Heroes' Park, is turning in his grave, Mr. Speaker.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, the Government speaks about its commitment to Local Government. The Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, came here a couple weeks ago...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Careful what you say!

Dr. WHEATLEY: Why you nuh just shut yu mouth, bwoy!

Mr. McKENZIE: And Minister - Mr. Speaker, the Minister means well. But, Mr. Minister, you can't replace the rules of law in the way - he came here announcing that come the 31st of March - of July, which is next month, persons applying for Places of Amusement licences must be registered before they can get it.

Mr. Speaker, there is nowhere within the Places of Amusement regulations that gives the Ministry of Tourism any right to be interfering in the performance, in the role and

the functions of the Local Authority. You are emasculating the Local Authorities; you are taking away their powers gradually. And I will urge the Parish Councils that you all control, to resist that move. The Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism has no right to regularize, designate, name any place in Jamaica, unless him go to a hotel that is owned by the Government. Him can set rules in the hotel industry, you can't set rules for the general public in Jamaica, because the places of regulation, Mr. Speaker, do not give you...

Mr. CHUCK: Minister, you hear that!

Mr. McKENZIE: And I am urging the Minister, I am urging Minister Crawford, to trod...

Mr. CHUCK: ...carefully!

Mr. McKENZIE: ...to trod carefully! The Local Authority is the only one that can grant such permission. And I want the Minister to tell me when the 1999 Places of Amusement regulations were amended, gazetted, and put in place.

And even if it has been done, Mr. Speaker, it can't take six weeks to be gazetted, Mr. Speaker. The Government, Mr. Speaker...

(Heckling)

Mr. CHUCK: Yuh nuh wah hear the truth?

Mr. McKENZIE: ...the Government, Mr. Speaker, cannot continue to walk all over and do the things that they're doing, Mr. Speaker.

(Heckling)

Mr. McKENZIE: And I urge, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mine yuh drop dung an dead.

(Heckling)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...and I urge caution to the Minister - the Minister is here - I am advising Jamaicans that you are not obligated to go and get registered. If you want to keep your party, the law sey yuh go to the Parish Councils and you apply for the places of amusement license...

A MEMBER: That's right.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...they are the only authority. Ah me done on that section.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: So wha happen to the police? Wha happen to the police?

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker...

A MEMBER: Point, point, point.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...there has been talk about the Constituency Development Fund.

(Heckling)

A MEMBER: Some a dem nuh know 'bout local government.

Mr. McKENZIE: I am, Mr. Speaker…

Dr. WHEATLEY: Some a unoo nuh know 'bout local government.

Mr. McKENZIE: …I am, Mr. Speaker in agreement...

(Heckling)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Talk Buchanan talk. Some a unoo nuh know 'bout local government, it's not a lackey!

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...in agreement, Mr. Speaker, that the CDF, there needs to be some consideration in the present allocation of the CDF. I would suggest...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Dr. Wheatley, yuh know about medicine?

A MEMBER: Him don't even know what the word doctor mean.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Yuh know 'bout cow? Das why yuh a goh a prison fi cow.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...a hear di Member from Western St. Mary indicated that he would like...

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...Or from South East St. Mary.... he would like to see an increase to $50 Million.

Mr. CHUCK: I agree wid him.

Mr. McKENZIE: I'm not going that far, Mr. Speaker, I have a conscience the country is going through some tight belt tightening. Twenty-five Million Dollars ($25M) set aside and insist that Ten Million Dollars ($10M) can be used on infrastructure is a fair call, Mr. Speaker, a fair call. Members of Parliament, as a new Member of Parliament I cannot survive on what is being provided for me and the other MPs, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SAMUDA: I support you one hundred percent on that.

Mr. McKENZIE: I ask you, Mr. Speaker to…

(Cross talks/Hecklings)

Mr. McKENZIE: Now, Mr. Speaker, now, Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to, Mr. Speaker, a matter that affects my constituency. Mr. Speaker, the Government has finally named the team for the establishment of a commission of enquiry into the operations in West Kingston and in Tivoli Gardens in May 2010. The people of West Kingston have no objection because we don't think that is the way to go.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Government - we have no problem in the Government fulfilling its obligation, it is their responsibility to the nation and in whatever way we can, we will do what is necessary to ensure that there is a smooth running of the Commission. We have a responsibility to the nation, but we are concerned, Mr. Speaker, about how this will go about fulfilling these obligations. The record of this Government in dealing with the issues affecting the people of West Kingston is far, remotely far from being impressive. The terms and reference released by the Government are a strong indication of where the Government intends to go.

Mr. DALLEY: Why the Opposition didn't comment?

Mr. McKENZIE: I will say, Mr. Speaker, we have nothing against an objective enquiry to reveal the truth of what transpired during the incursion, because, Mr. Speaker, we have nothing to hide; we have absolutely nothing to hide, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Justice has indicated that they've set aside $100 Million to undertake the CEO. I'm hoping, Mr. Speaker, that that $100 Million when I ask the Minister in the Standing Finance Committee if that is all, his response well, that is all that we have now and that is what we have put in the Budget. I want to say, as the Member from North Central asked me to do, Mr. Speaker, I'm warning the Government that the people of West Kingston will not allow the use of public funds to

promote its platform agenda for the elections which are pending.

(Heckling)

Mr. McKENZIE: We have been down this road before, Mr. Speaker...

MEMBERS: Manatt! Manatt! Manatt!

Mr. McKENZIE: ...and we want to prevent a repeat of what took place in West Kingston, so the Commission should ensure that it is free from political interference.

Mr. Speaker, the constituency continue to be deprived of badly needed state resources.

Mr. A. HYLTON: Poor leadership.

Mr. BUCHANAN: Say leadership and MP.

Mr. McKENZIE: Living conditions of many people in West Kingston continue to deteriorate on a daily basis.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Say leader and MP.

Mr. McKENZIE: The social infrastructure, water, sewage, light - proper sanitations...

Mr. BUCHANAN: Say leader and MP.

Mr. CHUCK: Dem better off than Westmoreland.

(Cross talks)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...are lacking, Mr. Speaker, in at least 65% of the constituency.

The Government continues, Mr. Speaker, to boast about the fact that it is working, working, working, working. They speak about how they love the poor. Yuh cyaah only love PNP poor, Mr. Speaker, yuh haffi love all the poor of Jamaica, so you need to spread some of that love in the constituency of West Kingston.

Mr. Speaker, the social issues in West Kingston...

Mr. DALLEY: Are bad.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...during the last administration following the incursion...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Who called the incursion?

Mr. McKENZIE: ...the former Member of Parliament, I spoke with him...

A MEMBER: Who dat, Bruce?

Mr. McKENZIE: ...and I said to him, 'Prime Minister, yuh need to look at doing something for the people'.

A MEMBER: And wha him duh?

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Him neva duh nutten.

Mr. McKENZIE: He summoned Dr. Gladstone Hutchinson - the then head of the Planning Institute of Jamaica - to his office, and out of those discussions, Mr. Speaker, the concept of the Urban Renewal Programme was established.

In order not to give it any political thing - the community programme - Central Kingston was also included. Mr. Speaker, substantial work was done. The funding was found. The areas identified to start the programme. Housing development was concluded.

Mr. SHAW: Heroes Circle.

Dr. DAVIES: Weh di funding come from?

(Cross talks)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, following the outcome...

(Laughter)

...following the outcome of the General Elections in December 2011, the entire project...

A MEMBER: Was scrapped.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...was taken out of West Kingston and was placed in an adjoining constituency where the progress, the work is going full speed, but the persons, Mr. Speaker, who wanted it, have been deprived of it.

A MEMBER: You made up all of that.

Mr. McKENZIE: I say this without apology, Mr. Speaker, the people of West Kingston has always been the subject of political victimization, and I say it without fear. This started Mr. Speaker, way back, way back in 1972, when the elections were held in '72 and the PNP won the election, John Maxwell, the man who contested the seat against Mr. Seaga, took the microphone...

Mr. CHUCK: Here we come.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...and say, 'Tivoli Gardens, here we come'. And they were true, Mr. Speaker, to their word.

Mr. CHUCK: That's right.

Mr. McKENZIE: All the programmes that were established in West Kingston between 1962 up to that time, Mr. Speaker...

Miss GRANGE: And this is the fact.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...were closed - were destroyed, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Talk 'bout 83 to 89.

Mr. SHAW: We gwine talk bout up to the present.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I said it already and I'm going to say it again.

Mr. D. SMITH: Hold on man, hold on.

Mr. McKENZIE: All developments that have taken place in West Kingston can be attributed to the Most Honourable Edward Phillip George Seaga.

(Applause) (Cross talks)

Mr. McKENZIE: When we lost the election, Mr. Speaker, when the elections were held...

(Heckling) (The Speaker gavels)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...in '89, that time again, Mr. Speaker, everything, Mr. Speaker, was moved out of the constituency. Mr. Speaker, the Government has spent more money equipping the security forces, not just in West Kingston, across Jamaica; they've renovated new police stations...

Dr. DAVIES: You're fighting down the police force?

Mr. McKENZIE: Just hold on.

Mr. Speaker, while it is good, Mr. Speaker, to give the security forces the requisite tools that is required to minimize the level of crime, then we must also be prepared, Mr. Speaker, to introduce the social programmes as a means of eliminating crime in these communities. (Applause) This has nothing to do with West Kingston, Mr. Speaker, this don't spell sense to spend all that money, because if there's not opportunities within Arnett Gardens, Rema, Tivoli, in all these communities, Mr. Speaker, those efforts will go in vain.

Mr. CHUCK: Jones Town and Trench Town.

Dr. DAVIES: Yuh don't touch on Foreign Affairs yet.

Mr. McKENZIE: Despite these challenges, Mr. Speaker, there are still signs of greatness in the constituency.

Mr. Speaker, we're continuing at a pace with education and I'm proud of what we've

done so far. Last year, Mr. Speaker, some $9.7 Million was spent on education.

Mr. ARSCOTT: All right, Desmond, time fi yuh done now.

Mr. SHAW: Yuh nuh like hear 'bout Tivoli Garden?

Mr. McKENZIE: Yuh nuh worry, me soon stop.

Some $9.7 Million, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Talk 'bout agriculture, yuh know 'bout education.

(Heckling)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...was spent on education and dem tings deh.

A MEMBER: Yuh nuh start talk 'bout Green Bay.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...from the CDF fund, with the remaining portion coming from the Private Sector to assist the cause, Mr. Speaker. The future of the people of West Kingston, especially the younger generation, is built around a proper education and I want, Mr. Speaker, to give that support.

(Applause)

I want to turn, finally... (Applause) Mr. Speaker, I want to turn finally, to some comments made by the Member from Western St. Mary.

A MEMBER: Where is he...?

Mr. CHUCK: Lost.

Mr. McKENZIE: I am sorry that he's not here. As Member of Parliament for the constituency, I consider those comments as it relates to my constituents - and *dem* include comrades too - to be very unfortunate. There is no denying, Mr. Speaker that certain members in communities in West Kingston, have been on the wrong side of the law, just like anywhere else in Jamaica. We can talk '*bout* Bulbie, Tasha Miller, and to name... Feather Mop, and all *dem* names... were supporters of the People's National Party.

Mr. Speaker, the community - the community, Mr. Speaker, is not denying that what took place during the extradition was unfortunate. On the night of the incursion, Mr. Speaker, I was interviewed on TVJ, and I publicly apologized to the people of Jamaica for the actions taken by some members of the community.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: We have never denied, Mr. Speaker... we have never denied that Christopher Dudus Coke was a member of the community. We have never denied that, Mr. Speaker. And it would be unfair of us to deny it, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, you know what I found difficult, from the Member from Western St. Mary, and he quoted from the Bible. He gave a Biblical leading up, the Israel on Mount Sinai.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Is Israelites, not Israel.

Mr. McKENZIE: And the people lost faith, and they turned to their own gods. What the Member from Western St. Mary had said, that since that took place, before Christ, the world has never seen another man who has taken a self appointed name. So, Christopher (Dudus) Coke, since the children of Israel disobeyed, was the only man to have taken on the role. And I want to read what the Member said. He said: *"Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the Honourable House of mass burials"* which

is a lie; which is a lie. The Member misleads this House...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yes... how?

Mr. McKENZIE: ...when he said that there was mass burial in West Kingston following the security forces operation. He said the country literally came to a halt, and Jamaica's image was tainted.

Government MEMBERS: That is true, yes, yes, that is true.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...on the global community.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to - I want to now respond to the Member. Mr. Speaker, there is a quote in the Bible - there is a quote in the Bible - and I want to use it because the Member used that quote.

A MEMBER: Amen.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, it is said in Matthew 7 verse 1: Judge not lest he be judged; St. John 8 verse 7 - So when they continued to ask Him...

Government MEMBER: That's right. Preach it brother.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...he lifted himself up and said onto them, he that is without sin, let him cast the first stone.

Mr. CHUCK: Go ahead Luther, go ahead; Luther, go ahead.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. L. Buchanan)

Mr. McKENZIE: Romans 3 verse 23, it says: For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Mr. Speaker... the stain, Mr. Speaker... (Applause) The stain, Mr. Speaker, dates back to the 5th January, 1978.

A MEMBER: That's right.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...in which five supporters of the Jamaica Labour Party...

A MEMBER: Where is the brigadista? Gone.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...was enticed by the promise of jobs.

A MEMBER: That's right. At Green Bay.

Mr. McKENZIE: Fourteen of them, Mr. Speaker, was pushed in an ambulance and taken to Green Bay.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Nineteen eighty, block the road *pon mi.*

Mr. McKENZIE: And I read, Mr. Speaker, what was said. It says, Mr. Speaker: *The victims, all here from Higholburn Street, the Gold Street area of a JLP stronghold in the South Side community in Downtown. They were identified closely to the Opposition Jamaica Labour Party, and were singled out as prime targets to be neutralized.*

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. McKENZIE: One of those, Mr. Speaker, who lost his life, was a Jamaica football representative, who lost his life. And the Minister - the Member talked about a mass burial. That was a mass burial.

Mr. CHUCK: Mass killing.

Mr. McKENZIE: All five of them were buried together at the May Pen Cemetery. And he speaks about Jamaica's image was tainted on the global community. Yes, it was tainted in 1978 under a PNP Administration. The five wasn't enough. The five wasn't enough, Mr. Speaker. On the 20th April, 1980, they went

back to Central Kingston and the names of those persons who went were known; they were convicted supporters of the Peoples National Party. Another five, Mr. Speaker, was murdered in their beds. And the Member talked about Jamaica's image has been tainted, Mr. Speaker? Jamaica's image was tainted on April 20, 1980. Mr. Speaker, May 20, 1980 - they talk about who is staining Jamaica's image - 153 women who were held in the State - in the care of the State was murdered - burned to death, Mr. Speaker...

A MEMBER: That's true, man.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Who did *ketch* it a fire?

Mr. McKENZIE: ...was burned to death at Eventide Home.

(Cross talk)

Dr. WHEATLEY: We don't reach the Gold Street massacre as yet; we don't reach Gold Street massacre as yet; we coming down the lines.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker... Mr. Speaker...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Who set the fire?

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, the Member...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Members, Members...

Mr. CHUCK: You weren't even born yet.

Mr. McKENZIE: The Member, Mr. Speaker... the Member, Mr. Speaker, the Member from...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Just a moment, Mr. McKenzie... sit... Mr. McKenzie, have your seat, please. (Gavels) Members, if we continue on this route we will be bringing the nation into disrepute.

Dr. WHEATLEY: The what?

The Deputy SPEAKER: If we continue along this route, on both sides... let us allow the Member to complete his presentation. He is making a rebuttal, to which he is entitled.

A MEMBER: That's right.

(Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Thank you for your protection, Mr. Speaker. But you said something that I am happy with. You said, continue the image... painting a bad image, something like that.

A MEMBER: He said continue your conclusion.

Mr. McKENZIE: Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, these 153 elderly women, Mr. Speaker, the Eventide Home...

Mr. L BUCHANAN: I say don't talk *'bout* that.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...in the constituency of South St. Andrew, was a constituency, Mr. Speaker, that solidly supported the Jamaica Labour Party. I say no more. That, Mr. Speaker - the Member talked about mass burial... go to National Heroes Park today, that was where 153 unfortunate, elderly women is now interred, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Wickedness.

Mr. McKENZIE: And the Member talked about tainting Jamaica's image. None of you over there can't say you don't know Donald (Zekes) Phipps? None of you can't deny knowing him.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. McKENZIE: Well, like you a country man.

A MEMBER: Where is he now? Jail.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, in April, 1999, *Zekes* was arrested by the police on serious charges. The City of Kingston came to a standstill. Armoured cars were burned, police vehicle was burned. It spread as far as Montego Bay. The people took to the streets of the Corporate Area. Commercial life was suspended for days, demanding the release of *Zekes.*

Mr. CHUCK: And who is he? Luther, you know him?

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. L. Buchanan)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, you talk about tainted - the Member talked about tainting the image of Jamaica, globally; it is unprecedented; it has never happened in Jamaica before, Mr. Speaker. The security forces came under intense attack from people, loyal to *Zekes.*

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. Chuck)

Mr. McKENZIE: They had to go into the cell, took him out, put him on the balcony of Central Police Station, and this is what he said - this is what *Zekes* said: *"Mi soon come. Mi have a little business fi tek care of; gwaan home.* (Inaudible)

Mr. CHUCK: You know *'bout* that, Luther?

Mr. McKENZIE: That is a stain on the image of Jamaica. This appeared, Mr. Speaker, in almost all the global newspapers across the world, Mr. Speaker. This, Mr. Speaker appeared - the City of Kingston was brought to a standstill.

Dr. WHEATLEY: British tabloid... British tabloid.

Mr. McKENZIE: Who is Donald (Zekes) Phipps?

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, you know who is *Bebe* Stephenson, or Stevens, or Steven, or what his name is?

A MEMBER: You know *'bout* that now. *Mi* sure you know *'bout dat from West...* you.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker…

Dr. WHEATLEY: ....after election, you. After election.

Mr. McKENZIE: …he is the conceptualizer, mastermind...

Dr. WHEATLEY: Was. Him dead.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...or was of the biggest fraud operation that has ever occurred in this country. This man was not an ordinary player in the lotto scam...

(Inaudible comment by Miss Hanna)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...he engineered and ran that operation not only in Western Jamaica but throughout the parishes. When the number 8-7-6 appears in section of the United States of America, people tremble. They are afraid to answer an 8-7-6 number coming out of Jamaica

Dr. WHEATLEY: Why?

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, that incident has not only tainted Jamaica's image, but it could jeopardize the relationship that we enjoy, Mr. Speaker, with the United States of America. This man, Bebe, the chief executive officer of lotto scamming in Jamaica.

Mr. CHUCK: ...Central St. James. Ehhh.

A MEMBER: Who was he? Who was he?

Mr. McKENZIE: Chairman of the Board.

Opposition MEMBER: Who was he?

(Inaudible comment by Mr. L. Buchanan/ Laughter)

Mr. McKENZIE: A coming to tell you.

Dr. WHEATLEY: At least you acknowledge… money.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Mr. McKENZIE: A coming to tell you who was he.

Mr. Speaker, the operations by the security forces is still going on. The Jamaica Labour Party wants to assure them of our support in the fight to bring an end to one of the most brutal, savage bit of extorting money from poor people.

Mr. CHUCK: And rich people.

Mr. McKENZIE: The Member of Parliament from West Central St. James, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask her, did she consider the implications...

Miss HANNA: Table the questions.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...of attending that funeral?

Mr. SHAW: He's not tabling any questions.

Dr. WHEATLEY: And what is her ministerial position. Her ministerial position.

Mr. McKENZIE: This Member is not an ordinary Member of this Honourable House, is a Junior Minister in the Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce.

Dr. WHEATLEY: What kind of investment she wants? That is the question, what kind of investment she want?

Mr. McKENZIE: In a country that deals with at least 70 per cent of trade and other agreement with the United States of America.

(Cross talk)

Dr. WHEATLEY: What kind of investment she is encouraging? Lottery scamming?

Mr. McKENZIE: Does she understand that this is one of the biggest scandals that has ever been seen? She not only attended the funeral, Mr. Speaker, she was bold enough...

Dr. WHEATLEY: She brave.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...to speak and said, "*Without his support…"*

Mr. SHAW: There was a councillor there to.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...*I would not be the Member of Parliament.*

(Applause)

Mr. CHUCK: Rahtid! (Laughter)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Shame, shame!

A MEMBER: That's low.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Bad, bad.

Mr. McKENZIE: The country, Mr. Speaker - the country, Mr. Speaker…

Dr. WHEATLEY: Look here nuh, wey you sey bout that?

Mr. McKENZIE: ...should condemn the actions…

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: I saw you at Jim Brown's funeral.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. McKENZIE: The country should condemn, Mr. Speaker, the actions of the Minister. She attended the funeral...

Mrs. ROBINSON: She was a participant. I heard her say it.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: ...gave support to a man who was not only the founder but the CEO, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Chairman in charge.

Mr. McKENZIE: Is not me say so, Mr. Speaker. The police, the police, Mr. Speaker…

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: Yeah, Mr. Speaker, is a scandal.

(Cross talk)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Is a shame. The most honourable thing for the Member to do is to resign as a Minister of State, because she has brought the Government of Jamaica in disrepute.

(Applause)

Mr. BROWN: (Inaudible comment) Nonsense!

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, who was Bebe. No one on that side with the exception of a few. He was President of the PNPYO, Western Jamaica.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Listen, listen.

Opposition MEMBER: Listen man.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Listen!

Mr. McKENZIE: He was a member of the PNP Executive for the YO, Vice Chairman...

Mr. CHUCK: Vice Chairman!

Mr. McKENZIE: ...of the West Central St. James constituency of the People's National Party...

(Cross talk)

...and one of the main financial contributors to the People's National Party in Western Jamaica who has tainted the Jamaica's image on the global scene.

Mr. Speaker, Bebe was so big that he once sat…

Mr. KELLIER: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. CHUCK: And *yuh* talk 'bout Dudus.

(Cross talk)

Mr. KELLIER: Point of order.

Mr. SHAW: *Sid dung.* Yuh too barefaced. Sid dung! There is no point of order.

Mr. KELLIER: I am on my feet, you shut your mouth. I am now on my feet and you're going to listen to what I have to say.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Ahh Mr. Shaw.

Mr. KELLIER: You shut your mouth. Shut your little big mouth.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. CHUCK: Let's hear the point of order.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie. Mr. McKenzie, please sit.

Mr. KELLIER: You shut your mouth.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw, allow for the Member...

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister, what is your point of order?

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, the Member has just indicated to this House that the gentleman to whom he refers was a major contributor to the PNP...

Opposition MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. KELLIER: ...in Western Jamaica.

Mr. SHAW: Yes, yes!

Mr. KELLIER: He must present the proof or withdraw it.

(Cross talk)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear. (Applause)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Well, listen, listen, listen you getting the answer.

(Cross talk)

Parchment, yuh caan know everything... you nuh know weh a gwaan.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. McKenzie, that particular statement...

Mr. McKENZIE: (To a Government Member) We have something for you. We soon deal wid you, don't worry.

The Deputy SPEAKER: ...that particular statement, Mr. McKenzie. You have made your point of order, Minister Kellier. Mr. McKenzie…

Dr. WHEATLEY: We gwine provide the proof, Mr. Speaker. We providing the proof. We have it man.

The Deputy SPEAKER: I will be heard in silence!

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Chuck.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Dr. WHEATLEY: *Yuh neva* get the money?

(Cross talk)

You *neva* get the money, Derrick?

(Cross talk/Laughter)

You *neva* get the money? *Yuh neva* get nothing.

Mr. SHAW: Yes, man lotto scam money they use down there to win election.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. SHAW: Lotto scam money.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Members, Members, Members. Members, Members, nothing is… Mr. McKenzie, Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: I would ask that you put that statement aside and continue.

Government MEMBER: Withdraw it.

Dr. WHEATLEY: You can withdraw the truth. How you must withdraw the truth?

(Cross talk)

Why? Is the truth.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CHUCK: The man was Vice Chairman.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Opposition House Leader.

Mr. D. SMITH: I think the…

(Cross talk)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Smith.

(Cross talk)

Mr. D. SMITH: I think the point you are making…

(Cross talk)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. D. SMITH: Hold on, hold on. Mr. Speaker, I think the point you are making in…

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Samuda.

(Cross talk)

Mr. D. SMITH: I think the point you're making, Mr. Speaker, is relation to the level of contribution. (Laughter/Applause)

(Cross talk)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker...

(Cross talk/Laughter)

...the Member said a major contributor and you asked him to withdraw. I would suggest to the Member that he just say contributor and let us move on.

(Cross talk)

Mr. KELLIER: He must first withdraw the statement.

(Cross talk)

Dr. WHEATLEY: He alluded to the fact that he is a contributor.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. CHUCK: He never said financial.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...if it pleases you, Mr. Speaker

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: No, no, no.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Stop the noise, man, stop the noise! Stop the noise, stop the noise!

Government MEMBER: Keep quiet.

(Cross talk)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Stop the noise, stop the noise. You think a cow yuh deal wid here. Go sid dung man.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: …and the Member from South St. James.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie, continue.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Go sid dung man. You can tek wey no more cow yuh nuh, Roger tag them.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Wheatley, please. Go ahead, Mr. McKenzie.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, the Member from South St. James I have great regard for him. Mr. Speaker, Bebe was a contributor....

Mr. SHAW: And he was Vice Chairman of the constituency...

Mr. KELLIER: Shut yuh mouth.

(Cross talk)

Mr. SHAW: ...lotto scam.

Mr. KELLIER: Shut yuh mouth.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...and I withdraw.

(Crosstalk)

Mr. Speaker, you know if I was allowed I would have closed already.

The Deputy SPEAKER: That's what I thought. Please continue.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, he was once a Member of…

Government MEMBER: Him withdraw....?

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes he has.

Government MEMBER: Noo!

Mr. McKENZIE: I said I withdraw.

A MEMBER: Yes, he has.

The Deputy SPEAKER: My understanding - just a moment. Sit, Mr. McKenzie.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, he was a contributor.

Mr. André HYLTON: ....ask you to withdraw your statement.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie, in your earlier presentation you said he was a major contributor.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: I neva sey that.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Just a moment, just a moment.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...major. You heard major...

The Deputy SPEAKER: So you have withdrawn the word 'major'?

Mr. McKENZIE: ...and said he was a contributor.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, he has to.

(Cross talk)

No, no, I will not allow that. (Gavels)

(Cross talk)

I will allow a contributor, but not a major contributor.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, and I have done that.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, but not a major contributor.

(Cross talk)

Mr. SHAW: And Party Chairman of the constituency.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Unless it can be proven.

Opposition MEMBER: Party Chairman of the Constituency.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: In the wider sense anybody can be a contributor to any political party. (Applause)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Yes I…

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker…

Mr. SAMUDA: But, Mr. Speaker, you know what they mean (Laughter) You know, you know... more than anyone else. You know what they mean.

Mr. SHAW: Oh, yes.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda, Mr. Samuda…

(Laughter)

Just a moment.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker., if you allow me to finish to the Member from.... a chance to speak.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Let me remind this Honourable House…

Miss HANNA: Mr. Speaker, they say you're conflicting...

The Deputy SPEAKER: ...number -

Mr. SHAW: Yes.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Conflicting with what?

(Cross talk)

No, no. I have said that any Jamaican from the push cart man to the Governor-General, any Jamaican can contribute to a political party.

A MEMBER: Absolutely.

Mr. SHAW: ...to the lotto scam. (Laughter)

The Deputy SPEAKER: But to say a major contributor carries a certain imputation, which if it cannot be proven in this Honourable House I will not accept. That is the point of it and Mr. McKenzie has already taken out the word 'major' so let us continue.

Mr. McKENZIE: Right.

Mr. SHAW: Just say major minor contributor.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker…

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Shaw, Mr. Shaw.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker…

The Deputy SPEAKER: Continue, Mr. McKenzie, you were doing quite well a while ago.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, one dozen wild horses *caan* pull me away. When the Member from Western St. Mary stained and trampled the reputation of the people of West Kingston, marginalize these people in the way that this Government continues to do. They used the people of West Kingston as a means of gaining State power...

Mr. CHUCK: Yes, exactly.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...and I'm not going to put up with it, Mr. Speaker, because…

(Mr. L. Buchanan rises to his feet)

Opposition MEMBER: State your point of order.

(Cross talk)

Opposition MEMBER: What is your point of order.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: No, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker...

Opposition MEMBER: Sid dung, sid dung, sid dung!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Opposition MEMBER: ...no point of order, *sid dung.*

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie, sit. (To Mr. L. Buchanan) Yes, what is your point of order, sir?

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, the Member from West Kingston...

Mr. CHUCK: What is your point of disorder?

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Go ahead, Mr. Buchanan.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: ...said. The Member…

Mr. SHAW: You said that already. (Laughter)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: I will say it as long as you interrupt me.... that this Administration came into power because we trample the rights of the people of West Kingston.

(Inaudible comment by Miss Grange)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister at the time...

Mr. McKENZIE: So what is the point of order?

(Cross talk)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: ...was the Member of Parliament for West Kingston.

Dr. WHEATLEY: What is the point of order?

(Cross talk)

Mr. SHAW: That's not a point of order; that's politics. Sit down.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie, continue.

Mr. McKENZIE: ...the Member from Eastern Westmoreland is talking fluff. Fluff, Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: As the Member of Parliament Mr. Speaker, is not all criminals come from West Kingston, Mr. Speaker, two

of the greatest doctors - one of the greatest heart surgeons in this country, Dr. Scott, is a product of West Kingston, Tivoli Gardens. (Applause)

Dr. WHEATLEY: And the President of the Senate....

Mr. McKENZIE: Dr. Lee Martin, one of the finest neurosurgeons in this country, he was recognized by the Governor-General of Jamaica for his contribution, Mr. Speaker. Talk about those things.

Miss GRANGE: Look here, look here. Is all right.

Mr. McKENZIE: Talk about the performance in this year's festivals of the Tivoli Gardens Culture Group.

Miss GRANGE: No, throughout festival.

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: Those are the things you need to talk about and stop using the negatives.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: So big up, Babsy too, yuh nuh.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, in closing... (Applause)

Mr. SHAW: You well want him to close now.

Mr. McKENZIE: Who was 'Bebe' I just outlined a list of 'Bebe' achievements.

Mr. Speaker, 'Bebe' can be described at age 31 to be the most decorated comrade anywhere in Jamaica.

A MEMBER: Hear! hear!

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, we never have to go down this road. If the Member from Western St. Mary was given guidance, and come to this Parliament, and speak....

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. McKENZIE: You never tell him that when he was speaking. You never said that to him when he was speaking. It bun you, tek lick, tek lick.

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. McKENZIE: Tek lick.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Control yourself.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. McKENZIE: I am not going nowhere. Tek Lick.

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. McKENZIE: That can't trouble me, that won't affect me.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie conclude, sir, you said you were concluding.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, if the Member from Western St. Mary had come to this Honourable House and called on all Parliamentarians to unite around, the fight against crime and violence in Jamaica, if he had come here and say to us that all those things that were done by the PNP and done by the JLP is a strain on the country; but to single out, West Kingston.

Mr. Speaker, my contribution today, Mr. Speaker has ensured that we set the records straight, Mr. Speaker, and I make no apology, whatsoever for what I have said in this Honourable Parliament.

Thank you. (Applause)

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, we will continue the Sectoral Debate. The Member from South West St. Ann, Mr. Keith Walford otherwise known as Bass Odyssey will give his presentation. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Constructive atmosphere, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Alright, let us settle down. We move into a perhaps, less controversial atmosphere at this time.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Luther Buchanan)

The Deputy SPEAKER: The gentleman is known for providing very good music, I suspect that will help to assuage our tempers and our - Mr. Walford go ahead. (Applause)

Mr. Walford, go ahead. (Applause)

Mr. WALFORD: Mr. Speaker, permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Permission is granted for you to speak from a seat other than your own, sir.

Mr. WALFORD: Mr. Speaker that was a marathon innings, very marathon innings. And again it leaves me to play the role of a night watchman for the second year making my Sectoral Debate presentation.

But, Mr. Speaker, before I start my presentation, I feel compelled to tell all my colleagues on both sides of the House that on Thursday night my constituency office went up in flames and as a result of that, we are going to have to be asking or making some emergency fundraisers. So I implore all the Members of the House to contribute generously that certainly we can build back our constituency office in South West. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand in this noble House today making my second sectoral presentation representing the people of South West St. Ann. A true son of the soil, I was born there, I grow up there, I presently live there, I do my business there and if my wishes are respected, Mr. Speaker, I will be buried there. (Applause)

Mr. BUCHANAN: True son of the soil.

Mr. WALFORD: Mr. Speaker, I continue to believe that with God by my side all things are possible, which makes me very proud and humbled to be the man chosen by the people to be their representative in this House. And in saying thanks I must also promise that I will continue to serve with integrity, loyalty, dedication and commitment. Mr. Speaker, I must now say thanks to the Prime Minister the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller for affording me this opportunity and accepting me as a Member of the People's National Party to serve the people of South West St. Ann. Her leadership, Mr. Speaker, makes us all proud to be a Member of the team. Thanks must also be extended to the Regional Executive headed by Minister Lisa Hanna.

Let me now acknowledge the presence of Councillor Winston Brown, (Applause) my caretaker Councillors Roger Martley and Arleen Clarke Dunbar (Applause) my constituency executive, office staff, relatives, friends, colleagues and last but in no way least, my immediate family who have all supported me through thick and thin. And thanks to all who continue to work for the development of our constituency. (Applause)

I want to recognize the presence, Mr. Speaker, of Mr. Jeffery Sharp, Principal of the Aabuthnott Gallimore High School for the

past 17 years, (Applause) along with teachers, students and all present who journeyed from St. Ann or elsewhere to give me their support today. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, South West St. Ann has made some tremendous strides since I made my sectoral presentation last year. I must thank Minister Anthony Hylton who heard our cry regarding the lack of an ATM machine and offered his assistance. I am therefore, very happy to report that approval was granted and in spite of a very vigilant Parish Council Enforcement Team who stopped proceedings for over a month, work has again begun and a structure to build two machines in the main town of Alexandria. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the people are appreciative, business places are hopeful and the town is starting to look up.

Mr. Speaker, last year I reported that our roads were the worst in the world. Today, Mr. Speaker, with some amount of repairs done I am happy to report that we have gotten a promotion. We are now ranked as amongst the worst in Jamaica. Mr. Speaker, we are heading in the right direction and if this strength continues soon we may be ranked as amongst the best in Jamaica.

The people of Plantain Walk and surrounding communities asked me to give special thanks to Minister Arscott for the allocation towards fixing the road, and they are hopeful that the remaining amount to complete the roads will be coming shortly. Residents who were accustomed to parking in the church yard and then walk home are now able to drive in fine style. Taxis can now take people home and farmers are able to move their produce in and out of the community with much ease.

Most recently, Mr. Speaker, I have gotten reports that two new houses are being built there by returning residence who always wanted to return home, but they were waiting on the road to be fixed. However, Mr. Speaker, if the repairs are not complete we may very well end up in the same situation we were in before. Special thanks must also be given to the Noranda Bauxite team who assisted in this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, road repairs from Lodge to Hessen Castle that started last year are now complete. (Applause) Junction to Bohemia also from last year is now complete. (Applause) Aboukir to McKenzie has been repaired under the JEEP Programme, Happy News on Higgins Land Roads have been finally patched by the Noranda Bauxite Company after many a dialogue with them about roads in their mining areas. Mr. Speaker, after almost a year since approval is granted work has finally started on the Alexandria to Nine Miles road and for this I have to thank the Minister of Tourism, Honourable Wykeham McNeill and Junior Minister Damion Crawford for getting funds for this project from the Tourism Enhancement Fund.

Mr. Speaker, the roads in Thatch Walk, Lime Tree Gardens, Endeavour, Madras, Barnstaple - they are so bad that we had to deposit loads of marl on specific areas as a temporary fix so that vehicles can actually use these stretch of roads. Mr. Speaker, there are a

number of other communities with the same cry, Hogg's Run, Wilberforce, Benin, Broadleaf, Rosetta, Green Hill, Clydesdale, Cascade to Buroughbridge, Summerton to Gibraltar and McKenzie to Murray to name a few. So we are begging for help. Last year I asked for assistance to rehabilitate the road that links Douglas Castle to Grants Mountain, a distance of three miles that would merge two of our bigger farming communities in touch with each other. This would not only assist our farmers, Mr. Speaker, in getting their produce in and out of the community but will also provide a shorter distance for residents to travel to hospitals, students to school and access to our main roads.

Mr. Speaker, when we visualize all the advantages that can be realized from this road being open, and if we are serious about nation building and development then this road must be fixed.

Roads, Mr. Speaker, are considered to be one of, if not the most important parts of basic infrastructure. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, South West St. Ann needs immediate attention.

Mr. Speaker, if the term 'water is the staff of life' holds true, then 95 per cent of the constituents of South West St. Ann are dead. For so long we are solely dependent on rainfall for this precious commodity, Mr. Speaker, the drought season seems to get longer every year. Most of our community tanks are in need of repair with some communities in need of tanks. In addition, the roads leading to some of our communities are so bad that water trucks refuse to go in those areas.

Mr. Speaker, the people of South West St, Ann are desperate, they are anxious, they have been waiting patiently and are beginning to get restless, especially when one takes into consideration that our sources of water continue to supply neigbouring constituencies with not a drop coming to our people.

Mr. Speaker, this cannot continue as when the long months of drought gets unbearable, the situation is more glaring. The murmurs and complaints are getting louder, tension is so thick you can hold it and threats are becoming contagious. With all that said, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of State in the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, Ian Hayles for his visit a few months ago. This certainly puts him in a position that he could attest to the urgency of the situation. Listening to the Minister's Sectoral Presentation and hearing him announced the South West St. Ann Water Project to be started soon was most heartening and has brought great joy, hope and anticipation to our people. Numerous calls were flooding the constituency's office wanting to know when the work will be starting.

Mr. Speaker, we now eagerly await the implantation of this project and we also want to say thanks to the Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, Honourable Bobby Pickersgill for the opening of the Cascade Water Project last year. This is the only section of South West St. Ann with

running water. Sir, the people are indeed grateful, but there is still a lot to be done before we can say that the project is properly completed. We continue to get complaints from the scarce distribution which some say, whereas the pipes add value to their households, greater benefits could be derived if there was water available through them.

On a recent visit by the Water Commission it was diagnosed that additional storage tanks are needed. Sir, we seek your intervention. We also, thank you and your team, on behalf of the Aabuthnott Gallimore High School for the additional storage tanks that were put in and your visit to commission them into service.

EDUCATION

Mr. Speaker, I now move on to education. Last year I highlighted the need for additional space that our the only high school in the constituency the Aabuthnott Gallimore High. I now use this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to thank the Honourable Ronnie Thwaites, Minister of Education for the addition of six classrooms which should be finished for the next school year. (Applause)

However, the Principal has communicated that these additional classrooms has mostly helped to cushioned the current overcrowding for a school that was built for accommodating 650 and now has over 1,200 students. This means that there will still not be sufficient space for much new admissions.

The permanent solution, Mr. Speaker, must be the construction of a new high school to accommodate the vast amount of our students that travel as far as Tacky in St. Mary, Fern Court, Spaulding, Trelawny, Browns Town, James Hill and Clarendon just to attend school.

I am fully aware of the very tight financial constraints, but the truth, Mr. Speaker, is having one high school for such a big constituency and trying to eliminate illiteracy without giving everyone an equal opportunity for education, it can be compared to making bread from stones.

Mr. Speaker, last school year we spent Four point Eight Million Dollars ($4.8M) from my CDF Fund on back-to-school assistance and examination fees.

We are currently paying transportation costs for some very unfortunate children to get to school. But most touching, Mr. Speaker, is a little girl whose GSAT average was in the 90s, her mother is mentally ill and sometimes roam our streets. Her father cannot be found, her grandmother does a little farming but nothing sufficient to send her to school. Mr. Speaker, her grandmother visited my office a few weeks ago and begged for the mother to be removed to a mental institution as she was now threatening her life. After reviewing the situation we decided the best solution is to put this little girl in boarding at the high school she was selected to attend. Her last report, Mr. Speaker, from the school is most encouraging. In English her grades are 86, for Maths her grades are 92, and overall she is placed second out of 44 students in her class. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, her report is excellent and I am very confident this little girl is going to make Southwest St. Ann very proud.

Mr. Speaker, pit toilets continue to be one of our main challenges for schools and we must say thanks to the St. Ann Mission Foundation, based in Atlanta USA, for their sterling contribution of building modern water closets at Madras All Age School. Mr. Speaker, the opening of this facility is on Friday coming and Minister of Education, Ronnie Thwaites has promised to be there to cut the ribbon. We have also noted, Mr. Speaker, the Minister in his Sectoral presentation addressed the elimination of pit toilets by 2016, and because we are one of the constituencies most affected we will not forget or allow him to forget.

Mr. Speaker, we have given assistance to a number of schools in Southwest St. Ann in order to improve conditions under which our children perform. Ten schools got assistance with their Labour Day projects, some for sports programmes, some for general repairs, some for Christmas treats, Mr. Speaker, the list goes on, and because we believe our schools must be given priority and encouragement.

We say thanks again for the new basic school in Grants Mountain and continue to beg for another where the children and teachers are having numerous challenges with space being the biggest of all. Mr. Speaker, our young ones need to get a proper start.

At Retreat we have donated $300,000 towards fencing the community centre so it can be used for a basic school. At Mt. Maria we have given $300,000 to assist with completion of modern water closets that was started by the past students. At Charlton Primary we have donated $300,000 to asphalt the schoolyard. Mr. Speaker, from my JEEP funding we have constructed a sidewalk that benefits not only the constituents, but children going to and from school, as well as motorists traversing the route. Prior to this, Mr. Speaker, at the dismissal of school our children would be all over the road. Today the sidewalk has become useful for all pedestrians including our most vulnerable, our children, the disabled, the elderly and motorists can now drive freely. (Applause)

The safety of our children, Mr. Speaker, is most important, and we are confident that these moneys are well spent, because looking at the GSAT results confirms that tremendous improvement has happened since last year.

Mr. Speaker, last year in my Sectoral presentation I thanked Minister of National Security, Honourable Peter Bunting, for permission to use the facility at the now abandoned Armadale Correctional Institute for a skills-training centre. This year, Mr. Speaker, we are inviting him to the opening of the Armadale Skills-Training Centre. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, after many meetings with the stakeholders I thank them for their cooperation and commitment to see this project through, as with limited amount of funding that was available from JBI, we had to find creative ways to make this project a reality. One such idea, Mr. Speaker, was to ask the constituents to give free labour in return for certification from HEART. I am proud to report, Mr. Speaker, that at our meeting for registration 105 constituents came

forward to volunteer their services and of this, 89 turned out for three days of training with HEART before the work started.

Mr. Speaker, we thank everyone who shares this dream with us and has taken part thus far. Our groundbreaking ceremony was held two weeks ago with Minister of Technology and Mining, Honourable Phillip Paulwell as our guest speaker, and I must hasten to remind him of the computer centre, solar energy and funding promised over the next three years for this facility. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people who will benefit so much from this gesture, I say, thank you, sir. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the present plan is for 20 students per skill training, which gives us a total of 120 students at startup. This facility has acres of land space available, so any skills-training that is conceptualized and approved can find a home at the Armadale Skills Training Centre. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the transformation of Southwest St. Ann has found a new gear. A committee is in charge of the facility, work on the renovation has started and HEART has committed to the training of six major skills on startup day with the option to expand depending on demand. Mr. Speaker, it is said from every bad can come some good, and for the death of seven of our young Jamaican females in a fire, at this facility, a few years ago, I call for a national commitment to make this skills training centre one of the best in the world. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, as the saying goes, you give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, but teach him a skill and you feed him for a lifetime.

Mr. Speaker, last year I also spoke to a civic centre to be built on lands given to us by the Minister of Education. I am most disappointed to say nothing much has happened to this project as the source of funding is still not confirmed. However, Mr. Speaker, we are now in possession of building plans and possible costings. I remain very hopeful that after some meetings scheduled to take place shortly something positive would happen. Mr. Speaker, it's a project that is most needed for the constituency and will give the people free access to the Internet. Our students and constituents will have an environment they can research and study in. Mr. Speaker, failure is not an option, it's our mandate. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, last year I spoke to the rebirth of the Alexandria Hospital and again I am most disappointed to report nothing new has happened since. This project was almost ready for groundbreaking and to my amazement and utter disbelief technical challenges derailed this progress. This project has sponsors who are willing to work with the Government of Jamaica on finding common ground at absolutely no cost to the Government. Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow this project to fail. This hospital is strategically placed and will serve thousands of people, not only from South West St. Ann but also from adjoining constituencies, and will take mountains of pressure off St. Ann's Bay and Spauldings Hospitals. Mr. Speaker, there is some good news. The sponsors are

still interested and talks have resumed some three weeks ago with my colleague…

Mr. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. WALFORD: Luther and the team coming down to resume talks. (Applause) We hope and pray that a common ground will be found so that people of Jamaica will benefit from the restoration of this hospital.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Walford, for the record, please, remember you do not refer to any Member by his name.

Mr. BUCHANCAN: Eastern Westmoreland.

The SPEAKER: From Eastern Westmoreland. All right?

Mr. WALFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

FARMING

I now turn my attention on farming, Mr. Speaker, and this continues to provide employment for approximately 75 per cent of the people of South West St. Ann. So we must say a very big thank you to JSIF, Noranda Bauxite, JBI, and all other stakeholders who have played a part in putting together a major farming project to include goat rearing, greenhouses, water harvesting and making lands available for farming. Mr. Speaker, the total cost of this project is $91 Million with Noranda Bauxite contributing $12 Million, JBI $19 Million and JSIF $60 Million. (Applause)

Greenhouses will be constructed at Nine Miles. Twenty greenhouses will be constructed at Nine Miles, 20 at Watt Town and 20 at Tobolsk! Each sight, Mr. Speaker, will have one pesticide store, one bathroom and one packing shed to satisfy the Food and Safety Modernization Act. Training will be done in Business Management, Greenhouse Construction and Production. So if farmers require more greenhouses they can build it now themselves. Sixty farmers will be given the opportunity to lease land by the Noranda Community Council. For water harvesting, Mr. Speaker, the mined-out pits will be shaped by Noranda Bauxite. JBI will provide liners to line the ponds along with solar driven pumps. The capacity of these ponds are up to seven million gallons of water. Mr. Speaker, in every form of life water is the most important ingredient and our farmers need this ingredient to produce.

Mr. Speaker, two traditional crops will be grown in the greenhouses. Sweet peppers and tomatoes and three non-traditional crops in broccoli, cauliflower and red cabbage. Based on data provided, it is estimated that when these crops are harvested our import bill for these crops should be cut by more than 50 per cent. Mr. Speaker, goat rearing has been planned for Linton Park and Orange Valley on lands leased to farmers by the bauxite company. A abattoir is to be built that will enable fresh mutton to be supplied to the hotel chain and for other demands.

Mr. Speaker, ever since I have been a Member of Parliament I have been asking for assistance to fix a tractor in my constituency, which would help our farmers greatly to cut production costs. To date, in spite of letters

written and a commitment from CDF Fund, there has been little or no response to such an important venture.

Mr. Speaker, after a very long period of drought, the farmers have been asking for seeds, fertilizer and farming tools, but with very little resources available I have sought the help of the farming agencies who have directed me to the Ministry of Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, a plan must be in place to identify our major farming constituencies and special attention must be given to these constituencies for allocation, distribution, for all farming materials and equipment along with technical assistance if we are to utilize the true potential of our fanners. (Applause) Simply put, Mr. Speaker, constituencies that are established and proven in farming should be getting more opportunities and more allocations than those that have limited farming production.

I listened to the allocation of monies on drain cleaning and major towns getting 75% of that budget. Transportation for the police is allocated mainly in areas that have a high crime rate. Buses for transportation, Mr. Speaker, are mainly put in high populated areas. So why is it our major farming areas are not given special allocations so they too can feel special about what they do, and in return the country will benefit from increased production? (Applause)

SPORTS

Mr. Speaker, the Sports Programme for South West St. Ann has been a major success. Communities across the constituency look forward to the competitions and proper community networking is being achieved. Our football competition attracted 24 teams which were broken into four zones and each division having their zone. Zone winners and runners-up then competed in a quarter final round with winners moving on to the semifinals and then ended up with a big final which saw a massive crowd from across the constituency coming out to support. Every week during the competition our divisions had a game to look forward to which brought sporting activities into the communities.

Our netball competition started about a month after the football was finished and this had an even bigger support than we anticipated. Ten (10) teams took part from across the four divisions. Mr. Speaker, on the day of the finals my colleague from East St. Andrew, M.P. André Hylton, was passing for another engagement and graced us with his presence. He got so involved with the crowd and the activities that he complained openly when he had to leave, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, our cricket competition completed our sporting activities for the year. Ten (10) teams took part from across the constituency with every game attracting a huge crowd of supporters coming out to support their communities. Mr. Speaker, to finish out the season my colleague from North West St. Ann, Dr. Dayton Campbell and myself, we put together a combined north-west/south-west team that played against the Melbourne team at Ultimate Sports Ground, which was well received by our constituents.

Sports, Mr. Speaker, will always have an important role to play in community development.

Mr. D. SMITH: What was the result of the match?

Mr. WALFORD: Mr. Speaker, on the issue of communities without electricity, South West St. Ann has its fair share. I have been speaking to the chief engineer for the Rural Electrification Programme without any success to date. Mr. Speaker, I have visited Douglas Castle where half of the community has no electricity and based off conversation and assurance from the chief engineer? I made a commitment that electricity will be coming soon. As such I am pleading with the Honourable Minister of Mining and Energy Phillip Paulwell for his intervention. It is most unacceptable that in these times where most things are technologically driven we have communities without electricity.

Mr. Speaker, South West St. Ann has numerous post offices and postal agencies that provide tremendous service to our constituents. However, in recent times most of them have been closed. Mr. Speaker, this Act is a grave injustice to our people as most of the elderly depend on the service to collect pension cheques and keep communication with loved ones who either migrated or moved out for better opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, the Gibraltar Post Office has been closed and despite the numerous attempts on suggestions on how to keep it open, the post office remains closed, the constituents now having to travel almost 10 miles to Brown's Town for their mails. A similar situation is happening at Watt Town where the building only needs some repairs. At Wild Cane we offered to provide the facility at no cost to the postal services, yet the post offices still remain closed. Mr. Speaker, most of the post offices are closed and alternative for mail delivery is not yet established. Honourable Minister, we again ask for your intervention.

Mr. Speaker, before closing I must make mention and say thanks to the members of the Mission Group, Mind, Body and Soul, which is a team of doctors, dentists, nurses and assistants who visit every year to provide free medical care for our constituents. (Applause) Last year, Mr. Speaker, over 1,000 people were attended to with free medication given and this group will again be visiting this year from August 4 to 8 and will be working from the Alexandria Clinic. (Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time be extended sufficiently so he can complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time for speaking be extended so that he may complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Walford.

Mr. WALFORD: Thank you, colleagues. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am appealing to the Minister of Finance the Honourable Peter Phillips to assist in granting whatever waiver

is possible for the importation of medication and other medical equipment used for this mission.

In conclusion, last year I used the concept of bones to cement my address. After one year in this arena I have come to realize that some of us have not made the transition from being jaw bone to wishing bone; they are still talking, talking, talking. But the legendary Garnet Silk has left a message 'Keep them talking, we have got have a lot more coming'.

Mr. HOLNESS: That's a dubplate.

Mr. WALFORD: Yes, sir, that's a dubplate.

Some of us remain as a wishing bone always hoping and praying that the change will continue capitalizing on the opportunities presented to us. Finally, some of us have transitioned well and join the true backbones willing to support and add vitality. That is while the jaw bones are talking, talking, Mr. Speaker, the backbones are working, working, working.

Thank you.

(Applause)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, it's not intended to do anymore business tonight. I move for the adjournment until we resume tomorrow, the 25th of June, at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House now adjourns until tomorrow, Wednesday, June 25, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at 7:02 p.m. until Wednesday, June 25, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015

WEDNESDAY, June 25, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:40 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Dr. Andrew Wheatley

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Before we get down to today's business let us welcome our visitors today, led by the Mayor of Kingston and St. Andrew, Her Worship. (Applause)

And just to remind our visitors that you are not supposed to participate in any way in the conduct of business.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 111**
  Registrar General's Department
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year 2007/08

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda.

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I wish to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days, I propose to ask the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining the following questions:

Question 1:

Will the Minister outline the duties and responsibilities of the Chairman of the Board of the Petroleum Company of Jamaica (PETCOM)?

Question 2:

Does the Minister agree that any deviation on the part of the Boards Chairman from the Terms of Reference governing his appointment is inappropriate and may serve to bring the entry into disrepute?

Question 3:

Will the Minister advise of the duties and responsibilities of the General Manager of the Petroleum Company of Jamaica or any person acting in that capacity?

Question 4:

Can the Minister indicate whether he is in receipt of any complaint via written correspondence or otherwise, from either the Chairman of the Board or the Acting General Manager of the Petroleum Company of Jamaica regarding the conduct of either officer?

Question 5:

If the answer to Question No. 4 is in the affirmative, will the Minister inform the House of the nature of said complaint(s) and advise of his response in seeking to address the matter?

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days I will ask the Minister of Local Government the following questions tabled in my name.

Question 1:

Can the Minister say what was the cause of the recent fire at the Riverton City Dump?

Question 2:

Can the Minister state if any private contractors were contracted to assist in putting out the blaze?

Question 3:

If the answer to Question 2 is in the affirmative, can the Minister name the contractors and how much money was spent to undertake this operation?

Question 4:

Can the Minister state the amount of fires that occurred at the dump since 2011?

Question 5:

Can the Minister also state how much was the total cost to extinguish these fires?

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to seek the leave of the House to withdraw the Provisional Collection of Tax, Minimum Business Tax, Confirmation Resolution 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 10th day of June, 2014, and standing in the name of the Minister of Finance and Planning at Item 12 under Order of Business.

The SPEAKER: Is it the wish of the House that this Resolution be withdrawn?

Mr. DALLEY: Yes.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Resolution withdrawn.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we will continue with the Sectoral Debates and we will be taking contributions from the Member from South East St. Catherine, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development. And he should be followed by the Member from Central St. Catherine.

The SPEAKER: Minister Fagan.

(Applause)

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker may I - I am seeking permission to speak from a seat other than my own?

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Mr. FAGAN: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I must give thanks to the Almighty who has made all things possible, including my being here to participate in yet another Sectoral Presentation.

I am grateful that the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller granted me the opportunity to serve in the capacity of State Minister and I am humbled by the level of confidence she has invested in me.

Mr. Speaker, I am equally grateful to the people of South East St. Catherine who have

elected me to serve and represent them in the capacity of Member of Parliament. (Applause) Special thanks to my Councillors, my constituency secretary, members of the constituency executive and many groups and organizations which have continued to work with me for the growth and development of the constituency. (Applause)

I would like to use this opportunity to acknowledge and thank my Minister, the Hon. Noel Arscott... (Applause) ....and my Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Dionne Jennings for their continued guidance and commitment to the vision of the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development.

Special thanks to my personal staff; my Consultant, Executive Assistant, Executive Secretary, Chauffeur and Security.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply appreciative of the work and support of the staff at the Ministry. To the Mayors, and today we have our Senator the Mayor of KSAC. (Applause) The Acting Mayor of Portmore, Councillor Thomas. (Applause) And there are a number of other Councillors and Deputy Mayors.

A MEMBER: All here.

Mr. FAGAN: All here.

To my immediate family, Mr. Speaker, my children and my wife, Joy, I thank you for your unwavering commitment and support. (Applause) You have gracefully accepted and shared in the challenges that are associated with representational politics and for that I am forever indebted to you.

To you, Mr. Speaker, I say thanks for conducting the proceedings of this Honourable House in a dignified and commendable manner.

To my fellow colleagues on both sides, I say thanks for your support.

I would like also, Mr. Speaker, to use this opportunity to welcome the many teachers and students from three of our schools in the constituency, Waterford High School, Waterford Primary School, Bridgeport High School, welcome.

(Applause)

(HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture, entered and took her seat.)

(HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, whilst I am here to present on my portfolio responsibilities at the Ministry of local Government and Community Development, I ask that you allow me a few minutes to highlight some of the programs and projects undertaken in my constituency, which have helped to improve the lives of many.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of Portmore are now experiencing improved distribution in water supply. As Member of Parliament, I have lobbied hard for significant improvements in this area.

(HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew South Eastern, Minister of State

in the Ministry of Technology, Energy and Mining, entered and took his seat.)

I am therefore pleased to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that over $1 Billion were spent on the development of new water sources for South East St. Catherine. (Applause) The project, Mr. Speaker, involved the construction of 10 kilometers of transmission main from the Rio Cobre into Caymanas, across Mandela Highway to the Marley Hill Reservoir at Braeton.

(Inaudible comment by Members)

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to the issue of the Wastewater Management System at every presentation that I have made in this Honourable House especially as it relates to Bridgeport and Independence City. Today, I feel very achieved and proud to announce that more than 200,000 residents across the Municipality of Portmore are expected to benefit from improved sewage facilities, as work is underway on the approximately $2.3 Billion in the cost of the Project in the Portmore area.

The duration of this project will be over Forty Five (45) months involving the decommissioning of the five existing Wastewater Treatment Plants, which are in an advanced state of disrepair. The plants include: Independence City, Bridgeport, Hamilton Gardens, Portmore Villas, and Caymanas Gardens, which receive a combined flow of just over 18,200 cubic meters per day. They will be converted into transfer Pumping stations for the delivery of effluent to the Soapberry Wastewater Treatment Plant in St. Catherine.

Mr. Speaker, South East St. Catherine will be impacted by eighty percent (80%) of the overall project and I want to commend the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change and in particular the Minister for seeing to the implementation of this project.

Mr. Speaker, another major project being undertaken in South East St. Catherine which will cost some $70 Million is the total rehabilitation of George Lee Boulevard. This involves the rehabilitation of the road, as well as drain cleaning and the reconstruction of drains. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, Hon. Dr. Omar Davies, as well as my fellow State Minister, Hon. Richard Azan who with his technical team visited the constituency, recognized the need for the project and saw to its implementation. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we are doing work in Waterford and we have done work to rehabilitate cross-drains and we will be moving swiftly to address the Adair Drive, which will cost somewhere in the region of $27 Million.

(DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas

Eastern, Minister of Health, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, the Jamaica Emergency Employment Programme, the JEEP, JEEP is still driving in and around South East St. Catherine. (Applause) And it is driving on better roads.

Mr. Speaker, in the third phase of the JEEP we were able to do three (3) major infrastructure projects. In the community of Armada Court, the retaining wall which threatened to undermine the apartments was rehabilitated at a cost of $4 Million. Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that we are in the hurricane season, I am happy that these homeowners can sleep much more comfortably knowing that their properties are secured. We have done work in Westmeade and we are also rehabilitating a classroom in Waterford at the Infant School, Waterford Infant School.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to education and I'd like to speak to the achievements of all the schools in the constituency but time will not allow me. Kindly allow me though, Mr. Speaker, to highlight Bridgeport High School, Waterford High School and Waterford Primary School.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bridgeport High School family, I want to extend gratitude to the Ministry of Education and the Minister, Reverend Ronald Thwaites for assisting with the construction of four classrooms completed at a cost of $13. 4 Million. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the aim is to have a single shift operating along with the 6th Form programme. I know the Minister of Education is committed to the process of removing all schools currently on the shift system and I am very happy that the Prime Minister announced in her recent budget presentation that Bridgeport High School will be one of the schools to be taken off in short order. (Applause) I can tell you, Mr. Speaker that the expectations of the Board, Principal and teachers, PTA and other stakeholders are very high.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Warmington)

(MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. Speaker, you know, I'm a Christian, I'm a Christian and every day, every day, Mr. Speaker, I have a Daily Bread, but one of these days I was going through the Bible, Mr. Speaker, and I came upon the Gospel according to St. John verse 1.

Government MEMBER: Preach it brother. Preach it.

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker, I got this Bible some time ago when I was in Israel, I bought it in Jerusalem and it stayed close to me, so I read the Bible every day. It says, Mr. Speaker, verse 45 says:

"Phillip findeth Nathanael and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And

Nathanael said unto him, Can there be any good thing come out of Nazareth? Phillip said unto him, come and see."

A MEMBER: Phillip… (Inaudible)

(Laughter)

Mr. FAGAN: Phillip said onto him, 'come and see'. Come and see.

Mr. Speaker, you know, I reflected on those two verses and I was thinking about Waterford and all the - all that has come out of Waterford and what people are saying. We are talking about Gaza, we are talking about those who are.... what world they are and Boss, First Boss and World Boss and everything else and sometimes when you talk about Portmore and listen to some of what comes out of the News, you wonder if anything good can come. But I'm here to tell you that we have good things happening in Portmore and in Waterford. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, an independent survey report published in the *Gleaner* on March 27, 2014 tracked schools' performance on receiving GSAT students through to CSEC.

In 2008, Mr. Speaker, GSAT intake, students' average in Maths at this same school was 35%. In that same year, the surveyors ranked Waterford High 135. Mr. Speaker ranked Waterford High 135 from the 150 schools in Mathematics on the list on the list of high schools. In a more recent survey, Mr. Speaker, the institution managed to move up 97 places and is now number 38 best performing high school in the subject. (Applause) I want to congratulate the teachers, the teachers who have to sometimes work five times as hard because we get students at that average as against some other schools that we say are high performing schools, and these teachers have worked very hard to bring these students to such a high level, congratulations. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am still on Waterford, Waterford Primary.

Waterford Primary School which is reporting significant improvement in the literacy competency of its students. Its success is attributed to what they call a 'Pull out Programme', undertaken in its enrichment centre. The school is seriously aiming at the eighty-five per cent (85%) mark, which is set by the Ministry; the 87% mark which is set is to be attained in 2015.

The public-private partnership is evident here, Mr. Speaker, as Digicel Foundation has invested in a reading room at this institution which has helped the students' reading level to move from an average of 56% mastery in 2009 to 77% mastery in 2014. I think this is a commendable achievement, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

(MR. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. KENNETH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, I was told that every year when the students leave the reading room they are reading at three times the levels which they started.

I must also hasten to say that the world's fastest man, in the 200m Mr. Warren Weir, is a past student of the said school, Waterford Primary School.

Government MEMBER: No, this year. This year.

Mr. FAGAN: This year.

Again, I want to commend the staff and encourage the students to continue to do well.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I am proud.... I didn't say band, you know. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be associated with the many achievements of the students and schools as a whole that is why this year through my Constituency Development Fund (CDF), I am making available yet again, upwards of $3 Million towards assistance to the education programme. (Applause)

We're moving on, the Independence City Community Centre which was rehabilitated at a cost of approximately $4 Million, again from the Constituency Development Fund was further assisted by the Universal Service Fund and equipped with 25 computers to provide computer access for that community. This Centre will also provide educational assistance through the E-Learning programme with volunteers from the neighbouring Portmore Community College and others. The Westchester Community Centre also will be improved project from the Universal Service Fund and a similar programme will be in place.

Mr. Speaker, I now move to - I don't intend to keep you long today. I now turn to my Ministry's portfolio matters. And I want to talk about safeguarding the most vulnerable amongst us.

Mr. Speaker, in our quest for growth, economic growth and development we need to assure the most vulnerable in the society are adequately protected. The Ministry, the Board of Supervision and the Local Authorities continue to address and improve the delivery of social assistance services to support the wellbeing and protection of the country's vulnerable persons.

At the Infirmaries, Mr. Speaker, the residential facilities, namely the infirmaries are critical in protecting the dignity of our most vulnerable citizens. While the system, Mr. Speaker, is not perfect and much of the infrastructure is old, we are making strides in the gradual but substantive improvements to these facilities. Mr. Speaker, during the 2013-2014 Financial Year, the sum of $62 Million was spent to undertake the following activities:

- The B Ward at the Portland Infirmary was repaired at a cost of $2.3 Million;
- The new sewage system in St. Thomas was completed at a cost of $11 Million. This will enable the connection of the new sewage system to the ward, which will be occupied shortly; (Applause)
- At Hanover, Mr. Speaker, a new ward was completed at a cost of $33 Million; and a new sewage system completed at an additional cost of $9 Million;
  (Applause)

- The Isolation Ward at the Manchester Infirmary was completed at a cost of J$5 Million;
- St. Mary, Mr. Speaker and Hanover, these Infirmaries received solar water heaters and panels from the Civil Aviation Authority at a cost of $6 Million. In addition, the perimeter fencing at the St. Mary Infirmary was completed at a cost of $ 1.2 Million and new lighting fixtures were installed to improve security at the premises;
- In addition, we are sustaining the food and vegetable gardens and the poultry projects at the Infirmaries which are used mainly to supplement the diet of the residents.

Mr. Speaker, we need to just hear these things, these are nice kind of a good PR hunch, but these are very important matters that we must listen to. Infirmaries and those vulnerable people in our society. We are not only talking about those things that we see some kind of a.... some (Inaudible) ...business, we are also talking about the good things that we're doing in the Infirmaries and working with the Senior citizens. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, all this was done to improve the accommodation, safety and security of the residents and staff at these facilities, but we are not stopping.

In this financial year, we will continue in our efforts to improve the facilities with infrastructural works to be carried out at the Manchester, St. James, Portland, Clarendon and St. Ann. We will be focusing on improving the perimeter fencing at some infirmaries, as well as installing solar and water harvesting systems to reduce the water and energy consumption costs.

We understand, Mr. Speaker, that we do not have the resources to do everything. Therefore, we continue to develop partnerships in order to support the social protection programmes. We congratulate and thank the many volunteers from the communities, the faith-based organizations, schools, private sector entities, voluntary groups, and friends in the diaspora whose immeasurable support and contributions have not gone unnoticed. To date we have a total of six (6) Friends of the Infirmary established, the most recent being in Hanover and St. Elizabeth. We thank this special group from the diaspora in Canada spearheaded by Mr. Lloyd Seivewright. Last year, we received donations from them valued at $2.4 Million through which the Ministry assisted in improving the living conditions of the residents of the Infirmaries and patients in some hospitals. The Ministry - based on the new Act, the Ministry is taking steps to secure Charitable Certificates for all Infirmaries under the recently promulgated Charities Act. The Hanover Infirmary has already received the Charitable Certificates.

I speak now about the Homeless, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry continues to provide budgetary support to all local Authorities for their homeless programmes. Last year the Ministry provided $16 Million to supplement the homeless programmes such as

shelters, drop-in centres and feeding programmes. Additionally, support is provided by our many partners and we cannot overstate its value. The focus is now on a coordinated approach to the administration of the outreach and support services to this group. Given the needs of this group, we have increased the support to the programmes to $21 Million in this financial year. The Board of Supervision continues to forge partnerships with several groups to support the homeless programme; indeed homelessness is everybody's business. For example, some of the proceeds from an initiative with the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) Kingston City 5K Walk-Run were used to support homeless shelters. Six (6) Homeless Parish Committees Hanover, St. Catherine, Portland, Manchester, Clarendon, Kingston and St. Andrew have been established to develop strategies and measures to address the homelessness in the respective parishes.

On the matter of indigent housing, Mr. Speaker, a total of 1031 houses were either built or repaired at a cost of over $104 Million. (Applause) This does not include what the Members of Parliament would have been doing from their Constituency Development Fund. Eight hundred and eighty-eight (888) houses were repaired and 143 houses were built. This was done through the Parish Council's and the KSAC in partnership with Food For the Poor, in order to improve the living conditions of clients. These repairs are facilitated through the use of poor relief funds, local donors and of course, I just mentioned it, the Parliamentarians through their CDF Programmes.

Mr. Speaker, providing the necessary care for the most vulnerable in the society requires partnership. The Prime Minister in her Budget Speech highlighted the significant financial support we will receive from the National Housing Trust (NHT). The Ministry has already engaged the National Housing Trust regarding programmes for:

- Providing Indigent housing;
- Improving infirmaries' facilities and
- providing care facilities for the rehabilitation of homeless persons.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry has provided estimates of costs for the works at some facilities and completed joint site visits to critical facilities in Portland, Manchester, Clarendon, St. James, Kingston and St. Andrew. We expect these discussions and site visits to bear good fruit very soon in this fiscal year. We thank The Most Hon. Prime Minister… (Applause) ....and the National Housing Trust for their commitment to creating housing solutions for all and I anticipate that others will get involved in supporting poor relief activities in the very near future.

As far as community empowerment and development is concerned, Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform this Honourable House of the progress have been made at the Ministry in the Community Development portfolio. In today's world of brand marketing, we sometimes make the grave error of discounting and devaluing our human capital which is vital to national development. I am privileged to be

involved in a Ministry which focuses on the development and renewal of our communities, without which brand Jamaica could not succeed.

In essence, we create opportunities for growth and development at all levels. Across the Jamaican landscape, the Social Development Commission has cemented its role to empower communities through implementing and ensuring strong governance mechanisms. In addition, they also provide the capacity for planning and developing reliable community data, project development and implementation.

While the Commission continues to be impacted by limited financial capital, the resolve and commitment of the staff, supported by partnerships, realized positive impact in all performance goals. The whole of government approach embraces coordination among Ministries, Departments, Agencies, civil society, the communities, support from our MPs and international development partners. We thank our international partners such as The United Nations Development Plan (UNDP), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Department for International Development (DFID), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Canadian Urban Institute, and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The communities' database which is unique to the SDC was boosted in the period with the completion of ten (10) Parish and 26 Community Profiles that have already begun informing community intervention strategies in rural and other areas. Mr. Speaker, the (13) PDCs and other governance structures played a key role. For example:

- Westmoreland & Clarendon PDCs collaborated with local community groups and assisted in the preparation of project proposals and business plans in the amount of US $70,000;
- St Mary, PDCs initiative, plastic bottle recovery programme focuses on working with schools to place receptacles to facilitate processing.

Today, we welcome the Mount Peto CDC from Hanover… (Applause) ....with their Western Spices and Pastries business model and Trench Town Ceramics and Crafts. The crafts could have been seen on the outside on display. (Applause) All projects, Mr. Speaker, all projects conceptualized by the Social Development Commission… (Applause) …and we want to commend them.

Mr. Speaker, the process of development brings rapid urbanization. While this urbanization puts pressure on local governments and communities, it stimulates creative solutions in cities and towns which promote local economic development and fight poverty.

I want to speak, Mr. Speaker, a little bit about Town Management.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry is very happy to facilitate the process of sustainable development, capacity building and transformation by providing the framework for responsive governance mechanisms; one such, Mr. Speaker, is our Town Centre Programme.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, St. Catherine is the parish in which the first Municipality was created as a pilot. The profile of the parish mirrors in many respects, the global trend of urbanization referred to earlier. The parish is therefore ideal for the pilot.

Mr. Speaker, the Town Centre response to the challenges of our urban centres makes good sense, in that it seeks to create a mechanism for citizen participation through the presence of Town Managers and the creation of an Advisory Committee.

Our urban centres cannot continue to operate as they are currently. We have to create an environment in which all stakeholders engage with representatives of local government in identifying the actions that must be taken to improve our urban centres. This facilitates orderly development and increases the investment potential and ultimately the economic development of towns.

The town of Linstead, therefore, has been selected for the first pilot in this Town Management Programme and the official launch of this town centre will be announced soon.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, we ask that the Member's time be extended sufficient to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently for him to complete his presentation?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Fagan.

(Applause)

Mr. FAGAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

We are making significant progress, Mr. Speaker, towards the creation of another Town Centre this time in Ocho Rios. We have advanced and facilitated discussions with the UDC and the St. Ann Parish Council which will own this process. The next stage will involve consultation with the MPs and the other stakeholders to identify their vision for the town and their priorities.

Mr. Speaker, outside of those towns that we are working on and later on we might be talking about Junction or we might be talking about Santa Cruz.

A MEMBER: Good place, good place, Junction.

Mr. FAGAN: ...or we might be talking about some other place, but where we are now is a very unique area in our country the University Town, we are looking at the University Town, and last year I spoke to it. Each Urban Centre will have its own unique issues for resolution.

A MEMBER: And what about the rural centre?

Mr. FAGAN: I spoke to that.

A MEMBER: Okay.

Mr. FAGAN: Last year, I referred to the interest of residents in the communities of Papine, Liguanea and the immediate environs in creating a University Town. Since then, since then, Mr. Speaker, significant work has been advanced by various stakeholders. And we want to thank the KSAC - and the Mayor

is here, it's very dear to her heart. Members of Parliament and our Member of Parliament is Andre Hylton and Damion Crawford, very involved in the discussions. Area PCDs and the residents of the University Town, the University of Technology, the University of the West Indies, Vocational Training Development Institute, Management Institute for National Development (MIND) and several representatives from other educational institutions in the community. We recognize the significant work done by the Faculty of the Built Environment at the University of Technology in this initiative. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, while the process is by nature lengthy, we're committed to improving - we're committed to moving it along. We've facilitated recent meetings with the KSAC, UTECH, PDAC, and we will meet with other partners at the UWI and other stakeholders to conclude their perspective roles and position on this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, the next step which will be spearheaded by the KSAC will seek to conclude the MOU and the Management Structure, Master plan, and the corresponding budget. Mr. Speaker, as part of this initiative, we are moving ahead with the KSAC's proposal to construct a pathway to specially accommodate the physically challenged who traverse the Papine and Elletson Flats area. (Applause) In fact, Minister... (Applause) To start the process, Mr. Speaker. My senior Minister, Minister Arscott, has approved $11 Million for this project and works are to begin shortly.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we want to sustain our cities. In 2013, the Ministry facilitated a partnership between the St. James Parish Council and the Inter-American Development Bank under Emerging Sustainable Cities Initiative. This initiative targets cities in Latin America and the Caribbean countries and employs a multidisciplinary approach to address challenges facing urban areas. ESCI has three dimensions of focus - Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change, Urban Sustainability and Fiscal Sustainability and Governance.

Out of this initiative we have The Draft Action Plan for Montego Bay, which identifies some critical sectors that must be addressed to ensure the sustainable development of the city. The St. James Parish Council through the support of the IDB now has an opportunity to develop a Local Sustainable Development Plan and secure funding for the implementation of feasible projects. This fiscal year Mr. Speaker, the Action Plan for Montego Bay will be finalized and funding support sought. We couldn't have done it without the support of the IDB. We express our appreciation to them as we anticipate further support. (Applause)

The SDC, Mr. Speaker, has a coordinating role. It is working with a number of community groups to develop economic projects across Jamaica such as:

- Hopewell - sorrel and ginger
- In other rural communities Alps Trelawny - Eco-Tourism, and this is by the CDC, and it creates employment and encourages

community based tourism while learning about traditional Jamaican herbs and remedies. Estimated project value is JA$3 million; six persons are employed.

- In rural Manchester, $2.5 Bee Keeping project by Grove Place Community Club... (Applause) ...is aimed at training farmers in the production and marketing of honey which will yield economic benefits including employment to the community.
- In Jeffery Town St. Mary - Jeffery Town Farmers Association operates three Community-based enterprises: multimedia centre, radio station and green house, where its products and services are used to generate income for a number of persons. Estimated value of that project is JA$8 Million. (Applause)

The Commission also utilizes sports to promote community development through the staging of the SDC 20/20 Cricket... (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. FAGAN: ...and recently we launched for this year, the Netball Competition which resulted in 382 cricket teams and 132 netball teams competing. More than $700,000 won by the respective national and Parish teams were also donated to community charities.

Governance and Institutional Strengthening, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development plays a strategic role in achieving the goals outlined under Vision 2030. More specifically, much of the work relates to National Outcome Number 6 - Effective Governance through the Governance Thematic Working Group. We continue to facilitate capacity building in a governance framework that will allow opportunities for citizens to participate in addressing the challenges in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, as we create the framework and facilitate a greater level of independence with Local Government, we are facilitating increased transparency and accountability. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear.

Mr. FAGAN: Portmore, I'm coming closer to the things that some people like to hear, Portmore, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in reference to the Consultant's Review of the Portmore Municipality Experience and the Report and Action Plan, I can report that we have concluded the following priorities outlined in the implementation schedule:

- The examination of the Municipality structure, which is being implemented in collaboration with the Corporate Management Development Division, in which Portmore Municipal Council is one of the priority areas of focus.
- The Review of the Charter of the Municipality including recommendations and amendments, including voting rights of the Mayor and the committee chairpersons and a Constitution for the Portmore Citizens Advisory Council. Drafting

instructions have been prepared and issued to the office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and these amendments are being done in tandem with the Municipalities Act.

(Applause)

So we're not just doing anything.

- Submission for approval for funding of the first Local Economic Development Project for Portmore under CARILED, is on its way.

And as far as the Parish Safety and Security Committee is concerned - and that is as far as I'll talk about Portmore - Mr. Speaker, we thank the UNDP for collaborating with the Ministry - the Enhancing Civil Society Participation in Local Governance for Community Safety, project which was completed in March 2004, through this project we have established Parish Safety Security Committees in 12 Local Authorities. Communities have been exposed to training in safety audits and various safety tools for urban crime and prevention. A safety and security handbook is now completed. This is a practical example of the strategy in which Local Government is assuming its expanded role as parish government. Our Mayors must be congratulated on the leadership role which they have been undertaking in leading the collaborative process.

Mr. Speaker, growth is facilitated in safe and secure communities and we are committed to the sustainability of the project. In that regard, Parish Safety and Security will continue to form part of the overall thrust of the Local Government agenda.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the Jamaica Fire Brigade, sir.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

MEMBERS: Sit down! Sit down!

Mr. CHARLES: You know you are disrespectful? Is can't the Member of Parliament you're talking to?

MEMBERS: Sit down! Sit down!

Mr. CHARLES: You're showing your background and you're home!

(The Speaker gavels)

(Cross talks/Laughter)

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker, at no time today...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. FAGAN: Jamaica Fire Brigade.

...and there's a report, Mr. Speaker, from the Auditor General that was tabled in this House yesterday. Mr. Speaker, I really want to thank the Auditor General and the Department for its performance audit on the management and operations of the Jamaica Fire Brigade and for providing us with the substantive report.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. FAGAN: Yes, I'm sorry, I want to thank her, yes, I want to thank her.

While I have not had the opportunity to peruse the report in detail, Mr. Speaker - because that serious analysis will have to be done - I've been able to review some of it, including the Auditor General's recommendation, some of which has already been implemented. Mr. Speaker, the Opposition Member in his presentation, highlighted certain findings, and used the

report in an attempt to paint a damning picture of the Jamaica Fire Brigade, and this administration's supervision and their support to the Brigade.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker, what the Opposition Member failed to do, however, is to point out to the people of this country, that the report not only covers the period for which this administration has been in office...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Dem don't even know dat.

Mr. FAGAN: ...it covers for the most part, all the years, all the years in which this administration was last in office. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the Report refers to the years 2007 to 2014...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Aah!

Mr. CHARLES: And what are before it? Twenty-five years!

Mr. FAGAN: ...Mr. Speaker, and it doesn't take much, it doesn't take much, Mr. Speaker, for us to realize that those seven years this administration has only been in office for two.

Mr. McKENZIE: Seven years? And wi only in a power fi five!

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker, the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, presided...

A MEMBER: Dem in a power fi 25 years!

(Cross talks)

Mr. FAGAN: ...Mr. Speaker, the Opposition presided over four years between 2007 to 2011, of the underfunding of the Brigade. (Applause)

If you look at Figure 2...

A MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. FAGAN: ...on the Analysis of the Jamaica Fire Brigade, request for Capital A, expenditure over the fiscal years from 2007 to 2014, which is on page 13 - and you can find it on the Report - you'll realize that more significant support came from after 2012. (Applause) You will notice that even though $235.8 Million was approved in 2011/2012, only $88.9 Million was received by the Brigade.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Shame! Shame!

(HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker, just look at 2013, the budget approved for that year was $223.9 Million and the amount received was the largest over the entire period and stood at $184.6 Million. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, in the 2014/2015 budget, JFB, 2014/2015, JFB received 37% increase over the previous years. (Applause) So we're not just talking...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: We're doing!

Mr. FAGAN: ...we're doing!

MEMBERS: Working, working, working.

Mr. FAGAN: Working, working, working.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about loud mouth, you know...

Government MEMBERS: Aahhhhh...

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker, it is about putting money where your mouth is.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, this Report speaks to information...

Mr. HENRY: Real money.

Mr. FAGAN: Yes...

Mr. HENRY: No...

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker, this Report speaks to information on JFB's response to emergency calls over the last seven years - 2007 to 2013, the JFB responded to 105,932 emergency calls. We know that 74 per cent were genuine fire calls; 12 per cent were special services.

Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight that the 11,695 represents malicious false alarm calls. Over the seven-year period, JFB responded to an average of 11 per cent of the 1,671 malicious false alarms. This is cause... Mr. Speaker, this is cause for concern, and we can encourage Jamaicans to do their part. We call on our nation's adults and children to desist from making such calls, as this only puts greater burden on the already scarce resources.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker... Mr. Speaker, we inherited...

Mr. McKENZIE: Stop talk about inheritance. You were there for 18 years.

(Cross talk)

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker...

(The Speaker gavels)

…Mr. Speaker, we inherited many of the challenges with the Jamaica Fire Brigade, and as my presentation will go on to show that we have been working tirelessly to address those challenges and develop the Jamaica Fire Brigade, and improve its capacity to improve service to the people of Jamaica. So, that is as far as the Report is concerned. We will - or my Minister will speak some more at another time.

The Jamaica - the work of the Jamaica Fire Brigade, Mr. Speaker, is sometimes perceived as merely responding to fires. I just want to remind you - just want to remind you just in case you believe the fire fighters are just about fighting fires. Mr. Speaker, the Jamaica Fire Brigade's support to businesses, goes far beyond all the needs to be highlighted. The Agency significantly supports the economy and the businesses by:

- promoting compliance with the International Fire Code and the Building Code;
- conducting development plans, reviews, and approving new construction permits for fire safety;
- providing protection and prevention information, and public education programmes;
- conducting Fire Prevention Audits on specific properties, island-wide, including their own fire stations;
- providing technical consultations and giving free advice to businesses and the general public on fire prevention and fire protection.

Mr. Speaker, the Jamaica Fire Brigade is also making a valuable contribution to business facilitation in this country. For the last two years, the Fire Department conducted inspections and approved approximately 1,600

subdivisions and construction of fire plans for new developments.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Brigade conducted over 1,400 building inspections for the same period. These plans and buildings were reviewed for Fire and Building Codes compliance. Due to the large numbers of buildings for inspections and resource constraints, Jamaica Fire Brigades conducts follow-up inspection, employing a risk-based approach.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot escape the realities of the economic climate that currently exists, but we will not allow our firefighters to operate under less than favourable conditions. (Applause) We are not in a position to carry out the large scale upgrading that is required; we are striving towards meeting full compliance with the Fire Safety Standards at our fire stations.

Mr. Speaker, last year the Ministry funded repairs and construction to a number of fire stations. These include the construction of two new engine bays at Santa Cruz... (Applause) ...Fire Station at a cost of $4 Million to protect these fire units from the elements.

You may recall, Mr. Speaker, the fire fighters at the Port Royal Fire Station were relocated, due to the discovery of asbestos in the roof of their fire station. Today, the station is asbestos free; the roof is replaced with aluminum sheeting material... (Applause) ...and it is currently functioning at full capacity.

In my Sectoral presentation last year, I mentioned plans to renovate the Savanna-la-Mar Fire Station. Today, I am happy to report that a contract in the sum of $29.5 Million has been awarded for the rehabilitation and construction... (Applause)

A MEMBER: At last.

Mr. FAGAN: The Brown's Town Fire Station, Mr. Speaker, is to be rehabilitated in this financial year. The process has already begun, as a contract valuing $2 Million has been awarded to effect repairs to the station.

Mr. CHARLES: Two million - Two million Jamaican...?

Mr. FAGAN: Yes, it's a start; it is a start.

Mr. CHARLES: That can't even buy two tires.

Mr. PRYCE: Two million more than what you allocated.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. FAGAN: Funds have been allocated - funds have been allocated in the Budget to commence preliminary works at Port Maria and Barnett Street. The rehabilitation work started in St. Ann's Fire Station on Labour Day, this year, is still going on. The Labour for this project is provided by the building and maintenance team of the Brigade, and volunteers in the community. The cost of rehabilitating work is $6 Million, and the Jamaica Fire Brigade will save about $4 Million for the community volunteer work and the Brigade team. And we want to thank the Fire Brigade and the community people... (Applause) ...for putting sweat equity amounting to about $4 Million dollars.

As far as equipment is concerned, Mr. Speaker, like many other entities, the Jamaica Fire Brigade has had to grapple with the real challenges, but they are not daunted. In the approved Budget for this year, a total of

$171.3 Million has been approved to address the equipment needs and the fire station repair. These include: rehabilitation of fire vehicles, $21.4 Million.

(MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern entered and took his seat.)

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Shaw)

A Government MEMBER: Aubyn soon come…. Aubyn outside waiting on you.

Another Government MEMBER: Run Audley, run, the owner *fi di yaad* a come. Aubyn soon come fi di seat.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. FAGAN: You know, I was *gwine* give you something in Christiana but I change my mind, you know.

Government MEMBERS: ...*Caan* go under the bridge. Aubyn can pass.... Aubyn can cross it.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. FAGAN: Fire trucks, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't want after today, we don't want us to be talking again about the way the Opposition Spokesman would have been talking about - you know, just talking about the same thing - ask the same questions: trucks... trucks... repair of trucks. Almost every meeting of this House, some questions are asked.

Mr. SHAW: Have you read the Auditor General's Report on the fire trucks?

(Cross talk)

Mr. FAGAN: We are tired to tell you the same thing, but we *gwine* tell you again. But I am going to tell you, I am not going to be telling you this thing again about what we are doing about fire trucks, because we have said it over, and over, and over again. One Member said that he was researching to find out what did you do while you were there, and he couldn't find anything - he couldn't find where you have even purchased one tire.

Government MEMBERS: Aahhh...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: Talk about 18 years. Come on.

Mr. FAGAN: I am going to tell you again; Mr. Speaker, I am going to say it again. I won't be long. I am just saying it again. Mr. Speaker, history will show - and I am telling you that I am not going to say it again because you have heard it time and time again. Mr. Speaker, history will show that this Administration is committed to the needs of the Jamaica Fire Brigade...

(Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: Do it; do it.

Mr. FAGAN: ...especially in relation to the purchase of fire trucks; especially in relation to the fire trucks. Mr. Speaker, within two years - within two years of returning to Government, we have acquired... within two years of returning to Government, we have acquired three new, fully equipped trucks. (Applause)

Mr. SHAW: We ordered them.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. McKENZIE: So what happen to those trucks that were on the sea coming?

Mr. FAGAN: And the cost, one hundred...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. FAGAN: ...and those units not cheap, you know, Mr. Speaker. We are talking about $133 Million. And again, Mr. Speaker, we are not stopping there; we have already commenced follow-up on the procurement for three more trucks.

Mr. McKENZIE: Three at a time.

Mr. FAGAN: Three at a time. And we are negotiating - the Board and the Ministry, we are seeking to find ways to see how we can improve the stock. It is important to highlight this, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. CHARLES: The firemen are happy, thank God. That's what you *seh;* no problem.

Mr. FAGAN: It is important to highlight this, as the last time, Mr. Speaker, the last time... Mr. Speaker, hear this... the last time that the Jamaica Fire Brigade received new trucks was in 2006.

A MEMBER: Who was in Government then?

Mr. FAGAN: Furthermore, Mr. Speaker - so we don't want to hear it again, because you have not done anything. (Applause) The Japanese Government is also donating two fire trucks for the parish of Westmoreland. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. FAGAN: These are to arrive in the island soon. So, we *gwine* have five...

Mr. McKENZIE: Soon when? How soon is soon?

. **Mr. FAGAN:** The trucks are here, they have been shipped and... Mr. Speaker, the Opposition Spokesman spoke also - we are mindful that the pilot Emergency Medical Service of the Jamaica Fire Brigade has its challenges, but provides a critical service. Therefore, in this financial year, and as mentioned earlier, we will be purchasing one ambulance, repairing two, and the Japanese Government has donated two ambulances which will be arriving in the island, again soon.

Mr. FAGAN: This, Mr. Speaker, will bolster the fleet...

Mr. McKENZIE: ...save the applause...

Mr. FAGAN: ...of the pilot EMS to the previous complement of six working ambulances.

And as I move on, we spoke about hydrants, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the House that as at June 2014, 65 per cent of the fire hydrants are working.

(Inaudible comments by Government Members/Applause)

Mr. FAGAN: The Brigade will be intensifying its hydrant maintenance programme having received US$13 Million grant - sorry, Jamaican grant…

Mr. McKENZIE: Thirteen Million US?

Mr. FAGAN: Thirteen Million (J$13M), I'm sorry,...

Mr. McKENZIE: Oh!

Mr. FAGAN: ....grant from the Japanese government for islandwide fire hydrant rehabilitation programme.

Mr. SHAW: Is a bigger difference that from US ($) and Jamaican ($).

Mr. ROBINSON: I know. He clarified it.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Man clarified him the thing already.

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Is a big error that.

(Cross talk)

Mr. FAGAN: Some of the equipment has already been received to commence this programme in a few weeks. The donation will also facilitate the purchase of a vehicle dedicated for this purpose.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Support for the Jamaica Fore Brigade, Mr. Speaker, continues with the receipt of state-of-the-art equipment from the United States Government valuing US$300,000, and this is US [dollars].

(Cross talk)

Work out that. This donation followed a three week training course for the members of the Jamaica Fire Brigade in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear emergency operations. Mr. Speaker, the costs associated with providing fire services are significant and increasing, but we are working with the Jamaica Fire Brigade to...

Government MEMBERS: Working, working, working.

Mr. FAGAN: ...reduce the risk and impact of fire on our communities.

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: If you were working...

Mr. SHAW: You have nothing in there 'bout working.

(Cross talk)

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker, this Government is committed through partnership to provide a modern fire service.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

(Cross talk)

Mr. FAGAN: Today, I really want to express thanks to the Ministry team, and salute the vibrant and dedicated Board, the Commissioner, the recently retired Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners and other service men and women who have worked assiduously with who remain dedicated as we are to serve Jamaica land we love. (Applause)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Charles)

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker, I have outlined a raft of programmes, projects and initiatives that the Ministry has been embarking on over the past year, and as the visionary international artiste, Stevie Wonder, sings, these have been signed, sealed and delivered. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker, our firefighters and, indeed, our citizens have called for fire fighting vehicles. We have answered that call with five. Three bought, two donated, all fully equipped signed, sealed and delivered. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, expect more, because we are procuring three additional fire trucks.

Mr. CHARLES: What about their accommodations?

Mr. FAGAN: Mr. Speaker, $62 Million was spent on infirmaries to improve the accommodation, safety and security of the residents and staff of these facilities. This has been signed, sealed and delivered. With support from the NHT and other partners we will be doing more. We care about the indigent, the homeless as evidenced by the 888 houses, which have been repaired and 143 built to the value of $104 Million in partnership with the Food for the Poor and the

councils these have been signed, sealed and delivered. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we are rolling out the town centres, so you can look out for the launch of the Linstead town centre, followed by Ocho Rios, and the University Town. Mr. Speaker, we continue to empower communities and revitalize rural development through the SDC with projects 42 economic initiatives valuing in excess of $200 Million signed. Sealed and delivered. (Applause)

(Cross talk)

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we are aligned to the global agenda of developmental to local government. Our programmes support this, our commitment underpins it and our collaboration assures it.

(Cross talk)

(MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central, entered and took her seat.)

So, Mr. Speaker, when we declare that Local Government is creating opportunities for Growth and Development it is clear from my presentation that the Government is actively and persistently moving towards having this goal, signed, sealed and delivered.

(Cross talk)

May God continue to bless us and bless Jamaica land we love.

(Applause)

Government MEMBER: Signed! Sealed! And delivered!

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

The SPEAKER: Miss Grange.

Mr. CHARLES: Gwine give you some teaching now, listen.

(Applause)

(The Speaker leaves the Chair and the Deputy Speaker presides)

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SEPAKER: Yes.

Miss GRANGE: I seek permission from position other than the seat assigned to me.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Permission granted, Miss Grange. Continue.

Miss GRANGE: Thank you.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, once again I have the opportunity to address this Honourable House in my capacity as Member of Parliament for Central St. Catherine and as Opposition spokesperson for information, youth and children, entertainment and culture, sports and gender affairs.

Government MEMBER: What a portfolio.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Superwoman.

Miss GRANGE: I told you before seven persons took over from me.

Government MEMBER: Ahhh! (Laughter)

Miss GRANGE: These carry with them tremendous responsibility and it speaks to the confidence that the people of Central St. Catherine have in me and also the confidence that the Leader of the Opposition, Andrew Holness, has reposed in me.

(Applause)

Opposition MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Miss GRANGE: I am extremely proud and humbled to work side by side with such

an astute individual as my leader who in his unstinting service to his country, continues to lead the Jamaica Labour Party with distinction; a young man who epitomizes the potential and future of Jamaica.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

He continues to grow from strength to strength, showing respect for the Jamaican people and getting their respect in return (Applause) as he articulates a vision for a country in which the lives of the people will be truly balanced under his leadership by the right policies and programmes under good governance.

I also want to thank my parliamentary colleagues on both sides for their support as well as the Clerk, her team and the other parliamentary staff. Let me also thank various other stakeholders who are here and elsewhere this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Speaker and his Deputy in a special way for being good referees most of the time.

A MEMBER: Most?

Miss GRANGE: Most of the time.

I thank the Members of the media whose role as the Fourth Estate ensure that accurate information is communicated to the public. As the Opposition spokesperson with responsibility for information I have a vested interest in a free and democratic press and a media that will carry out its functions in a fair and unbiased manner. The responsibility that you have must never be taken lightly. You must endeavour to perform your duties to the highest ethical standards. I hope that one day in the near future more comfortable accommodations will be provided for you, indeed, all of us who have to function in these limited facilities.

A Member of Parliament has at least three roles: to his her political party, to the Parliament and above all else, to the constituents. I stand here this afternoon as a proud Member of Parliament of the constituency of Central St. Catherine.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Miss GRANGE: The people whom I have been given the humble pleasure to serve I respect and I love you. In fact, as I stand here I see some in the Gallery who have come to give me support as I bring their interests to the Parliament and to highlight our challenges and our successes. With that said, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge a few of these persons, some of whom are present here today: the headboy and headgirl from the Spanish Town High School (Applause), the Tawes Meadows Famers Group, a branch of the Jamaica Agricultural Society (Applause), the people of Tawes Meadows, Ellerslie Gardens, Up Town Spanish Town, French Street and surroundings, St. John's Road, Jobs Lane, Forrest, Gordon Pen, Eltham schemes, Buck Town, Ensom City, Brunswick Avenue and environs, all of you.

Government MEMBER: There are here now?

Miss GRANGE: They are here.

My three Councillors: the veteran, Theresa Turner, the young and brilliant, Kenisha Allen, and the skillful footballer Barrington Bailey. Theresa Turner from Hampton Green Division; Kenisha Allen from

the Spanish Town; and Barrington Bailey from the Ensom City Division. They are all here and I really want to express my appreciation.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence of my daughter, Paula McNeill Surtees (Applause) and her husband, Jonathan Surtees. (Applause) I must express appreciation to my security officers who have difficult time monitoring my movements (Applause/Laughter) and to my staff…

Mr. DALLEY: What about the grandchildren?

Miss GRANGE: No, they are away studying, yes. And my staff for their continued support and for putting up with me, because I know I am not easy. I really put a pressure on them; I'm the first to confess. I must also make special mention of Raymond - everybody loves Raymond. Raymond, my driver.

(Inaudible comment by Government Members/Laughter)

Miss GRANGE: You want to be my driver? (Chuckles) Raymond went to death's door and came back miraculously. And I must thank Minister Ferguson (Applause) for his help in ensuring that miracle. And more than anything else, I must give God thanks for all his mercies.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: Some good Kumina!

Miss GRANGE: Now I will touch on constituency matters. I have one of the best constituencies in Jamaica bar none. The second strongest constituency for the Jamaica Labour Party and I am very proud of that constituency. Now although the need is great we do much with very little. Through thick or thin, through good or bad times we bond together. We have to give thanks as we continue to see a decline in crime. Murders and other serious crimes are down because of the hardworking policemen and women of St. Catherine North who serve the communities of Central St. Catherine and the greater Spanish Town, and I really want you to applaud the work of the police. (Applause) I also want to applaud the decent law-abiding citizens who cooperate with the police and who lead the various communities. (Applause) And, of course, I make every effort to implement strategies to assist in the constituency, especially the young, unattached, unemployed youths to steer them away from anti-social behaviour and to give them hope.

Today, as I speak to you, I do so as one who has given all my life to public service. I grew up in it. My youth passed me by because I was so absorbed in community work and being part of a community that was proud of its existence. Many times the intellectuals at the university, those days we called it the ghetto, they would be studying the ghetto. I say why are they studying me? Why are they studying Desmond? Why are we case studies?

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. McKenzie)

Miss GRANGE: But today I think the need is greater because there are greater challenges in the inner city compared to the time when we were growing up. So I grew up in the community of West Kingston where we lived each other's lives and shared each

other's pain and happiness. So my choice to enter representational politics stems from the abiding desire, Mr. Speaker, to serve my people at the highest level. Politics for me is the highest form of service and I think everyone in here should really consider the important role you play in representing people. So I serve my constituency with the greatest humility and passion and it's all about family and one people; it's not about me and them, it's about us.

Now what is frustrating, however, is when I come to this Honourable House year after year with the same concerns and I do not see the Government or the relevant State agencies taking appropriate measures to address them: youth and unemployment, road rehabilitation and infrastructure development, welfare, housing and education.

There is an urgent need, Mr. Speaker, for inner-city/urban renewal in my constituency and in fact in all the inner- city communities in Jamaica and in fact rural development as well. There are too many informal settlements which also make policing difficult; this coupled with, and I repeat, a very high youth unemployment rate which increases the risk of criminal activity.

Great attention, Mr. Speaker, must be shown to the needs of the youths. The Government needs to let the IMF know that its policies are affecting our ability to adequately provide for the young, the unemployed and the vulnerable in our country. If we do not provide meaningful opportunities for our youths we are increasing our social problems. We are mixing a cauldron filled with unemployment, crime and despair. It is not okay for our young people to get up each day and there are no jobs! It is not okay for our youth to get up every morning and there are no opportunities! I know that no one in this Parliament can be satisfied or sleep well at nights knowing that our young people are in need of such greater intervention to allow them to turn their lives around. I know it bothers all of you regardless of what side you are on because it's reality.

I suggested in my last Sectoral Presentation that there should be a special scholarship fund from the Government to assist at the tertiary level young people from inner-city communities to further their education. I do the best I can with the allotment of $4 Million plus additional amounts through verification through virement from the Constituency Development Fund, the CDF, over $5 Million, but the need is so great that the impact is small. It is now almost back-to-school time and many of these unemployed parents are visiting my office for assistance with school supplies and fees. The resource provided is but a drop in the bucket and simply cannot satisfy the needs of our less fortunate, nonetheless, I try not to turn anyone away. But those who sometimes are critical of the CDF being provided to Members of Parliament if only they knew, if only they will take our space for a day and to understand for those of us who are genuinely prepared to serve how painful an experience it is for us and most challenging.

In my constituency most of these households are single parents, single mothers

in the majority and they try to put food on the table for their families but there is never enough to go around. So I repeat this call again today for a special scholarship fund and it's not difficult, it is not because of the IMF why the Government can't do it. I know funds exist that can do it. I know there are funds that are sitting there just earning interest.

Mr. DALLEY: Where?

Miss GRANGE: I know. What about the Housing Trust where there the funds are there that you will never touch. I am not talking about contributors' funds that have to go back to contributors. I am talking about funds that are going to sit there forever and ever and ever; the interest on those funds can be used. In fact, former Prime Minister Mr. Bruce Golding had identified an initiative, at least introduced an initiative where a foundation would have been set up that some of those funds could have been used to assist people who have served their country well, established well-known individuals who have fallen on hard times and some of those funds can also be used to assist in this effort. It just takes a little imagination and a little creativity. You know a lot of funds sitting there and interest is being earned and it sits there and it's like we don't have any imagination and people in the meantime they are out there hurting. So I repeat this call again, it is only through the concerted effort that we will effect the necessary changes in our society.

All across Jamaica there are intelligent young people whose prospects are stunted, whose dreams are shattered because of financial challenges. They are prevented from accessing higher education which could help them, their families and their communities to get out from under the stranglehold of poverty and ultimately make our nation prosper. This is a matter of national emergency, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of National Security is never going to get crime under control if the Government does not see the full picture, the big picture. A piecemeal approach to national development is insufficient. We need a national youth policy and programmes that can actively engage the youths so we can transform their lives.

I stand before this Honourable House with a burning passion that will not be quenched by the mere rhetoric on youth. I want to see our leaders rolling up those sleeves and going into the trenches with transformative policies and programmes. It's not about calling press conferences. It is not about taking a photograph because you have done something for an individual in your constituency. I don't take photographs when I make my contributions because it's not about the camera and it's not about promoting yourself, it's about serving the people.

Mr. SHAW: ...20 photographs yesterday. You know you had 20 photographs in your book.

Miss GRANGE: Speaker, road rehabilitation and infrastructure development in my constituency...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Parchment)

Miss GRANGE: Colleagues, Mr. Speaker, I really want you to listen.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I can't be beaten.

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker, road rehabilitation continues to be a major problem. Through JDIP and JEEP we were able to partially patch a few roads and rehabilitate Ensom Avenue and Kennedy Lane, in the Ensom Division. But there is so much more to be done in all three divisions and so I must express my deep disappointment, Mr. Speaker, and frustration that the $10 Million allocated now cannot even complete one little road in my constituency. Interestingly, Mr. Speaker, when I listened to all the praises and thank yous being showered on Ministers Davies, Azan and Guy by MPs on that side for all the roads and infrastructure work done in their seats, I wonder if I am living in a different country or I am in a dream world.

Mr. PARCHMENT: Ask Pearnel.

Miss GRANGE: It cannot be the same Jamaica. Mr. Speaker, I wish I could shower thank yous to the Ministers, but unfortunately I am not as fortunate as those on that side.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Dalley)

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker, I marvel when I hear the thank yous.

Through the JSIF Inner City Basic Services Programme...

Mr. HENRY: I left that programme in place two years too late.

Miss GRANGE: Through the JSIF Inner City Basic Services Programme some grand plans were presented to community of Tawes Meadows. Ten years later, Mr. Speaker, not much has changed and the World Bank funded programme has come to an end. My biggest disappointment is that after all these years the sewage plant is still not replaced. The people continue to live in an unhealthy environment sewage flowing from the sides of the tank, sewage flowing out of the manholes, sewage in the gutter, sewage running in the gully, sewage running in the streets, sewage, sewage everywhere, Mr. Speaker, while children study, play and get sick.

Miss GRANGE: It is a disgrace, and who gets blamed?

Opposition MEMBER: The Member of Parliament.

Miss GRANGE: The Member of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, what else can we do? Should we take to the streets?

Opposition MEMBER: Yes.

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker, should we?

Opposition MEMBER: Yes.

Miss GRANGE: NEPA served an enforcement order on the NWC for them to become proactive in joining with JSIF to solve the problem. So there was a new plan to replace the existing dysfunctional sewage plant with a new pump station and pipeline to take the sewage out of the community to the NWC treatment facility in Eltham. I got a commitment that the Eltham treatment plant would be upgraded. Sixty Million was originally allocated for the upgrading. Mr. Speaker, now I am told there is no money. Where is the money?

Mr. WARMINGTON: That's what them always do and tell you, man.

Miss GRANGE: Where is the money?

Mr. WARMINGTON: That's what them gwaan always tell you.

(Heckling)

Miss GRANGE: I have correspondence.

Opposition MEMBER: Bruk Government.

Miss GRANGE: …up to last year, that gave me details of the plan…

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: They know they can't win your seat, you know Babsy.

(Heckling)

Miss GRANGE: That gave me a date when they would look at all the responses to the tender that was put in the paper, and that they intended to start the project December, 2013. Where are we now, Mr. Speaker? We are in the middle of 2014.

On Labour Day the citizens took it into their hands. They went and they purchased pipes with my assistance, and they used those pipes to channel the overflow of the sewage out of the community into the drains. Now this drain was getting a little of the sewage before, so now it is all going into the drain and is exposed near the roundabout, the Old Harbour roundabout. You should also see how the people used cement and marl and filled out the road that was eaten out around from the manholes.

A MEMBER: Thanks to Norris Grant.

Miss GRANGE: Norris Grant can't go there.

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, Babsy, continue.

(Heckling)

Mr. SAMUDA: Don't mek him drag you into that.

Miss GRANGE: And, Mr. Speaker, out of desperation the people took it into their hands and covered the manholes, patched the road with cement and marl, got the sewage out of the community and into the drains. That can't be healthy. It cannot be healthy.

The Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, he is responsible for the environment, you know. Tells me that it will take $200 Million to solve the Tawes Meadows sewage problem and over $400 Million to upgrade the Eltham sewage plant and to take the waste by pipeline from Tawes Pen to the Eltham plant.

Opposition MEMBER: Dem can spend how much million in Fagan's constituency.

Miss GRANGE: But, he says, "We working on it. We working, working, working on it." The next time I heard anything about it there was a one paragraph in the junior Minister's presentation about the problem and all that one paragraph told me, or what it did was to underscore the importance of the saying, "promise is a comfort to a fool". Mr. Speaker, well I am not a fool, and the people of Tawes Meadows and Central St. Catherine, they are not fools. I want to know when something will be done. Something must be done, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Spanish Town could be our worst nightmare if it is allowed to decay through neglect to provide funding for infrastructure development.

Mr. Speaker, I am sending a message through you and maybe the Prime Minister is

listening in her office. This matter is of urgent, urgent importance. Welfare cases are numerous in my constituency. I can never find enough in my CDF to deal with welfare matters, especially funerals. Sometimes I have ten funerals in one week. People dying from natural causes, people dying from stabbing, people dying from gunshots, it is, Mr. Speaker, a very -

(Heckling)

Mr. Speaker, it's a very painful experience. Family's bodies, their loved-one's body sometimes stay six weeks or more, because the funds are just not there to bury them. Most of the communities are either informal settlements or occupied by the very poor and unemployed. Most household heads are single mothers with a number of children. So while the CDF allocation helps it is really a drop in the bucket, and what I find is that, there are housing schemes built by developers surrounding the inner city communities, so while the inner city communities and the conditions gets worse and decay sets in, these housing schemes that embrace these communities keep being developed and poor people are not being provided with housing solutions to make them too live in decent environment.

Housing and land tenure is another major issue but there is now a glimmer of hope, Mr. Speaker, and I can say one thank you on that side.

I wrote to Minister Guy or through an attorney we wrote to Minister Guy about 8 Chambers Lane - and the folks here, it's important that you listen. Eight Chambers Lane the people were being evicted. Property owned by a Dr. Ronald Borne who has put up for years with the squatting, and as he advance in age he said, "Ms. Grange, I have to settle this thing. I have to leave my family; you will never know when I will go. I have to leave my family in a settled situation. I am either going to evict these people so I can sell the land or you have to do something about it."

Well, I received a letter from Minister Guy or a copy of a letter where he has indicated that Government will acquire the land through the declaration as a special improvement infrastructure area under the Local Improvement Community Amenities Act. So these persons will not be evicted but instead will be made some time, in the future to assist - will be assisted sometime in the future with housing problems. And, Mr. Speaker, I will give credit where it's due. I will give credit where it's due, and that shows the respect.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The Member's time for speaking has expired.

House Leader.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I now ask that the Member's time be extended sufficient to complete her presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time for speaking be extended so that she can complete her presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Miss Grange.

Miss GRANGE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to my colleagues. And now will move quickly to education. I am

spending quite a bit of time on my constituency.

Opposition MEMBER: That's right, that's right.

Miss GRANGE: As I should. My spend on education annually from my CDF allocation provides items such as uniforms. We do uniforms for all the schools. We cut the uniform, we size it, we get the name of the child, we package it and we send it and it is distributed and they sign for it. We do books, book vouchers and we pay fees at all levels from basic to tertiary. This is in addition to the CSJP and the JSIF assistance that is given at the tertiary level, but again, this only skims the surface of what is a growing need.

There is an increasing number of young people, Mr. Speaker, from the Spanish Town communities who have matriculated to tertiary level, but are unable to find funding to go to university or have had to drop out of college and university. This reinforces my earlier call for a special scholarship fund - as the Prime Minister walks in - from the Government to assist young people from inner city communities to further their education at the tertiary level. I know she was listening in her office, and I know that the problem I face with these youngsters not being able to fund their education at the tertiary level, I know that the Prime Minister in her constituency has the same experience, and all my other colleagues have the same experience.

Mr. DALLEY: All.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Miss GRANGE: So, at this point, however, I would like to thank the CSJP and JSIF for their social intervention programmes in the communities in Spanish Town although at times, Mr. Speaker, at times I am impatient with how they do things and disappointed with the long delays in getting results, but I still thank them because they are making every effort to do a job. I think maybe sometimes it's just how the system works. So I just want them to hear me, I want them to understand because sometimes I beat up on them, but I just want them to know that I do appreciate their work.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker, I now turn my attention to the bigger picture, education and looking to the future in my constituency. Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Education is going to be the most powerful weapon that I will use to change Spanish Town. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing on which both sides of this Honourable House agrees, is that this country cannot advance unless we achieve an educated workforce, one which can fit into this globalised market place. We have to find the mettle as leaders of this great country, to improve the education product to the point that it produces the outcomes we all know and agree we must achieve and achieve now.

Noted American educator George Washington Carver pointed out that education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom, a freedom I want for the constituents of Central St. Catherine to enjoy. Freedom to achieve their full potential, freedom to

experience as the movement from darkness to light.

Mr. Speaker, the ongoing debate surrounding ranking of secondary schools in Jamaica has not escaped my attention, particularly because I work very closely with the schools in my constituency. Constituents in Central St. Catherine, though typical in many respects, is unique in many ways. Time would not allow me this afternoon to elaborate, but suffice to say that, though too many of my constituents exist on the margin, barely eking out an existence, the vast majority recognize the importance of education and are eager to ensure that their children get the best education afforded by the system. You should see how proud they are when they get their children ready and they are walking them to school. It's just a wonderful experience. You can see the love and you can feel the love. They want their children to be better educated than they were and they want their children to have a better life than they have had.

Spanish Town sits at the centre of the constituency and have worn a black eye for too long, owing to its perceived though sometimes a reality, violent reputation. What cannot be denied though, Mr. Speaker, is the success stories which emerge from this darkness year in, year out. We are not short of shining stars. Mr. Speaker, I am so proud of Stafanie Taylor of Gordon Pen. You know who she is? World renowned female cricketer. (Applause) She comes from Gordon Pen and a graduate of Eltham High School.

There is the Spanish Town Dance Theatre Company, and right now we don't have a space to rehearse on a regular basis. But I am looking forward to the Youth Information Centre and the NYS facility, which should be opened soon to the young people of Spanish Town.

Minister Hanna, we hope that it will be opened soon; I understand that it will be completed by the end of the month. It will be, and we will have a grand opening, and we will have the facilities where in addition to training, we will have a fantastic cultural development programme. As a matter of fact, St. Catherine, and Spanish Town, in particular, has the largest number of marching bands in the island, I think everybody knows that. But every year we have students who defy the odds and excel academically, every year we have that. But is not as widespread and as commonplace as I would like it to be. Too many of our children are failed by the system and are falling through the cracks.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is what gives me the drive to pull out all the stops to ensure that the educational institutions within my constituency are delivering an education product for which we can be proud, turning out students who can emerge out of the system academically qualified, and be able to make a meaningful contribution to this little rock called Jamaica.

It is commonsense that quality schools produce quality citizens and skilled workers, and that employers are attracted to places having highly educated labour. We all know

that it is not only about time in school that counts, not only about the time that is spent in school, but rather, the quality of the school.

We also know that there is mounting evidence that the quality of teachers is the key ingredient to student performance. I am placing great emphasis on improving the quality of the schools, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency, as I am convinced that this is a formula that will give the children of the constituency the best chance of achieving their highest potential as productive citizens.

It is no secret, Mr. Speaker that two secondary schools in my constituency, Eltham High School and Spanish Town High School, have not been achieving the educational outcomes we would want to see. The reasons for the underperformance is many-faceted, ranging from a paucity of necessary resources, financial and otherwise, to a student population which seem unmotivated to strive for excellence. I have pondered the situation, Mr. Speaker, for some time, searching for solutions, and I have finally found the solution.

One of the things I recognize is that the school leadership is so engrossed in the every-day running of the school that they need more support for the ongoing assessment to develop and enunciate a vision for the forward progression of the school.

I felt that the School Boards could play a vital role in this regard, if we could attract the right skills and the right individuals to serve. Specifically, I have sought to have the Boards of Management revamped with new and vibrant leadership that will be working with the Ministry of Education and the educators in the school to improve teacher and student performance over the next three years.

Mr. Speaker, I decided to reach out to a cadre of individuals I felt could serve on Boards, and bring that renewed kind of visionary and effective leadership to the process. Some of these individuals I thought would never accept, but former Prime Minister, the Most Honourable Edward Seaga, taught me something: never be afraid to ask, you can only be told no, but you may just be told yes. And so I went out and I recruited some dynamic individuals, individuals who are well connected and individuals who are very versed on matters of education.

I want to acknowledge, however, the hard work of the previous Board members, and to thank them for giving generously of their time and expertise; and for that we will forever remain eternally grateful.

Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, I am now seeing results in the short time since April, and exciting things are on the horizon.

At Eltham, for example, plans are afoot to introduce a culture of excellence at the school, to build on the solid foundation already established in its brief history - it's a school that's only thirteen years old. A new Board of Management was appointed on April 1, and the Board has already articulated its vision for the school, and has set about collaborating on the development of their Five-year School Improvement Plan, to chart a course for the realization of that same vision.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. McKenzie...

Mr. McKENZIE: I have just crossed the floor.

The Deputy SPEAKER: You have crossed the floor?

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Would you like that to be recorded in **Hansard**?

Miss GRANGE: No. He is coming back. (Laughter)

(Inaudible comment from Mr. Robinson)

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker, what is that vision?

The Deputy SPEAKER: No, I think you need to apologize, Mr...

Mr. ROBINSON: I withdraw it.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes. The Speaker made the ruling and I am simply following that ruling.

Mr. ROBINSON: I withdraw it.

The Deputy SPEAKER: If you wish you can take it up with the Speaker, or...

Mr. ROBINSON: I withdraw it.

Mr. SHAW: He said you must apologize!

Mr. DALLEY: Shut yu mout' and go back go sleep!

The Deputy SPEAKER: Continue, Miss Grange, continue.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Miss GRANGE: Okay. Mr. Speaker, what is the vision for Eltham High School? The vision is referred to as the S-T-A-R, the STAR Programme. The acronym speaks to Student Transformation using Academic Resources. The programme will run deeper than just the name of the overall programme, with the inclusion of motivational motifs, reward systems, *et cetera.* Each student in the school will be known as an Eltham High School STAR. Outstanding performers will be given badges, announcing them as Special STARS in subject areas, grade levels, sports, performing arts, *et cetera*, for example, a SHINING STAR in Mathematics.

To get buy-in from the entire school communities we will make parents, Proud Parents of an Eltham High School STAR, we will make teachers Proud Teachers of an Eltham High School STAR. And for the communities and supporters, we will make them Proud Supporters of an Eltham High School STAR. And we will design and give them appropriate badges that they can wear proudly to say that they are part of the Eltham High School STAR Programme.

Mr. Derrick SMITH: St. Catherine High in there?

Miss GRANGE: I am sorry?

Mr. Derrick SMITH: St. Catherine High in there?

Miss GRANGE: Not any more.

The Board recognizes that it cannot be business as usual at the school if the STAR Programme is to be a success. We have set about doing a SWOT Analysis of the school, identifying strengths which need to be built on, weaknesses which need to be addressed, opportunities which must be endorsed, and threats which must be repelled.

The single most significant weakness in the school, Mr. Speaker, has been identified as the two-shift system. It's a weakness in every school, in fact. So bringing an end to this system is the number-one priority to be replaced with what is known as the Staggered-

Day system, a system which has been used successfully by one of the leading secondary schools in the Caribbean, Campion College, and which can accommodate the present school population in Eltham High. So, our consultants are drawn from schools such as Campion College.

However, the transition does require some resources. And I am sorry the Minister of Education isn't here today, but I will make sure he gets a copy of this. The school, with assistance from me, as the Member of Parliament, has been in dialogue with the Ministry of Education to provide as much of the resources needed in order to achieve this. The plan is to fill the gap with donations from private sector companies, charitable organizations and NGOs.

Now, among the other plans we want attainment of the minimum academic target set by the Ministry of Education for all secondary schools in Jamaica, whereby at least 54 per cent of the Grade 11 cohort must attain passes in at least five subjects, including Math and English. This target is to be achieved by the end of the 2015/2016 school year.

We also will be reintroducing the Grade 7 Remedial Education Programme in September. This one-year programme will seek to identify students who are assessed as below the required level to take on the secondary school academic curriculum. They will then be placed in the programme and an accelerated primary level Grade 5/Grade 6 combined primary-level curriculum will be taught to them. At the end of this process, they will then be placed in the regular school system, starting at Grade 7.

Mr. Speaker, I find that many youngsters from my constituency, because they have not - they need remedial training and they are not of a standard, the schools in the area refuse them. They are sent to Point Hill, they are sent to White Marl, they are sent to distant locations. Parents don't have the money for bus fare, they don't have the money to give them lunch, and so what happens? They don't go to school. And they are the ones who end up on the corner - the men, and the girls end up making babies at an early age.

So, with this remedial programme being put in Eltham High School, we will also be able to channel - those students who were being sent to high schools far from the area, we will now be able to take them in. And in fact, the Minister of Education has promised me two specialists for this programme, and I want to really thank him for that. (Applause)

Now, all Members of Parliament were offered dysfunctional JUTC buses, and a number of them - in fact, most may not have taken up this offer. So, Mr. Speaker, I went around with a little note and a line for signature, and I got almost all my colleagues on this side to sign, giving me the bus. So I now have thirteen buses, twelve of which will be used at the Spanish Town High School - which I will tell you in a little while what they are going to be used for - but I need additional buses, because I need buses for Eltham High School. Because what we are going to do is to tastefully refurbish two JUTC buses to be used as the remedial education centre until more

permanent facilities can be built at the school.

And in addition, we will refurbish two buses to create a Sixth Form, for we are introducing Sixth Form in Eltham High School. We will start small but we are doing that, because there are students who have had difficulties getting into Sixth - St. Catherine High can't take anymore in Sixth Form, and so we are now going to create a Sixth Form in Eltham High School, and use those buses, tastefully refurbished, as the facility to house those students.

Eltham High School has an excellent Culinary Programme. And so what we are going to do, those students will end up with on-the-job experience, because we are going to strengthen the programme so that they can be extended into a catering facility that can provide catering for functions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'll move on to Spanish Town High quickly. I am pleased to announce that that the Jamaica National Heritage Trust last week handed over to the Spanish Town High School, possession of the Old Military Barracks Building located adjacent to the school. The existing capacity at Spanish Town High School is 1,200 places and therefore, with a school population of 2,400, we've had to also deal with a shift system, so we have two shifts there as well.

Now if you know where it's located, there is no holding area, there is traffic right around the school. And if you were to visit that school now, you go through one entrance, which is like a tunnel, and people are going in and out through that tunnel and the school is - in fact you would think you're in a bus terminus that is not adequate for the number of passengers it should serve.

So the Board of Management is desirous of restoring the Old Military Barracks Building in order to provide the facilities that would enable the school to operate on a single shift. And this is in keeping with the Ministry of Education's objective. They want to take all the schools that are on shift system to put them on a single system. And this is also in keeping with the goal that was set by the former Minister of Education, Mr. Andrew Holness, our leader.

So through assistance from the Ministry of Education it has been determined that if the school is to operate on a single shift with a capacity of 2,400 school places, the following facilities would have to be housed in the restored building. And interestingly enough, in restoring the building, we are going to maintain to the extent that we can, the old architecture. Because what we also want to do is to make sure those students appreciate and understand the heritage and the history of Spanish Town.

So we will be looking at eighteen additional classrooms, nine special room labs, and these would include Integrated Science Labs, a Music Room, a Reading Room, two Computer Labs, one Food and Nutrition Lab and a Resource and Technology Lab, which would include Art and Industrial Techniques. Some of the additional bathrooms...

Mr. CLARKE: The building is safe?

Miss GRANGE: Yes, yes. Because the Jamaica Heritage Trust - they're working along with us. Some of the additional

bathrooms stalls required for students - because right now the bathroom facilities are inadequate - staff bathroom facilities and Staff Room and a Sick Bay.

Mr. Speaker, once the restoration plans have approved the Board of Management intends to seek funding from local and international donors. And I can tell you, this Board is very dynamic because they've already made contact and they're already getting commitment to assist in the restoration.

It is important to note that the cost of restoration is not expected to exceed that required for new construction, so the restoration efforts will have the two-fold benefit of providing urgently needed educational facilities, while at the same time, preserving a building of world heritage significance. That's being created, Mr. Speaker.

When the Spanish Town Military Barracks was constructed it stood as a fine and impressive eighteenth century structure. This type of structure has now become very rare. Barracks like this survive at Woolwich, England and the Morne Fortune in St. Lucia, but not many of examples exist. In the 1970s the barracks building was saved from demolition, like Devon House was on account of the protest of the citizens of the time and the Spanish Town branch of the Georgian Society.

Suggestions to rehabilitate the building to accommodate modern offices, school rooms, a record office, a library, trade school, went on unheeded and the building was not maintained and gradually it deteriorated. It is therefore now appropriate that the building be fully restored and integrated into the Spanish Town High School Complex where it will enjoy renewed relevance to the lives of the youth and wider community of Spanish Town, the first capital of Jamaica. And while it's being restored the students will also get training in restoration.

In the interim, however, the Board will be taking some repairs and construction over the summer holidays to provide five additional classrooms. And this is where the twelve JUTC buses will be used. I am short of about six buses and so I have - I'm going to be approaching my colleagues on that side to hand over their buses to me. Okay? Right. I also need some as community centres, so the more buses I get - you don't want them, I can use them. We need all the hands on deck. We need the commitment of the students, the school administration, teachers, Ministry of Education, private sector companies and most of all the parents. We cannot afford to let up even for a brief moment, too much depends on it. The future of this country depends on the improvement of Spanish Town; both in terms of education and in terms of infrastructure.

The first capital, a town that could be a problem - I just want to say it nicely, a town that could be a problem for Jamaica; a town that should be respected and given the attention that it truly deserves. I hand it over to the present administration to hear that cry and to hear that call and to respond.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I spent a lot of time on my constituency and I do not intend to speak for a long time for much longer except that I have...

Mr. CHUCK: To say hello to Lisa.

(Laughter/Inaudible comments)

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker, although I've covered a lot of areas in the portfolios that I shadow, I'm just going to highlight two key areas, Children in State Care and the National Youth Service. I'm acutely aware of the need to always be mindful of the human rights of others. This is of increasing concern when those whose rights we seek to protect are our children and even more importantly, those children in homes. The state must recognize what an awesome responsibility it is when children are entrusted to its care. These are the most vulnerable of our population and if we do not protect them who will?

Mr. Speaker, last week I was extremely shocked when along with many other Jamaicans, I discovered that sexual education material with inappropriate content was being taught to our children without the proper supervision or approval. The Child Development Agency - the CDA - entrusted with protecting our children was unaware of the programme eight months after it started. We're forced to ask the question, how come the Minister with responsibility for our children was also unaware of the programme or its contents, eight months after it had started? In fact, the CDA found out by reading the Jamaicans for Justice Newsletter. That's how they found out, the Newsletter from the Jamaicans for Justice.

And it is when those in civil society began to raise a fuss that the Minister sought to express outrage, even attacking the local human rights group. Jamaicans for Justice has accepted that some of the content may have been inappropriate.

Mr. Speaker, how can twelve-year-olds and many others below the age of consent be exposed to content which speaks to anal sex as between a man and a woman or a man and man or between man and animal? How could they be? And then, how could twelve year olds between twelve and sixteen be told that in protecting yourself you must discuss with your partner? Twelve-year-old has a partner - a sex partner?

I don't think those in here today, many are aware of this and how bad it was. Can you imagine, can you imagine you have a twelve year old or even a sixteen year old, even a seventeen, being taught about oral sex and anal sex and having discussions with their partners?

Mr. DALLEY: It is wrong, it is wrong.

Mr. McKENZIE: It must be banned.

Miss GRANGE: It is wrong! It is a disgrace!

MEMBERS: It is wrong, it is wrong.

Miss GRANGE: What right do they have to be teaching children of that tender age, an impressionable age, about these types of sexual activities and without the consent of their parents, their guardians or the agencies responsible for their care and protection?

But, Mr. Speaker, what is equally troubling is the fact that those who should know were unaware of the training programme for so long. Another troubling aspect is that there is a clear need for the introduction of a suitable sex education programme, given the issues surrounding

sexual and reproductive health, and the CDA should have been the one to have implemented such a programme to educate our children.

There is a saying where there is a vacuum it creates an opportunity. The JFJ grab the opportunity.

Mr. McKENZIE: Dem fi go talk to Civil Rights and...

Miss GRANGE: Yes, there needs to be a proper programme of sexual and reproductive health to assist our children as they grow.

(Inaudible comments)

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker, why is it that after making a startling...

(Heckling)

Mr. Speaker, I want you to listen carefully. Why is it that after making a startling revelation weeks ago about a particular children's home, the Minister has so far not seen it fit to order a general audit? In addition, we've not seen where the Minister has seen it fit to introduce an appropriate intervention programme.

Madam Minister, we need answers. I'm not beating up on you, people think so, but I have to do what I have to do. We need answers.

I've tried over the past many months...

Mr. CHUCK: It's a friendly advice.

Miss GRANGE: ...Mr. Speaker, to be as delicate as I can when making reference to the Minister, but the truth is too blatant to remain hidden behind euphemistic language. Minister, you got to step up.

Sitting in air conditioned offices and having hastily called press conferences without being aware of all the facts is no way to run a sensitive Ministry as one dealing with the affairs of children.

The resignation of Dr. the Honourable Carolyn Gomes, OJ, from JFJ Board and Susan Evans, another board member, Mr. Speaker, should send the message and serve as a lesson regarding the appropriate thing to do when you fall down on the job.

Mr. Speaker, I note that the Minister has released... It is important you all listen yuh nuh, this is now not about politics it's about children.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Miss GRANGE: Because they admit, they admit, that they took a programme into the homes that was inappropriate.

Mr. DALLEY: And you believe it's inappropriate and the Minister believes it's inappropriate and she said so.

Miss GRANGE: That's right, but heads must role everywhere, because there's something called accountability.

So let me go on, Mr. Speaker. I note that the Minister has released an interim report from the CDA on the controversial JFJ administered sex education in six, six, privately operated children's home. And by the way, most of the homes for which the CDA is responsible to monitor and the Ministry of Youth is responsible for, most of the homes are privately operated, most of the homes, there are only a few operated by Government. So if most of the homes are privately operated, what else is going on in those homes that we don't know about?

While the timing of the release of the Report is quite interesting, it is timed when I

am making my presentation and I find it very useful. What I find most curious is that the matters highlighted as findings or discoveries, if you will, should not, in all sincerity, be discoveries at all. It reminds me of somebody who said they discovered Jamaica, when people were already living here.

Mr. Speaker, these are things the CDA and indeed, the Minister should know about. It is a matter of being on the ground and having one's finger on the pulse as a Minister. I am not saying that if I were the Minister, it could not have slipped in, but it certainly would not have taken me eight months to know what is going on. While one caption by a media house concerning the interim report reads: Homes had no authority to allow lessons. We must acknowledge that the Minister does not have the luxury of not being on top of her game, especially in a situation where this rather controversial curriculum was being delivered over an eight-month period.

The fundamental issue here has not been addressed. What has happened at the top? What has happened with the Ministry and the CDA's monitoring structures? What has happened to the checks and balances mechanisms? Who is accountable, Mr. Speaker? Who is accountable? Who is elected to be accountable? Accountability is the key. Somebody fell down on the job - many persons fell down on the job, but who is ultimately responsible? I want you to just think about what these youngsters were taught. This is not about politics now; this is about our children.

Mr. Speaker, I rest my case and I leave it to conscience of each and every one of us in this Chamber.

I move on to children with mental health issues. There are many children who have been placed in State care that have not been properly assessed or diagnosed. It is very troubling that there are wards of the State with mental challenges that range from mild depression to psychotic. There are wards of the State who have serious behavioural challenges that are mixed with those who are in need of just care and protection. No significant efforts are being made to assess them. The CDA and the Ministry of Youth, what they call a *smile boss,* that seems to be satisfied with a psychologist and two social workers, cannot cater to the needs of our children in State care. The mixing of wards with various developmental, behavioural, and mental needs can only exacerbate the problem.

I have received reports, Mr. Speaker, of children who have been abused in State care, even by other wards of the State. The abuse ranges from verbal and physical, to sexual. I heard of one case recently where a ward was beaten by another ward. The ward was removed from the institution, sent somewhere else, and then eventually that ward was brought back, and beat the ward again, who she had left in the home. Something has got to be wrong.

The abuse ranges, as I said, from physical to sexual, and verbal. And these are matters that the Minister must address. She must tell this Parliament what are the meaningful and

effective tools and intervention strategies that she is employing to tackle these issues now - not in the future - now.

We heard the Minister identify a particular children's home recently, and cited as one of the reasons for its imminent closure, the abuse by children, of other children. The Minister has not properly communicated to the Parliament and the people of Jamaica, how these matters are being dealt with. Additionally, there is a need for more spaces in the children's homes, not less. Let us not forget that the Windsor Home for Girls is left idle as the girls were relocated because there were security concerns regarding the surrounding community. You are telling me, that we can't address security problems in a community, so what we do, we move the girls out of one of the best constructed homes; we move them, put them in less comfortable surrounding because the community around cannot be managed. Who - is the tail wagging the dog?

Let us not forget that the Musgrave Children's Home was burnt to the ground. It has not been rebuilt. Let us not forget that part of the Glenhope Place of Safety was burnt, and reports indicate that instead of rebuilding the section, it is going to be rebuilt and retrofitted, not to house wards, but to serve as a counseling unit with offices for children's officers.

Mr. Speaker, the Glenhope Home has one of the best computer labs you can find, one of the best cosmetology labs you can find. The equipment is there wasting; the section that was burned could be fenced off, and the Home occupied. What is the logic? I don't know. Has the Minister visited the location so that she can say, well, look, this does not make sense? Mr. Speaker, what needs to be done immediately is to rebuild, repair and reopen these homes, and to separate the children who have various challenges so that the appropriate interventions can be made.

Now, I also get complaints from the staff. Staff has complained...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Miss GRANGE: I am doing my work... Staff has complained that they have had to purchase books to train themselves. These - they sometimes use in helping to diagnose children, so they can make referrals, or attempt intervention. Some have even expressed how fearful they become as some wards are violent and have attacked them on several occasions. Unfortunately, when these incidents occur, they say the CDA is always slow to react. Staff too, in many homes, have been operating for years in temporary capacity, and nothing has been done to regularize their status, or provide them with job security.

In one particular instance, Mr. Speaker, it is reported that an employee died, having served 20 years without ever been appointed. Now, you know what that meant. That employer had no means - the family had no means of securing any funding to bury that individual. She was in a temporary job, and she was not benefiting from statutory deductions. If even a fraction of the reports I

get are true, then it is clear that much more needs to be done to remedy the affairs that concern our children.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the Report that was issued - the Statement that was issued by the Minister, and I look at the fact that the children who were taught inappropriate sex - given inappropriate sex training, range from age 11 to 16 - eleven, not even twelve. I think in one instance there was a ten year-old. And, I understand.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Miss. GRANGE: One hundred children.

A MEMBER: My God!

Miss GRANGE: One hundred children were exposed to this. And, comments of two children:

I was taught that anal sex is not healthy for the body, but if one wants to have anal sex, it is his rights, and no one should try to hurt that individual.

That is a child making that comment.

Dr. WHEATLEY: That is wrong.

Miss GRANGE: Another comment by a child:

I was taught that someone can get infection in the mouth from oral sex.

Another related that they were not influenced to do anal or oral sex, but it is a choice.

Mr. DALLEY: What is the source of that information?

Miss GRANGE: Now, extensive counseling will be needed to reverse any negative impact on these children. The Minister is aware of that. I am reading from her Report.

A MEMBER: They are already damaged.

Miss GRANGE: They are damaged. And you know what, four of the institutions are being given subvention from the Ministry of Education, as independent schools. So, it is not only the Ministry of Youth that has a problem; the Ministry of Education - and Education Officers are supposed to be monitoring what is taught in those institutions. This is really outrageous.

Mr. CLARKE: (Inaudible) ...from a vigilant Opposition.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Miss GRANGE: We don't monitor; it's not our job. You don't ask us to do your job.

(*Sotto* voce comment)

Miss GRANGE: But if I am asked to help, I will. I will go in there. I had a Home in my constituency before it was cut, Strathmore Children's Home, which is now in the constituency of the Member for East Central. I don't know if she visits that Home but I used to be in that Home and I checked on everything, including how the classes were conducted. You have got to be on top of your game, man. You have no excuse.

So, Mr. Speaker, it was Nelson Mandela who reminded us that the true character of a society is revealed in how it treats its children, and it is important that we take care and protection of our children. There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children. So, Minister, if anyone were to look on our soul today, on how we have treated our children in State care, we have found wanting. It is a sad

day - very sad day in this country.

Now, I am winding up; I am just going to touch on the National Youth Service. Mr. Speaker, the Minister, in her contribution to the Debate last year, spoke of a proposal to merge the National Centre for Youth Development with the National Youth Service for more effective youth mainstreaming and implementation of programmes and initiatives. I had expressed that the Opposition was of the view it would have been more appropriate for the Government to have engaged all the key stakeholders prior to making this significant announcement. In any event, at this time, clarification as to what exactly is now the present position, as it relates to the NYS and its operation, is of urgent attention.

Mr. Speaker, and Madam Prime Minister, information coming to me is very troubling, and it may be timely to ask for a forensic audit of the NYS. There are problems there, and there are more questions than answers.

Madam Prime Minister, you and I, we come through the trenches; we care about people. We may have our different styles and we may be offensive at times, and we may offend people, but we know what it is to care, and we know what it is to be honest, and we know what it is not to cover up for people.

Now it appears that the same issues that plagued Maureen Webber at the Housing Agency of Jamaica are affecting her now at the NYS. In the latest SWOT Analysis done last month by Leahcim Semaj, some of the issues raised by staff members as a serious threat were the fear of victimization and the influence of politics into the day-to-day running of the service.

(Cross talk)

Apparently, Mr. Speaker, Madam Speaker, people are being forced to resign left, right and centre.

Mr. SHAW: But that's the same thing happen at Housing Agency.

Miss GRANGE: More grievous allegations, however... being levied at Chair, Ms. Webber in relation to the hiring practices of the service and its relation with her company, Development Options.

Opposition MEMBER: Oh!

Mr. SHAW: What!

Miss GRANGE: The Office of the Contractor General (OCG) has commenced an investigation asking the service to state, among other things, the relationship between NYS and Development Options and whether the NYS has engaged or entered into any other arrangement with Development. You may all recall I asked that question during the Standing Finance Committee meeting of the Minister and the Minister indicated that there was no such relationship. The NYS responded to the OCG in April to indicate that Development Options was the place that collected applications for the office of the Executive Director and there was no contract with NYS but there was a contract with the parent Ministry to execute youth...

A MEMBER: What?

Miss GRANGE: ...which is another programme which the private sector is involved with.

(Cross talk)

Opposition MEMBER: Youth.

Mr. SHAW: Okay.

Miss GRANGE: As a matter of fact one NYS recruit told me that she went to a place to apply, to fill out her form, to be recruited for NYS, and she had to pay a fee. It appears that the Contractor General is not satisfied with the responses and has asked for more information. It is said that a number of staff members of Development Options and members who were at the National Housing Trust are now on the NYS payroll.

A MEMBER: What?

Miss GRANGE: I'm only giving you the information I get.

Opposition MEMBER: You're not making any inference.

Miss GRANGE: This is where I have to take it. A not making no accusation.

Mr. DALLEY: It can be wrong information.

Miss GRANGE: It can be wrong information, but it is worth looking into.

(Cross talk)

Because I'm being responsible a not gwine call no names.

Mr. SAMUDA: Don't say not. Not yet. Not yet.

Mr. D. SMITH: Not yet, not yet.

Miss GRANGE: Okay, I have the names, but I will not say them now.

Mr. SAMUDA: Now. That's better.

Miss GRANGE: However, one such person was hired to run the entrepreneurial programme without approval of the evaluation committee or the procurement committee. I have so far been given two names who are from Development Options and one name formerly a member of the NHT Board.

Mr. SAMUDA: My, my.

Miss GRANGE: I also understand that a micro-finance conference put on by Development Options was nicely sponsored by the NYS. I can only tell you what I've heard.

(Laughter)

Opposition MEMBER: What!

Miss GRANGE: A not making any accusations, but...

Mr. CHUCK: No, no, what you... sounds very incestuous.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Yuh spreading propaganda.

Mr. CHUCK: Very incestuous.

Mr. SHAW: Hey, you keep quiet.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Spreading propaganda.

Mr. SHAW: Not propaganda at all.

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker...

Miss GRANGE: ...but it is worth looking into.

Mr. PRYCE: ...Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Raymond, sit down, sit down.

(Cross talk

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker.

(The Speaker gavels)

Opposition MEMBER: What is your point of order? ....

Mr. PRYCE: You will hear, you will hear.

Mr. SHAW: Sit down! Sit down!

(Cross talk)

Opposition MEMBER: What is the point of order?

(Cross talk)

Mr. PRYCE: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

(The Speaker gavels)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Pryce. Silence, please. Yes, what is the point of order, Mr. Pryce?

Mr. PRYCE: Thank you, sir. Two things: first permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

Mr. SHAW: No! Go back to your seat.

Mr. DALLEY: And you go back downstairs go drink, yuh half drunk. Go back down downstairs go drink.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Permission granted. Go ahead.

Mr. SHAW: Go back to your seat.

Mr. PRYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member from Central St. Catherine herself just conceded that she cannot provide to this Parliament the veracity of the statement that she's making.

Mr. CHUCK: No, no, never said.

Mr. PRYCE: She said that she can't prove it. She is only saying what she's heard. So if she is letting us know that she unable to prove the veracity of the statement perhaps she could approach the point in a different matter.

Mr. SAMUDA: Nonsense, that's not a point of order, sit down. That's not a point of order.

Mr. CHUCK: That's not a point of order.

(Cross talk)

Mr. PRYCE: I leave it to you for your adjudication, Mr. Speaker.

(Cross talk)

Opposition MEMBER: Sit down!

Mr. SHAW: Sit down and go back to your assigned seat.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. DALLEY: Go back downstairs.

Mr. CHUCK: That's a point of a contention not a point of order.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Members, Members. (Gavels) Miss Grange, continue your presentation.

Mr. CHUCK: Point of contention not a point of order.

(Cross talk)

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker, I did come here and make any accusations. I came here and provided information that has come to me.

(Cross talk)

I'm speaking to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. CHUCK: To the Parliament.

Miss GRANGE: I'm speaking to the Prime Minister. I'm speaking for my colleagues to hear and all I can say is...

Mr. DALLEY: You don't know if it's true or false.

Opposition MEMBER: Continue, Babsy.

Miss GRANGE: ...it's a matter that needs to be looked into and you know it's like pregnancy (Laughter) as long as you have a healthy pregnancy time will tell.

(Cross talk)

It is coming. (Laughter) It is coming, okay.

Mr. CHUCK: Something will happen after nine months.

Miss GRANGE: So I rest my case.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CHARLES: Sunrise and sun set.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Miss GRANGE: Mr. Speaker, I now turn to gender affairs.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw (Gavels) Mr. Shaw, we want to hear Miss Grange you know. We want to hear her, okay. So be quite.

(Laughter)

Miss GRANGE: All right, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to deal with gender matters and then I'm going to do my conclusion, right.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Prime Minister, before I get into my prepared presentation on gender matters. We talk about women's empowerment ensuring that they serve on Boards, encouraging them to get into politics, ensuring that they're at a leadership level, but I'm little disappointed Madam Prime Minister because I know where your heart is that during this - and I don't think you are aware of it.

(Cross talk)

Over the last two years or so more women have been displaced - women at the leadership level have displaced and moved from their positions...

Mr. DALLEY: Like where?

Miss GRANGE: ...and to the extent that they feel that they have been unfairly treated.

Government MEMBER: Where?

Mr. CHUCK: Horace Lattibeaudiere.

Miss GRANGE: They feel that they have been victimized.

Mr. CHUCK: Lattibeaudiere. Many others.

Miss GRANGE: Lattibeaudiere. Faith Webster from the Women's Bureau.

Mr. CHARLES: Don't call nuh more name.

(Cross talk)

Miss GRANGE: What's the lady from NHT?

Mr. McKENZIE: The Mayor of Morant Bay, the Mayor of Morant Bay.

Miss GRANGE: I'm telling you there is - Mr. Speaker, through you to the Prime Minister...

Mr. McKENZIE: The Mayor of Morant Bay.

Miss GRANGE: There is a long, long list and there is got to be an explanation. Don't tell me all of a sudden these women...

(Inaudible comment by Mrs. Neita-Headley and Mr. Parchment)

Miss GRANGE: ...all these women gone. They all were bad leaders, bad CEOs? It's not possible. They are civil servants - some of them we found when we were in Government. Some of them this side found them in positions when we were Government for the four years and we kept them.

(Inaudible comment by a Government Member)

Miss GRANGE: We kept those women. It was about seven of them. There were about even of them and we worked well with them. We didn't marginalize anybody, right.

Mr. McKENZIE: Don't listen to the man wey come from country wey just come a town.

(Laughter)

Miss GRANGE: So, Mr. Speaker, an issue of pressing concern and which will impact on national development is that of greater gender equality. When the United States recognized that there was an imbalance in the civil rights of African Americans an affirmative action policy was adopted. We need to address the imbalance in the status of men and women in our society. It is ironic that even with the Prime Minister having broken the glass ceiling for females to lead the country, we have not advanced in a more substantive way the cause of women in this country. A cause which is so fundamentally important, and it is too is a human rights issue. This is a critical time for our nation and the status of women in many regards is that of second class citizens.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Charles)

Miss GRANGE: Notwithstanding the increased numbers of women at the university level, let us look in our Board rooms and our Parliament. The issue of our domestic workers, Mr. Charles, my colleague from Clarendon, also needs to be addressed with urgency. Here is a large segment of our workforce that provides service to numerous families and most receive only minimum wage. They work long hours without health care and other benefits and it is high time that whether through the National Health Fund or a public/private sector partnership with the health insurance providers that steps are taken to address this. The Minister, I hope, will make a note of this. I am sure that if the Labour and Health Ministers were to examine the issue and enter into discussions with the insurance companies a way could be found to remedy this situation.

Equally important is that we need more males in the classrooms to provide guidance to our young men to assist them in understanding their roles in society. The Minister of Education ought to consider what incentives can be provided to get more males to enter the teaching profession; to get them into the teachers' colleges. Vision 2030, which is the National Development Plan cannot be fully accomplished if we do not intensify our discussion and put gender on the front burner going forward, Mr. Speaker. We need active engagement from the civil society, the church and various other sectors of society to address this issue and the Government must make this a national priority. Government should start now by implementing the policy on Gender and Women's Empowerment which was approved by Cabinet and under the JLP Administration. There is an implementation plan there and I would encourage the Prime Minister to personally take a look at that plan to see what can be implemented now and what would need improvement going forward.

As a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Kinds of Discrimination against Women, Jamaica has an international obligation to ensure that the human rights of our citizens are protected. Mr. Speaker, in a case from Saint Lucia, Francois the Court said the government must take active steps to

reduce/eliminate domestic violence. And I quote:

> *"The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women defines violence in the domestic setting in the following way: 'Violence against women shall be understood to include physical, sexual and psychological violence that occurs within the family or domestic unit or within any other interpersonal relationship, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the woman, including, among others, rape, battery and sexual abuse.*"

Among the State obligations are the following:

- To apply due diligence to prevent, investigate and impose penalties for violence against women;
- To include in their domestic legislation penal, civil, administrative and any other type of provision that may be needed to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women and to adopt appropriate administrative measures, where necessary.

This is an understanding that the Government's role goes beyond making occasional statements which it hopes will appease some in the society. There must be adequate surveillance of domestic violence in our society. This must be a central plank of the Government's policy going forward. The Government needs to articulate a gender policy that clearly addresses the needs of men and women in our society.

The most recent Global Gender Gap Report put out by the World Economic Forum shows that greater gender equality correlates with high levels of Gross Domestic Product, GDP. Likewise Goldman Sachs Global Economics recent reports also support that closing the gap between male ale employment can have major economic implications for the global economy. For example, it could boost US GDP by as much as 9%, Euro zone by 13% and Japanese by 16%. The data suggests that gender imbalance undermines economic growth and so a Jamaica Labour Party government will make gender an integral part of its development plan, an integral part of the 2030 Vision, an integral part of social equality. The JLP has been taking active steps, Mr. Speaker, in the Senate, the Parliament, in the selection of candidates and that of junior spokesperson positions to include a greater representation of women and we should applaud the Leader of the Opposition for really pushing forward with that agenda. (Applause)

The economic and psycho-social well-being of our men and women is of paramount importance and must be taken seriously. We on this side boast an enviable record for the sensitivity and steadfastness with which we have treated with gender issues.

Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to applaud the efforts of key stakeholders, in particular the 51% Coalition and our colleague Legislators from the Upper House, Kamina Johnson-Smith and Imani Duncan-Price for

the spirited, robust and refreshing debate they have sparked.

Mr. Speaker, the nation has the assurance that the Opposition takes seriously the issue of having more women in leadership position and actively involved in political life. We always have and we always will. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to have had a member of the 51% Coalition present to us at a recent meeting of the Shadow Cabinet. In the wake of that instructive and thought provoking presentation, a range of issues were ventilated in further refining our prospective as the people's loyal Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, on the question of quota system, I just want to quickly say that while it is always good to have more of our women sitting among us it is conceptually and practically a flawed idea. For starters, a quota system would not fit well with the Westminster System of government we practice, certainly as it relates to the lower House. Separate and apart from that, a quota system would pose considerable challenges to the very meritocracy we envisage and embrace. But that is not the end of the matter, Mr. Speaker, we are of the firm view that in every way, and to every extent possible, our women are to be incorporated and have representation in leadership positions and bodies, including Boards, both public and private.

As far as the Upper House is concerned, it is widely recognized that a gender-balanced Chamber is the ideal. Achieving this doesn't conflict with the tenets of meritocracy or the present kinds of challenges a quota system does because it does involve the will of the people by way of the polls. I have no doubt that strong consideration is given to this in making appointments. Whatever challenges there are to having greater representation and an increased presence of women in politics. There is a lot we can do in the present to secure the outcomes we desire in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I now will be wrapping up my presentation. And I want to speak to the mission and the vision of the Jamaica Labour Party as today an opposition and as in the future a government. We as the alternative government have a vision and a mission. The Jamaica Labour Party is always looking to the future and ensuring that each and every Jamaican, particularly those from humble beginnings, those from the bowels of the society are empowered to chart their own course of self-determination and individual prosperity through a dignified enabling environment provided by the State. For it was our founder Sir Bustamante Alexander who said, and I quote:

> "Jamaica's most precious asset is the energy and vitality of its people; but the same energy imbues the community with a restless, questing spirit steadily seeking higher standards of living, better amenities and a fuller life for individual, for the family, for the community. Government will lay the foundation. It is for the people to set their hands to the task of building."

This was a quote from Sir Alexander Bustamante in the five-year independence plan 1963-1968. "I wish to remind this Honourable House and nation that the JLP is

the party now and has always been the party that understands and respect the history and culture of our people. (Applause) For we know that he who forgets his history and culture is on a path of doom and destruction destined to recommit the errors of past, so that instead to leading the people to the Promised Land, lead those people back into poverty, degradation and mental slavery that they have worked so hard to emancipate themselves from"

Recently, Mr. Speaker, the country was reminded in no uncertain terms why the JLP is more suited to lead and manage the affairs of this nation. We were reminded, Mr. Speaker, when one of the young rising stars in this Chamber in an attempt to score political points proceeded unfortunately to effectively insult over 95% of all Jamaicans. He has since apologized and I have accepted it. And I am sorry he is not here today because he is my nephew. He calls me auntie.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Charles)

Miss GRANGE: There was extensive reports and discussion in the media about the characterization of members of the Jamaica Labour Party as 'Dutty Labourites'. Well let me take my nephew and the Members of this Parliament to school and remind them that while many rightfully find the label 'Dutty Labourite' offensive like the use of the word or the label nigger in the United States it continues to be necessary to understand the history of the use of the label in order to ensure that we continue to jealously, zealously guard the gains that we have made as a people. The Member needs to be reminded and Members need to be reminded that the labels 'Dutty Labourites' and 'Rockstone Labourite' originated from the poor and squalid conditions under which the majority of Jamaicans lived and worked in the 1920s and 1930s that ultimately led to the labour uprising of 1938 led by Sir Alexander Bustamante.

The Member and the Members should remember that it is labour; labour galvanized the country and propelled the country into independence, electing Sir Alexander Bustamante as Jamaica's first Prime Minister who went on to achieve many great accomplishments. So what the Member or Members do not understand is that the Member has just engaged in an extensive exercise of self-gloating. Did none of his forefathers labour in the cane field or broke stones for a living? For it is through labour and the 'Dutty Labourites and Rockstone Labourites' that many on this side and on that side is now sitting in this House.

I therefore repeat, and I quote:

> "He who forgets his history and culture is on a path of doom and destruction destined to recommit the errors of the past so that instead to leading the people to the Promised Land lead those people into poverty, degradation and mental slavery".

The Jamaica Labour Party has always understood and continue to understand the Jamaican people. It is the JLP that brought back the body of Marcus Garvey and made him Jamaica's first National Hero. The man about who the establishment, Mr. Speaker, the establishment had a lot of negative things to say. But the Jamaica Labour Party recognized

his importance, his worth and his work and made him Jamaica's first National Hero.

(Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, we know where we are going, because we know where we are coming from. So today I salute the 'Rockstone Labourites' and the descendants of the 'Dutty Labourites' who are inside this Honourable House on both sides, I salute you.

Mr. McKENZIE: They are clean comrades over there and we are the 'Duty Labourites'.

Miss GRANGE: For this House was built by the sweat, the ingenuity and the hands of labour. The Jamaica Labour Party, a party that took the name of labour so that we all would never ever forget the sacrifices made by our forefathers.

I hope my presentation today, Mr. Speaker, has brought us together rather than pulling us apart.

(Applause)

I thank you very much.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Please be seated.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business today, I therefore ask for the adjournment of the House until next Tuesday, July 1, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House now adjourns until next Tuesday, July 1, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House accordingly adjourned at 5:54 p.m. until Tuesday, 1st of July, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015

TUESDAY, July 1, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:27 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern
MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern
MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western
MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern
MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern
MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western
MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western
MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern
MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western
MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern
MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western
MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western
MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Raymond Pryce.

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No.112**
  Cabinet Agenda Issues dated June 9, 2014
- **Ministry Paper No. 113**
  Negril/Green Island Area Local Planning Authority (NGIALPA) Annual Reports and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Years 2007/2008 to 2009/2010
- **Ministry Paper No. 114**
  The National Strategic and Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in Jamaica for the years 2013-2018

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the end of 21 days I will ask the Minister of Local Government the following questions tabled in my name.

Question 1:

Can the Minister of Local Government and Community Development state what Ministry, Department or Agency of Government is responsible for granting amusement licences?

Question 2:

Can the Minister state whether a decision has been taken to reassign this authority from the Ministry, Department or Agency currently responsible to the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, or any other Ministry, Department or Agency?

Question 3:

If the answer to Question 2 is not in the affirmative, can the Minister say on what basis the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment has publicly given July 31 as the deadline for individuals and organizations staging entertainment events to register with that Ministry in order to be granted permits to stage these events?

Question 4:

If the deadline stated in Question 3 is correct, can the Minister state whether there is a new process for obtaining these permits, and what role the Local Authorities, the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development and/or the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment will play in the authorization of these events in the future?

Question 5:

Can the Minister assure this House whether or not any discussions are taking place or are likely to take place prior to the July 31 deadline, and what stage these discussions have reached, if they are already taking place?

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, as you are aware we are winding down in relation to the Sectoral Debates. We will have our last Wednesday sitting tomorrow and then we will close the debates next week Tuesday with three presentations. Thereafter we revert to our weekly meeting. But we do have a lot of work to be done before we take summer break at the end of July. So, I really want to urge colleagues, we know what is happening elsewhere, especially in Brazil, but we do have a lot of work to be done during this month. We really want to start our business on time.

Today we have three presentations. We will commence with the Minister of Health and will be followed by the Member of Parliament for St. Catherine, Eastern and then the Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, in that order.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Dr. Ferguson.

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to this Honourable House to be able to serve the people of Eastern St. Thomas for another year as their Member of Parliament. (Applause) I am humbled by the level of trust that they have continually shown in me for more than 21 years. I will always serve them diligently for as long as they believe that I am worthy.

Firstly, I should like to give thanks to the

Almighty for his providential care. I thank the most Honourable Prime Minister for entrusting me to lead one of the Ministries most important to sustainable national development. I assure her that she will never get any less than my best efforts as the Government seeks to improve the health of the people of Jamaica in keeping with our National Development Agenda. (Applause)

I am indebted to the team at the Ministry of Health, agencies and Regional Health Authorities. Without their support I could not have achieved as much as I have in the past two and a half years. I acknowledge the strong and bold leadership of the Permanent Secretary, Dr. Jean Dixon. (Applause) I also thank Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Kevin Harvey; (Applause) Directors in the Ministry, the Boards of all the agencies and my advisor, Ambassador Marjorie Taylor and even for those who are not paid, Mr. Speaker, persons like Professor Winston Davidson for his advice from time to time. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay special tribute to my Secretary, Miss Valda Hutton. Valda has served, Mr. Speaker, six Ministers of Health out of 11 Ministers of Health since independent Jamaica. (Applause) I thank her for her hard work, but most of all for being a confidential person. And this is why she has survived six Ministers across the political divide.

I have to take a moment to acknowledge the work of colleague Minister of State and Member of Parliament for Eastern Westmoreland, Luther Buchanan (Applause) who started assignment in the Ministry of Health in the area of primary health care infrastructure in January, and has already made a significant impact. I look forward to the great work that we will do together, Mr. Speaker. But I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, tomorrow when he speaks, because he will be talking about the goodies, I know a number of persons who did not intend to be here tomorrow will be here to hear what the Minister of State will be saying.

Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed the love and support of many local partners, including the private and non-governmental organizations whose ingenuity, dedication and perseverance have assisted us in moving forward with the countless health initiatives. The UN agencies and our other development partners have also continued to support our efforts, and I thank them on behalf of the Government and people of Jamaica. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this year I feel like I have gotten closer to the members of the diaspora. Their interest and support for the health sector in Jamaica is incomparable. (Applause) I have established a group, a diaspora think tank and advisory body to give tactical support for us to realize the goodwill available from them. I must also acknowledge the Government of the United States, Canada, Brazil, China, Cuba, Venezuela, Spain, Japan and Argentina. I want to congratulate them for their one-love victory over Switzerland today (Applause) as well as to recognize the European Union for their assistance and support.

Mr. Speaker, I turn to matters relating to my constituency of Eastern St. Thomas. I thank my team of constituency executive

members, my Councillors who are here today: Councillor Bryan from the Morant Bay Division; Councillor Hutchinson from the Port Morant Division and Councillor Ludlow Mathison from the Bath Division, His Worship the Mayor; (Applause) my divisional executive and constituency executive members.

Mr. McKENZIE: Three councillors you have.

Dr. FERGUSON: Three out of four.

Mr. McKENZIE: Call the other one name, man.

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, my security officer; my driver, Joe, PD workers and volunteers, Friends of Eastern St. Thomas...

Mr. McKENZIE: Joe, be careful!

Dr. WHEATLEY: Your driver.

Dr. FERGUSON: Jamaica and New York Chapter; support staff at the constituency office Denise, Coleen, the two Jackie's and Kelly; parliamentary and party colleagues, and my own family who have well supported and has supported me over the 21 years. (Applause)

(MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern, entered and took his seat.)

(REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. KENNETH O'NEILL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, Eastern Central, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General, entered and took his seat.)

And I want, Mr. Speaker, to recognize Blossom who is in the Gallery, my fiancé.

Mr. Speaker, when the award of Commander of the Order of Distinction, CD, was conferred on me in October 2013, my acceptance was not only in my personal right but also in the name of all the people of Eastern St. Thomas, and I do want to once again, thank them most wholeheartedly for the confidence and the trust that they have continued to repose in me. (Applause)

In this financial year, Mr. Speaker, we intend to accelerate the pace of development in education, physical infrastructure, culture, sports, water supply, agriculture and social services. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, education continues to receive the lion's share of my CDF grant. This year we spent $6 Million which represents 40% of the available resources. As was the case over the past several years, we have

provided scholarships at secondary, tertiary level, book grants, uniforms and other school appliances.

The truth, though, Mr. Speaker, is that these funds are never sufficient to meet the demands and together with the support of Friends of Eastern St. Thomas, Jamaica and New York, we have been able to undertake far more. Thanks to their support, this year again we will have the Annual Luncheon for the Top Achieving GSAT boy and girl; their respective teachers and parents from the 23 primary schools in my constituency. (Applause)

Many of these students have achieved tertiary level training and have become professionals including doctors, lawyers, agriculturalists and businessmen and women. (Applause)

WATER SUPPLY

I want to specially thank the Ministers and the Ministry of Water for improvements and extensions to water supplies. In particular, commitment to start the Richmond Hill Supply and the Pump and Tank Project that is to start this year.

HOUSING PROJECT

On the matter of housing, Mr. Speaker, the projects in Hampton Court, Stokes Hall and Duckenfield continue apace with inputs from the European Union Sugar Transformation Fund and the NHT. Mr. Speaker, few constituencies can boast of having three housing developments being built at the same time. (Applause)

SPORTS AND CULTURE

Mr. Speaker, turning to Sports and Culture, we have just completed the design work for the Rudolph Elder Park. The intention is that this will be a World- class Passive Park with discrete areas for Exhibition of Intuitive Art and Jamaican flora and fauna. At the nearby Sports Field in Lyssons, we intend to complete the fencing and the community centre during this financial year.

Mr. Speaker, in 2013, in my presentation to this Honourable House, I said the best is yet to come for Eastern St. Thomas.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Taak to dem!

Dr. FERGUSON: Today I say again, the best is yet to come. I should like to mention just three projects. The Southern Coastal Highway Project, from Harbour View to Port Antonio, (Applause) we expect that some action and movement will begin during this financial year. The Projects in Agriculture and the spinoffs from the Logistics Hub. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, health is a global, regional and national development issue. The reality is that without a healthy and productive population we cannot meet our development goals. The overall health goal in Jamaica's National Development Plan is for a healthy and stable population.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: That's right!

Dr. FERGUSON: As part of efforts to achieve this, the Ministry of Health has as one of its objectives to provide quality and affordable health care services and improve access.

Mr. Speaker, the Administration's Manifesto calls for particular focus on development of the health care infrastructure and improvements in patient outcomes. The Ministry has translated this and other aspects of the Manifesto into its Strategic Business Plan and Operational Plan.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear! (Applause)

Dr. FERGUSON: In effect the Ministry's priority programmes and projects are aligned to the National Development Plan - Vision 2030 and the Medium-Term Socio-Economic Policy Framework 2012-2015, which is linked to Vision 2030.

Mr. Speaker, our commitment remains to provide accessible and affordable care to the people of Jamaica without compromising on quality. (Applause) The Ministry has made progress in terms of the development of the primary health care infrastructure and improvements in secondary care. We have also moved forward with the introduction of new technology to improve the flow of patient care, as well as our data management systems. Our objective is to develop a patient-centred health care system that can serve the needs of our local population and also as well as a global clientele.

As the country continues its efforts to introduce health tourism the Ministry of Health is fully onboard and committed to doing its part to ensure that Jamaica becomes the first choice for health care for Regional and Global citizens. (Applause)

My intention is to see Jamaica become the health hub of the Caribbean and a major player in the Region. (Applause) Traditionally, we have viewed the health sector as a social sector but I believe, Mr. Speaker, with the investments that we are making in health, we can transform the sector into a growth sector that can contribute to the national economy. (Applause)

ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH 2013/2014. PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

Mr. Speaker, last year we promised the people of Jamaica that we would put in place four Primary Health Care Centres of Excellence. We have delivered. (Applause)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Dr. FERGUSON: We have completed phase one of all four of the facilities - Claremont in St. Ann, which we'll open on Friday. (Applause) Isaac Barrant in St. Thomas, (Applause) Darliston in Westmoreland (Applause) Santa Cruz in St. Elizabeth. (Applause) All have been officially opened, Mr. Speaker, all have been officially opened. (Applause) Jamaicans are now enjoying the upgraded and improved facilities that they offer.

Mr. Speaker, Phase two will involve additional infrastructure improvements and the acquisition of equipment to the tune of $268 Million provided through the National Health Fund. (Applause)

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE RENEWAL

Mr. Speaker, the development of the Centres of Excellence is a part of the overall plan to strengthen health systems. In keeping

with this, the Inter-American Development Bank funded a technical study on reform and financing of Jamaica's health system with the aim of assisting the Ministry to provide increased access to affordable and quality health care.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, we are acting on the recommendation of the study which include:

I. Creating a 10-year Strategic Development Plan for the health sector;

II. Developing an implementation strategy for primary health care renewal;

III. Implementing demonstration projects to reduce the impact of non-communicable diseases.

Mr. Speaker, we have already submitted a request for technical cooperation and expect to receive funding approval soon.

SEWAGE TREATMENT PROJECT

Mr. Speaker, in June, the Ministry of Health in partnership with the National Health Fund and the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining through the Scientific Research Council launched a $389 Million Sewage Treatment Project. (Applause) This will be the largest sewage project in health ever undertaken by any Government of Jamaica. (Applause)

Phase I involve the construction of six sewage treatment plants using an aerobic digestion technology at the Fellowship Health Centre in Portland, Savanna-la-Mar Hospital in Westmoreland, Noel Holmes Hospital and Lucea Health Centre in Western Hanover. (Applause) Ulster Spring Health Centre in Southern Trelawny. Princess Margaret Hospital in St. Thomas and the Percy Junior Hospital in Manchester. Work has already started on some of these plants, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear! (Applause)

NATIONAL HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEM

Mr. Speaker, we have delivered on a promise made last year to begin the implementation of the National Health Information System and E-Health Strategy. We are doing this with technical support from GNU-Solidario. I am happy to announce that the implementation of the pilot project has started to put in place the Electronic Patient Administration System (ePAS) in eight facilities - four Primary Care Centres of Excellence and the four regional hospitals. The NHF, Mr. Speaker, has provided $50 Million.

Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of joined-up Government my Colleague Minister Paulwell through the Universal Service Fund implemented a $26 Million project to enable broad band connections at sixty (60) health facilities including the Centres of Excellence. (Applause)

DELIVERY OF PHARMACY SERVICES

Mr. Speaker, last year we spoke of a

quantum shift in the way we deliver pharmacy services in the Public health sector. That shift has begun in earnest, Mr. Speaker. The NHF has completed the takeover of the Bustamante Hospital for Children...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: …Port Maria Hospital....

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: …Percy Junor hospitals.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Name them!

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, we are seeing significant cuts in waiting time already. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Expensive governance!

Dr. FERGUSON: The pharmacies at Kingston Public, Victoria Jubilee and Cornwall Regional Hospitals are now being refurbished. The NHF has been given permission to take-over the four main warehousing and distribution centres across the Regional Health Authorities. The transfer of human resource is in process, Mr. Speaker. We are revolutionizing pharmacy service in Jamaica to be technology driven, customer focused, efficiently managed and that this country, Mr. Speaker, this is a service that the country has yearn for; this is yet, Mr. Speaker, another promise delivered. (Applause)

THE GOJ CARD

Mr. Speaker, we have delivered on our promise to begin using the GOJ Card in the public health sector. Since we launched the card in January this year, we have distributed close to a hundred thousand (100,000) Cards and with the NHF Card over 400,000 is operational. The GOJ Card will allow us to create linkages with the Electronic Patient Administration System.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time we'll be able to track patients through the health system no matter which facility they visit and reduce waiting time for registration. We expect to see significant savings in terms of revenue through efficiency gains. We will be able to improve operational efficiency, the collection of fees from persons with private health insurance and reduce wastage especially in the way we dispense medication.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: We hope to have full introduction and use of the card in all facilities by the end of the 2015/2016 financial year.

ACQUISITION OF AMBULANCES

Mr. Speaker, 19 brand new ambulances have been added to the existing fleet. (Applause) The first since 2007.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: My God!

(Heckling by Government Members)

Dr. FERGUSON: And US$84,383 that represent, Mr. Speaker, a significant amount of Jamaican dollars, close to 90 or so, Jamaican dollars.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Dr. FERGUSON: This is US. We are talking about US$884,323, so that would be about J$80-odd. Promise delivered, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

But, Mr. Speaker, I am not stopping there.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Opposition Member)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Listen!

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, 16 more ambulances will be added to the fleet in a matter of months. (Applause) Another promise to be delivered.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: That's right. And it will be delivered.

EQUIPMENT AND ACQUISITION

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, the Ministry spent close to $300 Million in the last financial year. We installed three state-of-the-art x-ray machines at Princess Margaret, Linstead and Cornwall Regional hospitals. We invested in operating theatre equipment, standby generators, laundry and dental equipment. Mr. Speaker, this year among the pieces of equipment that we will purchase are four additional x-ray units. We deliver on promises, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear.

Dr. FERGUSON: Cuban medical personnel.

Mr. Speaker, under the technical cooperation agreement, 36 additional Cuban health professionals have so far been deployed throughout the health sector since December 2013. For the first time the group includes specialists in the areas of neonatology, nephrology, pathology and guess what, Mr. Speaker, dentistry for the first time at last.

(Applause by Government Members)

ORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Speaker, comprehensive dental care is now available in the Centres of Excellence. More than 30,000 persons have benefitted in the past year from the sealant programmes undertaken by Great Shape Incorporated and UTech. These entities have also partnered with the Ministry and initiated the national sealant programme in St. Thomas Eastern.

Mr. Speaker, we have deployed Cuban dental personnel to underserved communities in St. Ann, Trelawny and St. Thomas. We are recruiting additional specialists from Cuban and have already completed a round of interviews.

Mr. Speaker, last year we said there had to be some legislative amendments. The areas that are presenting themselves for consideration include: One, regulating the practice of dentistry to ensure that only licensed practitioners can own and operate a dental surgery and dental laboratory. Mandatory continuing education for all categories of dental professionals. Regulating training. Prescribing additional categories of dental auxiliaries. Prescribing different categories of registration of dental professionals. Mr. Speaker, we have completed negotiation for an agreement with the North East Regional Dental Examination Board and the American Dental Association body to help us to establish a National Dental Examination Board to ensure the highest competence testing standards and also ensuring openness and transparency in these examinations.

PROMAC

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear! Hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health is now hosting overseas consultants as work has started as part of the Programme for the Reduction of Maternal and Child Mortality. PROMAC. We have put in place a team within our projects unit to deal specifically with PROMAC and we are working very closely with the Planning Institute of Jamaica. The Government of Jamaica signed the financing agreement with the European Union at the end of November last year. The EU is funding the project on that grant of £22.1 Million (Euros) or about J$2.6 Million.

(Applause by Government Members)

The main deliverables under this programme, Mr. Speaker, includes facilitating the establishment and equipping of maternal and newborn high dependency unit. In fact, Mr. Speaker, six high dependency unit for newborn, five for maternal, under this programme.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: The aim is to reduce maternal and child deaths in keeping with Jamaica's commitment under the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Speaker, 64 per cent of all infant mortality occurs in the first week of life. This is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. This project will therefore go a far way in allowing us to achieve the targets under the Millennium Development Goal four and five.

NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Mr. Speaker, the issue of non-communicable diseases has not left the radar of the Ministry of Health since I became Minister in January 2012. There is a simple reason for this. NCDs are eating into the productivity of our country because of the devastating effects they have on our population. What are these diseases, Mr. Speaker? We are talking about cardiovascular disease. We are talking about diabetes. We are talking about cancer. We are talking about low respiratory diseases. We are talking about kidney diseases and others, Mr. Speaker.

Cabinet has approved the National Strategic Plan for the prevention and control of NCDs in Jamaica 2013 to 2018, and I am tabling this plan as a Ministry Paper today. Ministry Paper 114/14, National Strategic and Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases in Jamaica, 2013 to 2018.

(Applause by Government Members)

(The Speaker gavels)

The SPEAKER: The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended enough to allow him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently for him to complete his presentation.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Three days time.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Minister.

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, this plan, Mr. Speaker, speaks to a national development issue. It requires an all of Government and an all of society approach, Mr. Speaker, if we are to be on top of this problem. Mr. Speaker, call me an evangelist if you will…

Government MEMBER: Preach, preach.

Dr. FERGUSON: …but tobacco was the first. Mr. Speaker, risk factor reduction is a major component of the plan. Jamaicans need to understand that NCDs are largely preventable. NCDs are largely preventable, Mr. Speaker. They are for the most part driven by widespread exposure to four common behavioural risks: Tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol. Community participation will be important. This year we are scaling up the Community Health Aid Programme in collaboration with the NHF as part of the community response.

PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

The NCD plan speaks to increasing physical inactivity by ten per cent by 2025. Discussion is taking place with the Minister of Education to reintroduce compulsory physical education in schools.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: That's right. (Applause by Government Members)

Dr. FERGUSON: We intend to establish additional healthy zones and green areas in the next financial year, Mr. Speaker. We have also been working with GC Foster College to build capacity for teachers and coaches to promote physical activity.

NUTRITION

Mr. Speaker, obesity is the number one health problem in Jamaica from which many of the NCDs develop, including diabetes and as much as 90 per cent of the cancers. The 2008 Jamaica Healthy Lifestyle study indicated that almost half of women in the 34 to 55 age group is obese and more than 80 per cent is above normal weight. In the 15 to 24 age group almost 40 per cent women was either overweight or obese compared with 22 per cent of men. Mr. Speaker, we have to do something about this.

Government Member: Yes.

Dr. FERGUSON: I have already met with the Food Industry to see how best we can improve the calorific value, provide better information on portion size and put in place proper labelling standards. Cabinet has already approved the Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy and the Food-Based Dietary Guidelines for Jamaica has been developed and is being pretested, Mr. Speaker. The National Food and Nutrition Security Policy done in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture has been fully debated in this Honourable House.

HARMFUL USE OF ALCOHOL

Mr. Speaker, the World Health Organization indicates that the harmful use of alcohol ranks among the top five risk factors for disease, disability and death throughout the world and is a causal risk factor for more than 200 disease and injury conditions. Mr. Speaker, I am referring to the type of drinking

that is detrimental to health and has negative social consequences.

Mr. McKENZIE: Start downstairs first.

Dr. FERGUSON: So we are not talking about, Mr. Speaker, stopping persons from drinking although that is the ideal, what we are talking about is irresponsible drinking that cause accidents that cause us to cancel elective surgery every time of trauma case goes to Spanish Town Hospital or to KPH. That is what we are talking about, Mr. Speaker. So don't get it wrong that the Minister or the Ministry is trying to - what we are talking about is moderation. Harmful use of alcohol.

Mr. McKENZIE: Start downstairs first.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Go tell Chuck.

Dr. FERGUSON: We are going to be tackling this problem by developing a national alcohol policy and we will be consulting with various stakeholders including the alcohol industry.

TOBACCO CONTROL

Mr. Speaker, on July 15 we celebrate one year since Jamaicans were given the chance to breathe cleaner air and reduce their exposure to the harmful chemicals in tobacco smoke as a result of the Public Health Tobacco Control Regulation 2013. (Applause by Government Members) Mr. Speaker, we can safely say that the regulations have been a major success. The NCDA reported that within the first month approximately 83 per cent of Jamaicans brought that view. We have put forward certain amendments to make implementation easier, which Cabinet approved on June 2, 2014. The amendments were tabled in Parliament on June 11, 2014, and were gazetted last week. We have extended the deadline for the transitional period to August 16, 2014, to give business operators a chance to put the required measures in place.

Mr. Speaker, I am giving friendly advice for free, to hoteliers, to club owners, to bar owners and other businesses, that after this date, the 16th of August, 2014, if you continue to flaunt the law you will be in for major consequences. I just want to make that very clear, Mr. Speaker, because there are some hoteliers who believe that they are above the law. There are some bars who believe so too, Mr. Speaker, and I am just saying, Mr. Speaker, that we as a country, I have absolutely no doubt that these regulations is good for Jamaica, and I am saying, Mr. Speaker, as politicians when we don't do we are criticized, but the time has come when we must do as politicians and leaders what is good for Jamaica.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, I have to take a moment to express my immense gratitude to the members of the Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control... (Applause) ...and the Heart Foundation of Jamaica, for providing resources and partnership with the team, so that we were able to successfully promulgate these regulations. I also want to thank Jamaicans here and in the Diaspora, who have expressed their gratitude, and to *The Gleaner* Company, and the World Heart Federation, for the awards that they have bestowed on me.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we need empirical evidence to guide policy decisions, and to monitor impact. I am pleased to announce, Mr. Speaker, that Jamaica is participating in a multi-country study on the Burden of Lung Disease, called the BOLD study. The study will track the prevalence of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease associated with, among other things, exposure to tobacco smoke.

It is being funded through two grants, one from the NHF and the other from the New Initiative Grant. The study is being conducted by the Pulmonary Research Group of the University of the West Indies, Mona.

And, I will just say, Mr. Speaker, that as Minister, just as we are looking at the curative side and we are looking at the risk- factor side, I am also convinced that research must be important in how we go forward.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is obliged to implement the remaining obligations under the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. And, I agree with my counterpart, the Opposition Spokesman on Health, the Member of Parliament for West Central St. Catherine.

In this regard, Mr. Speaker, we continue with broad national and international consultation designed to help us to find the pathway we will follow. We have had two high-level inter-ministerial consultations supported by experts from WHO and PAHO. A number of recommendations have since been submitted to guide our processes.

In May, I hosted the head of the WHO Framework Convention Tobacco Control Secretariat, Dr. Haik Nikogosian, who participated in inter-ministerial consultations which focused on the technical and legal obligations of the FCTC. While recognizing the need for a comprehensive Tobacco Control Act, he commended Jamaica's progress with respect to the Tobacco Control Regulations, and has since facilitated the training of a staff member to spearhead a Needs Assessment. The results will guide our next steps towards a comprehensive Tobacco Control Bill.

I remember last year the Member of Parliament for West Central St. Catherine, argued that the comprehensive Bill would have been a better approach. I support that position, Member, and we are going full-speed ahead. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: As part of the requirements under the FCTC, the Ministry of Health will establish a national coordinating mechanism to systematically move the process forward. And the Opposition will be a major player in that national mechanism.

CANCER CARE

Mr. Speaker, addressing the NCD risk factors, including the emphasis on the FCTC provisions, is only one of the ways in which we intend to tackle the scourge of cancers that is ravaging our population. We cannot be comfortable with a statistic that says one in

five deaths in 2010 was due to cancer. We cannot continue with a statistic, Mr. Speaker that says in 2010, 3,198 Jamaicans died from cancer. We cannot, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we promised a comprehensive approach to dealing with cancer care, and we are delivering on that promise. A number of initiatives are being undertaken towards reducing the incidence of cancers among our population. These initiatives are outlined in the National Cancer Strategic and Action Plan, developed within the framework of the National Strategic Plan for Prevention and Control of NCDs in Jamaica. The NCD Plan was approved by Cabinet in October of 2013.

Mr. Speaker, we have a long way to go but let me share a few of the initiatives:

1. The International Atomic Energy Agency mounted an Impact Mission in March 2013, and later that year provided a comprehensive set of recommendations to improve the management of cancer care in Jamaica.
2. The dialogue with the IAEA towards a reintroduction of nuclear medicine technology at the University of the West Indies, in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer, is far advanced.
3. We have a Memorandum of Understanding with Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre out of Canada, to develop systems of cancer care, emergency pre-hospital care, trauma and emergency medicine and chronic disease management.
4. We have an MOU with Sick Kids Hospital in Canada, to strengthen delivery of cancer care for our children.

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear! (Applause)

Dr. FERGUSON:

5. A National Cancer Registry has been developed to assess the burden of cancer, as well as track and monitor the cancer epidemic across the country.
6. We have put in place a simple but revolutionary procedure to quickly detect abnormal and potential cancer-forming cells in the cervix - the visual inspection with Acetic Acid method.

Mr. Speaker, I am committed to rid this country of cervical cancer. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Dr. FERGUSON:

7. We have strengthened the National Public Health Lab., to improve the turnaround time for results. We purchased and commissioned five microscopes, enhanced cytology and histopathology services, outsourced some services, and improved HR capacity. Here, I must thank my Cuban counterpart, Minister Morales, for providing three pathologists for this programme.

(Applause)

8. The Ministry of Health is procuring two Linear Accelerator machines, with funding support from the NHF, CHASE, the Vincent Ho Sang Family

Foundation, in collaboration with the Montego Bay Association of Administrative Professionals, and the Chamber of Commerce. The Ministry would welcome the support of other well-thinking Jamaicans, Mr. Speaker. The introduction of the LINAC machines should reduce the cost for a full course of radiation treatment from One point Eight Million Dollars ($1.8M) to zero, for the poorest and most vulnerable Jamaicans.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the procurement process for these machines are far advanced.

A Government MEMBER: Tell dem!

Dr. FERGUSON:

9. The Ambulatory Chemotherapy Suite, was established at the Kingston Public Hospital, which now allows treatment of more than 200 patients per month and free up almost 60 bed space, 15 beds per week.

This is something that we must laud, Mr. Speaker, because before that, the numbers were much lower. There was no place for persons to bathe and to clean up themselves; they were vomiting on themselves. We have created a first-class Ambulatory Chemotherapy Suite. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Dr. FERGUSON:

APPLIED RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF HEALTH

Mr. Speaker, the local health challenges must guide a research agenda designed to provide appropriate solutions. In recognition of this, the Ministry of Health has been improving its research capacity and supporting other research initiatives that are aligned to our priorities. We are providing opportunities for knowledge sharing by way of our annual Research Conferences, the fifth of which will be staged in November of this year, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a focused research agenda will be established in the 2015/2016 period under guidance of an Expert Committee. Funding support will be provided on a competitive basis.

THE CHILD & ADOLESCENT HOSPITAL

Mr. Speaker, we are finalizing plans to build a Child & Adolescent Hospital in western Jamaica.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear! Good place!

Dr. FERGUSON: The Ministry is leading the establishment of an inter-ministerial group to provide guidance to the process.

I am happy to announce, Mr. Speaker, that we have received expressions of interest from at least one Government, to fund the feasibility study. (Applause) This is currently under review.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: We are stepping!

(HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, North, Minister Without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility

for the Public Service, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister Without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports, and Deputy leader of the House, entered and took her seat.)

HEALTH TOURISM

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is poised to become a leader in the region where health tourism is concerned. (Applause) The corridor from Negril to St. Ann - I know Shahine would love that - is largely regarded as the Tourism Mecca.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Yes!

Dr. FERGUSON: Jamaica recorded stopover arrivals - we are talking about 2012 figures - of 1.8 million visitors. I know last year we reached to 2 million. Montego Bay accounted for 31 per cent, Ocho Rios 21.9, Negril accounted for 20.9. The health service in the Western and part of the North East regions is therefore more exposed to use by foreign nationals, including for emergency services.

Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent on us to respond. And so, in keeping with our plans to develop the health tourism sector, I have on my desk the North-West Corridor Trauma Plan, which is a proposal to develop the corridor from Negril to St. Ann, to improve trauma care. (Applause) The National Health Fund is leading a team of funders for the proposal, including the Tourism Enhancement Fund and CHASE, as well as private interests to pool resources to make one of the most important investments in health in this part of the island.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Good place to do it!

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, it is important to note, however, that while this investment is seen under the rubric of health tourism, our citizens will be the greatest beneficiaries of this programme. (Applause) Because sometimes we talk about health tourism and our people become jealous. But I just want to make that point right up-front, Mr. Speaker.

Under the plan, the capacity of St. Ann's Bay Hospital, Falmouth, Cornwall Regional, Noel Holmes... (Applause) ...Negril Health Centre will be improved to ensure that they are able to efficiently manage trauma cases and accept referrals where necessary. A plan will be developed to address any major gaps in the emergency health care situation in that region.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, HIV remains on the post-2015 agenda. We are far advanced with the integration of aspects of the National HIV/STI Programme with the National Family Planning Board. We are now moving to address integration at the level of service delivery to ensure greater efficiency and coverage of those in need.

This process that we are undertaking will be presented as a best practice, Mr. Speaker, at the International AIDS conference in Australia

later this month. A Change management and communication plan was developed to guide the integration. Organizational structure and HR manuals have also been developed and will be submitted for approval before the end of this financial year. Mr. Speaker, drafting instructions have been forwarded to CPC to facilitate the approved amendments of the NFPB Act.

We have made many important gains with respect to HIV and AIDS, Mr. Speaker, 43% of people living with HIV and AIDS are living longer and more productive lives.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: Forty-three percent are living longer and more productive lives, Mr. Speaker. We expect to meet the MDG goal with respect to the reduction of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV and we are well on our way towards zero infection in that area.

(Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: Importantly Mr. Speaker, through extensive and sustained lobbying in the international community, Jamaica has received an additional US$11 Million for a total now of US$19 Million. We are in the process of preparing our proposal for the grant to take effect in August 2015, ensuring a continuation of our HIV response to the middle of 2018. (Applause)

VECTOR BORNE DISEASES

Mr. Speaker, the recent outbreak of Chikungunya virus in the Caribbean continues to pose a major threat to Jamaica. The continuous threat of cholera from neighbouring countries and the rapid rise of dengue in the region all concern us. Though Chikungunya will inevitably reach Jamaica, we are still free of the virus despite more than 4,000 confirmed cases in 17 neighbouring countries and over 100,000 suspected cases. Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat this because if not, it will miss a lot of persons. Though Chikungunya will inevitably reach Jamaica, will inevitably reach Jamaica, we are still free of the virus despite more than 4,000 confirmed cases in 17 neighbouring countries and over 100,000 suspected cases. The same mosquito that carries and transmits Chikungunya carries dengue.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry has been proactive. We have sensitised our health professionals on the management protocols; we're monitoring the environmental conditions and have put measures in place to facilitate early detection.

I am appealing, Mr. Speaker, to all Jamaicans to follow the recommendations to reduce mosquito-breeding sites in and around our homes, places of business, places of worship and schools.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Important.

Dr. FERGUSON: A special plea, Mr. Speaker, because it is the participation of our citizens that will make the difference in how we survive. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: I am sorry that the Opposition Spokesman stepped out, but I wanted to make the point. Universal Health Coverage - I want to congratulate the Opposition Spokesman, because last year he

spent significant time on Universal Health Coverage and I especially wanted him to hear this presentation on this section.

While in opposition, Mr. Speaker, I had very strong views about the "no user fees" policy and the challenges that were emanating from it. These challenges remain. The issue is not simply a user fee or no user fee option, but essentially how to sustainably finance health services. To help shape an approach, we have had nine consultations across the island starting with the Opposition Spokesman on Health, the Member of Parliament for West Central St. Catherine, and ending with the academic community, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the global conversation has shifted to Universal Health Care or Universal Health Coverage. In reality, Jamaica by removing user fees was taking a step in the right direction. The problem, however, was implementing the policy without the requisite due diligence. What are some of these?

- Understanding the contribution of the private health sector;
- Forecasting demands for services in the public sector;
- Determining the mechanisms for service delivery;
- Ensuring the availability of adequate financial and human resources;
- And importantly Mr. Speaker upgrading the Ageing infrastructure - plant and equipment.

Mr. Speaker, UHC is now the number one global health priority for the post-2015 development agenda and there is a broad consensus around its definition. Mr. Speaker, Universal Health Coverage implies:

> *"All people have access without discrimination to nationally determined sets of the promotive, preventative, curative and rehabilitative basic health services needed, and essential, safe, affordable, effective and quality medicines, while ensuring that the use of these services does not expose the users to financial hardship, with a special emphasis on poor, vulnerable and marginalized segments of the population*."

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: And this is a quote from the World Health Organization, Mr. Speaker, not my quote.

Mr. Speaker, there's also the global recognition that we have to travel a path to get to this laudable outcome. Mr. Speaker, it is a journey not a destination. The steps in this journey must be carefully sequenced and executed according to the availability of resources. Here I quote the Director of PAHO. Here I quote the Director of PAHO, Dr. Carissa Etienne:

> *"Every country needs to find its own way to UHC based on its own particular historic, social and economic context, promoting a larger social dialogue. Each country can do something to move towards UHC".*

What are we doing as a country, Mr. Speaker? I've already mentioned some of these:

- The pharmacy services
- The GOJ card
- The National Health Information System Strategic Plan
- The Primary Health Care Renewal Policy
- Establishment of four Centres of Excellence at primary care level
- The Strategic Plan for NCD and a draft Cancer Plan
- The VEN List that speaks to medicines, which is the Vital, Essential and Necessary list.
- Significant investments in equipment and the physical plant at both the primary and secondary levels.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague Minister Buchanan, will provide more details on the additional investments at primary and secondary care levels when he came around... (Applause)

A MEMBER: A warn him, tell him fi keep quiet. Zip yuh mouth from now.

(Laughter/Heckling)

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, the issue of health financing remains a major challenge in the quest to realize the objective of Universal Health Coverage. My colleague, Minister of Finance, and I are at one with developing a pragmatic national health financing plan, taking into account of all options on the table from the national consultations.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the importance of sequencing the steps towards Universal Health Coverage. I'm pleased to advise that the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with PAHO, will be hosting a High Level Strategic Dialogue in the second quarter of this year. The High Level Dialogue, Mr. Speaker, will allow us to develop a roadmap towards Universal Health Coverage.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: Conclusion. Mr. Speaker, the health of our people is a national development issue.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: Over the decades, you've seen continuity in good health policies because of collaboration. I believe we're continuing that great tradition. Successive Administrations are building on solid achievements. In the upcoming period, we must continue the collaboration in the national interest; we must move towards Universal Health Coverage; we must work towards transformation of the primary health care system; we must meet our targets to reduce premature deaths from NCD by 25% by 2025.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, we have some things to boast about despite the challenges.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: In fact, I was reminded of the commitments that we made and my team would not forgive me, Mr. Speaker, if I did not boast on their behalf.

A MEMBER: Hi! Hi!

Mr. McKENZIE: Yuh nuh haffi mention it.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: True! True!

A MEMBER: Tell dem! Tell dem!

Dr. FERGUSON: We promised we would establish four Primary Health Care Centres of Excellence. We have delivered! (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: We promised to integrate the National HIV Programme and the National Family Planning Board for greater efficiency. We have delivered! (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: We promised to transform pharmacy services. We have delivered! (Applause)

We promised to develop the infrastructure of secondary health care facilities. We have delivered. (Applause)

We promised to continue infrastructure improvements at the Primary Care level and we have delivered!

(Applause)

We promised more ambulances for the health sector. We have delivered! (Applause) Nineteen and sixteen is on its way. (Applause)

We promised more equipment for the health sector and we have delivered!

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Dr. FERGUSON: We promised to strengthen the National Health Information System. We have delivered. (Applause)

We promised the GOJ card to improve efficiencies in the health sector. We have delivered. (Applause)

And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, we promised the people of Jamaica smoke-free public spaces. We have delivered!

(Applause)

MEMBERS: We have delivered!

Dr. FERGUSON: Mr. Speaker, we're on the road to Providing Quality Accessible Health Care for all Jamaicans through the development of systems of excellence.

Mr. Speaker, may God continue to bless Jamaica land we love.

(Applause/Standing ovation)

A MEMBER: Bless dem man, whole heap a decency.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Desmond, yuh hear good speech?

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: Miss Daley.

(Applause)

Miss DALEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise a second time in this great Parliament to report on my stewardship as Member of Parliament for St. Catherine Eastern (Applause) as I remain committed to serving not only the people who elected me, but this noble country of ours. And, I do so Mr. Speaker through community participation, shifting power to the people while creating a new identity through community participation.

Mr. André HYLTON: Hear, hear!

Miss DALEY: Mr. Speaker, as I face the task of shifting power to the people of St. Catherine Eastern, it is made easier of the support given to me from some special individuals and groups. First, let me acknowledge the awesome power of God to lead and guide me in my decisions. (Applause) I give thanks to my family, especially my mom, the late Florence Daley, for showing me the true meaning of love for

fellow man and giving selflessly. I will always be guided by the values she taught me and she will always be in my heart. Applause)

To our beloved Prime Minister the Honourable Portia Simpson Miller, Madam, I don't know how you do it, but after getting the privilege of being closer to you, I realize that the job you are doing is not easy. (Applause) I want to take this opportunity to salute you for your continued dedication, true love and the hard work you perform on a daily basis. (Applause) I want to place on record the level of admiration I have developed for you for being so humble and never too proud to hug, laugh and participate in the simplest event. (Applause) You are truly a leader.

Government MEMBER: Absolutely!

Miss DALEY: It is not only the big things that defines a leader but also the small ones. Madam Prime Minister, I salute you. (Applause) To the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, my colleagues on both sides of the House thank you for your guidance and love.

To my constituents, my community leaders, my PD workers, my executive, my support staff, especially Caretaker Fabian Headley, Tivet Thorpe, Cherrice Chambers, Andre Creary, my driver, my security details Tennant and Jones; to my Councillors, His Worship the Mayor Norman Scott, Councillor of the Greendale Division, Councillor Enos Lawrence from the Republic of De la Vega City....

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Miss DALEY: ...Councillor Keisha Lewis from the Laruriston Division and Councillor Donavon Guy from the Twickenham Park Division. Thank you for the love and unity that we continue to share. Your work in the communities reflects true people power as you join with me in strengthening community participation among the citizens of St. Catherine Eastern.

Mr. Speaker, today is being celebrated as International Reggae Day, and I use this opportunity to salute the list of artistes from whom I personally draw strength in the possibilities of our people. I refer to Bob Marley, Dennis Brown, Clement Dodd, Marcia Griffith, Peter Tosh, Bunny Wailer, Ken Booth, Jimmy Cliff, just to name a few of a long list of standard bearers who created a pathway for all Jamaicans throughout the world in a positive way.

(Applause)

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Miss DALEY: Mr. Speaker, I say without contradiction that St. Catherine Eastern will be a good example to Jamaica and the rest of the world. This, Mr. Speaker, is supported by the continuous developmental work undertaken over the past twelve months in the constituency in the areas of education, basic amenities and sports with community participation.

Mr. Speaker, education is the bedrock of social and economic development. It is the most powerful means to eradicate poverty.

It is with this conviction, Mr. Speaker, that at the beginning of the last school year over 2,500 students from basic to university level benefited from tuition payment, textbooks, vouchers and uniforms. We went a step further and assisted over fifty needy

students to pay their CSEC examination fees. (Applause)

Mr. André HYLTON: Good.

Miss DALEY: In total over $4.5 Million was spent on Education from the People's Constituency Development Fund, the CDF. Mr. Speaker, I say the people's because I am merely the custodian of this money. (Applause)

Mr. André HYLTON: That's right.

Miss DALEY: As was mentioned last year in my presentation, I promised that we would start skills training in Windsor Heights and I am now pleased to report that with the collaboration of the Councillor, the Community Security and Justice Programme, the Social Development Commission and HEART Trust/NTA - the centre was officially opened in March of this year. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear, Denise. Drop work pon them.

Miss DALEY: The first course of study is Masonry Level I as we are preparing our communities for opportunities in the logistic hub and the economic zone. (Applause) Twenty-five students were registered and are now pursuing the course with the oldest student being over fifty years of age. (Applause) This, Mr. Speaker, goes to show that we have no age boundaries for development in St. Catherine Eastern as we give power to the people with skills training.

Government MEMBER: True, true.

Miss DALEY: Mr. Speaker, the students are now tiling the bathroom on the building being prepared as part of their course-work and there is a section that needs new roofing and this will be done as another part of their course-work. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: That's right. Working, working.

Miss DALEY: It must also be mentioned, Mr. Speaker, that some of these students already can do construction but need to formalize themselves with certification at the new level. Isn't this community participation at work, Mr. Speaker?

(Applause)

Mr. André HYLTON: Yes, it is.

Miss DALEY: Mr. Speaker, the Tredegar Park All-Age School registered a decline in student attendance as a result of the level of crime that was being experienced in the area along with other factors existing in the community. Mr. Speaker, today the school is once again filled to capacity due to the combined efforts of the Principal, Mrs. Rochester, who is in the gallery, staff, community members and the Minister of National Security with other interventions. (Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Miss DALEY: I must recognize the contribution by the United States Embassy along with the community and allocation from the CDF that established a multifunctional farming facility that is assisting students with nutritional lunches. (Applause) This is enabling students to be able to attend school on a regular basis as previously the lack of lunch money was one of the reasons for poor attendance. It also serves to educate and develop the students with the sense of the importance of agriculture. Special thanks to

the US Embassy and the community for their contribution toward this venture. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker shifting power to the people means enabling them with a better quality of life. We were able to set-up three additional homework centres bringing the total now to nine established in the community within the last two and a half years. (Applause) I must make mention of the Greendale Computer and Homework Centre which was done through JEEP and the citizens at a cost of over $3 Million. Jonathan Grant High School introduced its Sixth Form programme with the opening of a new block for students at this level. (Applause) The Board, the Principal, Dr. Ankle, and staff must be commended for their great effort as they work to make the school one of the best institution for education and training. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, there are other schools in the constituency that continue to do well, but time would not permit me to give details so let me use this opportunity to say a very big thank you to all the educators and mentors within the educational institutions in my constituency from the basic to high school level and other institutions outside the public system. Special congratulations must be extended to the St. Jago High School athletics team, especially the girls who were placed fourth at the 2014 Girls' Championship at the National Stadium. (Applause

Mr. André HYLTON: Well done.

Miss DALEY: Mr. Speaker, the Central Village Multipurpose [Centre] is now completed. This project was undertaken by the Jamaica Social Investment Fund, JSIF, through the International World Bank for reconstruction and development. This project, Mr. Speaker, cost $121,944,275.00 and the community, Mr. Speaker, was able to contribute $6,105,000. This Multipurpose Centre will serve 5,800 citizens in around Central Village.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, last year the Minister of Education stated that everyone should be allowed to get a High School Diploma or its equivalency. We will be ensuring that our out-of-school population ages seventeen to twenty-one in the first instance benefit from this second chance. (Applause) We are, therefore, recommending that our schools be opened up at nights to facilitate those working citizens who need to upgrade and empower themselves with the qualifications they need. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You're a teacher at heart still.

Miss DALEY: Mr. Speaker, last year I spoke to the water problems in the constituency, today I stand proudly to report that several communities that are now having water. In February this year, there was the installation of the Windsor Heights Solar Water Supply System. This system was installed with the assistance from the Rural Water Supply Limited and will be maintained by the National Water Commission, NWC. The System will bring water to residents living at those altitudes where the regular NWC system was not able to reach. The Minister of Water, the Honourable Robert Pickersgill was on hand to officially turn on

the solar water supply in the community. Thank you Minister. (Applause)

WATER

Mr. Speaker, the farming community of Glade was given a temporary solution to their water distress. Although nothing can take the place of flowing water, a tank was erected in the community as an interim measure to the community water woe.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of several communities such as New Nursery, Tredegar Park, Fisheries, Caymanas Bay and Gravel Heights are also waiting for water to their homes, to them I say, water in your pipe is on its way. (Applause)

I have the assurance of the respective Ministry and Ministers that this will be addressed in the next financial year. And we intend to start at least four of these projects before this year end.

(Applause)

Mr. D. BUCHANAN: Talk up the things them, MP for life.

ROADS

Miss DALEY: Road, Mr. Speaker roads are an integral part of any good public transport system and a country's road network should be efficient in order maximize economic and social opportunities.

We should acknowledge that roads enhance mobility giving people greater access. We can shift power to people by giving access to economic opportunity through job search when they are able to travel on good roads to fend for themselves. Greater community participation can be encouraged as citizens can move easily to share with one another. Bearing this in mind, the Jamaica Emergency Programme, JEEP Phase 3 is now in the process of doing five (5) roads, namely: a portion of Greendale, Garvey Way in De La Vega City, Burke Road, Lauriston Scheme Road and White Church Street. (Applause) This, Mr. Speaker, will assist in getting people to and from freely.

As I speak now, Mr. Speaker, three more roads are added to the list that is being repaired under the supervision of the St. Catherine Parish Council. These roads are the Michael Manley Boulevard, White Church Street and Oxford Street. We are still lobbying for roads to be repaired in Tredegar Park, Caymanas Bay and Glade.

HOUSING

Housing, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I turned to the very important issue of housing, I remember a constituent who came to my office and informed me that he was living with four females in a one room dwelling. To this, I thought he lived with four wives. With tears he said, a wife and three daughters. Two of whom were attending prominent high schools in Kingston, Mr. Speaker. I was moved at the story. Mr. Speaker, I was moved because the story was told to me of rising very early in the morning and staying up late at nights to allow the girls to change their clothes. They needed their privacy, Mr. Speaker. Through the allocation from the CDF, I was able to give assistance of $50,000 to transfer a kitchen that they were making

into another bedroom. (Applause) They were also able, Mr. Speaker, to make a makeshift kitchen. The girls wrote and I quote:

"*We are very grateful to you and the Government for assisting us so that we can live as decent citizens".*

Mr. Speaker, it is my belief that the CDF plays a very critical and important role in the lives of people and a community. (Applause) I am now appealing to the Minister of Finance and the Government to look at the possibility of increasing the CDF from $15 Million, Mr. Speaker, to $25 Million... (Applause) ...and Mr. Speaker, where much is given much is expected. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak of the CDF and not say a very big thank you to Miss Moveta Munroe and her staff and Miss Garcia from the Social Development Commission in Spanish Town. They are true professionals. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Emergency Housing Programme in year one saw the constituency benefitted from 20 Food for the Poor houses thus far, seven (7) of these houses have been completed and another three are in the construction phase. The remaining 10 recipients' applications are being processed. Today, I would like to say thanks to Food for the Poor for the way in which the organization continues to touch the lives of the constituents of St. Catherine Eastern.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, 150 persons have been given assistance through the CDF Fund raising from $15,000 to $25,000 to carry out repairs to their houses.

Mr. Speaker, I am currently in dialogue with a private - with private investors from Florida regarding land identified in the constituency for low income housing solutions... (Applause) ...for the less fortunate citizens including, Mr. Speaker, our domestic workers. We hope to bring this plan to fruition within the next two years.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are guided by the word of Isaiah 32 verse 18:

My people will abide in a peaceful habitation in secured dwelling and in a quiet resting place.

(Applause)

TITLING

Mr. Speaker, I turn to titling. When people get ownership of their land, they have power. Having started last year, the preparation and the distribution of titles continued with over 1,000 titles to the residents of Windsor Heights. Although, we face challenges with some of the lands in the community we continue to work together, to formalize ownership.

Mr. Speaker, on the 14th of June, this year, the Minister with responsibility for housing, the Honourable Dr. Maurice Guy was in Windsor Heights to inform, Mr. Speaker, the residents that over 900 more titles are ready for disbursement. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the people of Windsor Heights are now identified as land owners, this is shifting power to them. (Applause)

The Honourable Dr. Maurice Guy and the Housing Agency of Jamaica visited the community of Gravel Heights in December

2013 at a handing over ceremony where over 80 titles were distributed to proud residents. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, power is being shifted back to the people as more titles are being prepared for Gravel Heights. (Applause) Thank you Minister Guy and your team, you are getting the job done. (Applause)

ELECTRICITY

Electricity, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, electricity is an essential utility in modern society, it is linked to everything from human sub-consciousness, human subconscious fear of the dark to the practical need for working in an industrialized world. (Applause)

We are having several challenges, Mr. Speaker, with electricity. The community of Mount View and Gravel Heights. Mr. Speaker, the residents are willing to pay for this basic amenity. I am therefore, now calling on the Jamaica Public Service and Rural Electrification Programme to assist these communities.

HEALTH

Health, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are serious about health care in St. Catherine Eastern several health fairs were held with medical practitioners such as doctors, dentists and ophthalmologist from the United States giving their services free of charge to individuals over a period of one week. These medical practitioners will return shortly, to once again give medical assistance, diagnosis and treatment to the constituency of Eastern, St. Catherine. Mr. Speaker, under the leadership of Dr. Jones of the St. Jago Health Center Pediatric Dentistry Department they received a gracious contribution from the CDF to purchase much needed equipment to carry out their functions effectively. (Applause) A donation of 250,000 was given toward the purchase of a mobile unit and several hand pieces. This has greatly boosted the service provided by the dental department through the visits they make to the schools in my constituency. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to report that under the CHASE Fund the Windsor Heights Clinic will be refurbished with the addition of another room and a parameter fencing. Minister Luther Buchanan is scheduled to visit to the facility very soon. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, last year I mentioned that we will be transforming the old capital into an eco-tourism zone, I am proud to report that this has already began. The warden are already trained, Mr. Speaker, and the next phase of the transformation of Spanish Town will commence shortly. (Applause) Several community forums were held to sensitize the residents of the various changes that have started to take place in their surroundings.

Mr. Speaker, through the tourism enhancement fund, the Port Henderson road will be beautified so that the environment will be attractive and accommodating for tourists and locals alike.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment, Mr. Speaker, as a country, we need to recognize that we are in a different global economy than where we were 20 years ago. (Applause)

With the increase in the population of working-class individuals, the demand of employment also increases. We recognize the need to empower individuals to become their own boss in this day and age. To this end over 100 persons were assisted with grants in the form of cash, chicken and feed and farm supplies to start or boost their businesses in an effort to create an economically stable environment for their families. (Applause) This was done, through the aide of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security Enablement Fund, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Project with RADA and my CDF.

Mr. Speaker, job gives economic power to people, and although more sustainable jobs are needed for the constituents, several categories of workers such as drivers, masons, forklift operators were able to gain employment with the China Harbour Engineering Company on the North South leg of the highway currently under construction. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, to increase the opportunities of individuals being employable worldwide, we are looking at training persons in various skills areas such as what we have already started at the Windsor Height HEART Center, we continue to forge partnership with HEART to get this done. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Logistic Hub and the economic zone will be in St. Catherine. We have already begun to prepare persons through training for its arrival. We intend to use the Central Village Community centre to future train individuals to be a part of this economic zone. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we identified a place large enough to accommodate over 200 persons in a Call Centre operation in a crime free environment. I am asking private entities to reinvest in Spanish Town, the old capital of our country. (Applause) There are a lot of young people who can benefit from this opportunity. Our plans were discussed with two prominent businessmen who own these businesses. Mr. Speaker, this is a means of investment to sustain the livelihood of the people through employment in a bid to shift back power into their hands.

CRIME AND VIOLENCE

There is almost a zero-level crime rate with community participation in the constituency. Mr. Speaker, the community of Gravel Heights suffered from the migration of residents because of crime and violence and the threat it posed on their lives and that after their families. Today, I can inform this House that the Gravel Heights is now crime free. A new identity has been created for the community and the residents. (Applause) Persons who have left are moving back home from all over Jamaica to reclaim their lands. (Applause)

Several entities must be commended for the role they played in the reduction of crime and violence in the Gravel Heights and, by extension, the constituency. The Minister of National Security, who took time out to walk the community to bring back confidence to the people, (Applause) Senior Superintendent of Police and his team, Mr. Anthony Castelle.

Mr. Speaker, in shifting back power to the people I must also commend the following: CSJP for their continued dedication to community development and safety, also for their input of having mobile police units in Lauriston and granting scholarships for tertiary students through the Benevolent Society; Bishop Rowan Edwards organizers of the 10,000 Men and Their Families March that assisted greatly in the reduction of crime and violence; (Applause) Pastor Arthur King for opening his church doors for community meetings and for encouraging the residents of Gravel Heights to keep the faith and hope of a better tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to organize training for individuals from volatile communities of the constituency in areas such as etiquette, resume writing and interview skills in an effort to empower them. The recruitment phase of this project is underway. I also intend to go further, Mr. Speaker, in my effort to bring the crime rate in my constituency to zero. I will be assisting five ex-prisoners every six months with a bed, two-burner stove, $5,000 and training in skill areas. The end result is that within the next five years there should be no repeat offenders and they will be empowered with the tools to make them take responsibility for themselves and become worthwhile citizens of Jamaica. (Applause) Thanks to Bishop Rowan Edwards for the assistance and the SDC, which were contacted to ensure transparency; this will start in the month of August.

I am convinced Mr. Speaker, that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change a community. (Applause) Indeed, it is the citizens that allow for the reduction of crime and violence. Mr. Speaker, I say this because of the number of registered community-based organizations that are in St. Catherine, Eastern and working to give their various communities a new identity, empowering the citizens to become more responsible. These groups are very much concerned about their communities and wanting the best for their families and those around them.

These organizations stand against illegal and criminal activities. On a regular basis they organize activities for community development along with keeping the youths off the streets and out of trouble. This is creating self-reliant individuals and communities. Through these groups we are able to issue farm work cards in a transparent way where colour does not matter. Community participation is working in St. Catherine. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I have to make mention of the three active uniformed groups that are in St. Catherine, Eastern and represented here today: the Jones Avenue Cadet Corps under the leadership of Kelvin Wallace; the Buckingham Golden Youth Cadet Corps at Railway Premises under the leadership of Corporal Fabian McKnight; the De La Vega City Cadet Corps under the leadership of Mr. Lewis.

(Applause)

I also recognize the various citizens associations and groups that are making an impact within their own communities, some of

them are here today: (Applause) the Greendale Twickenham Gardens Citizens Association under the leadership of Mrs. Mabel Sutton, the Windsor Meadows Citizens Association; Central Village Benevolent Society; Shelter Rock/Dempshire Pen Benevolent Society; De La Vega City Benevolent Society and Youth Club; Rivoli United Police Youth Club; Buckingham Golden Police Youth Club; Lauriston Benevolent Society and the Citizens Association of Keystone Association.

Mr. Speaker, you will realize now that with all the registered groups and well thinking citizens in St. Catherine, Eastern, it is no wonder that the constituency can now shift power to the communities and be a great example to the rest of Jamaica and the world. (Applause)

The words of Gandhi states, "*A small body of determined spirit fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history*". (Applause) To these groups I say you have changed history. You have done a wonderful job for reclaiming leadership and creating a new identity for yourselves and your communities by being active community members. A big thank you is also extended to the private entities which continue to assist these community groups towards their development.

SPORTS

Mr. Speaker, community sport day is a feature of St. Catherine, Eastern. This enables people to empower themselves with management, organizing and interpersonal relation skills.

Mr. Speaker, each year the residents of the various communities eagerly await the announcement of the date for sports day. Through the CDF we assisted the communities of De La Vega City, Railway Premises, Greendale, Big Lane in Central Village, to stage their community sports day. The Rivoli De La Vega City netball, football and cricket team continue to benefit from financial support made possible through the CDF.

Mr. Speaker, the Rivoli football team on Monk Street was in total darkness for many years. This makes it very difficult for training to take place in the nights. Through the CDF and friends for St. Catherine, Eastern, lights were erected on the field at a cost of over $700,000. (Applause) Though the field is not as bright as the National Stadium, the team is now able to utilize their field during the night for training. Congratulations to the Rivoli football team in retaining their place for the Premier League for the next year (Applause) after finishing in the top 10, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the St. Jago High School sporting facility will be upgraded through a programme out of the Ministry of Sports which was launched earlier this year by the Minister with responsibility for Sport, the Honourable Natalie Neita-Headley. (Applause)

I must give special commendation to the Principal of St. Jago High School, Miss Sandra Sawyer Watson for her leadership skills and to the Sports Department for the way in which they mould the young athletes, some of whom have represented Jamaica such

as Yohan Blake, Melanie Walker, Kerron Stewart, Nickel Ashmeade and most recently 17 year-old Cavahn McKenzie who passed away in Trinidad while competing for Jamaica. We were saddened by his passing but he ran the race to the end. We salute all the individuals who make the pain of his passing bearable.

(Applause)

In partnership with Bishop Rowan Edwards and Miss Joan Black from De La Vega City, a sports day was held in Jones Avenue where teams from various divides in the constituency came together on that day to compete and to have fun. By this action we are giving back power to the people to move about freely across the length and breadth of the constituency. (Applause)

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Sir Hugh Allen, the eminent musician said, "Jumping at several small opportunities may get us there more quickly than waiting for big things to come along". I see wisdom in these words. I say this because in moving forward I will embark on several minor projects.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The speaker's time has expired.

Mr. McKENZIE: She finish.

Mr. DALLEY: Any amount of time she needs.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, I now ask that the Member's time be extended sufficient to complete her presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time for speaking be extended so as to allow her to complete her presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

(Applause)

Miss DALEY: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the House for giving me this opportunity. I say this, Mr. Speaker, in moving forward I will embark on several minor projects that will reach a wide cross-section of my constituents. The end result of this, Mr. Speaker, will be a major development and transformation of the constituency of Eastern St. Catherine. We will continue to focus on the basic amenities: light, water and road for several communities. We will continue to work closely with the NGOs, community-based organizations to effect more change for sustainable growth and development.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I borrow a quote from an unknown author,

"*Don't look for someone who will solve all your problems. Look for someone who won't let you face them alone*".

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I recommit myself to facing all problems and challenges with my constituents. I say this to all, let us stand up for dangerous unselfishness. As the late Martin Luther King said, "*Let us rise up with a greater readiness. Let us stand up with a greater determination*" to make this country a better place to live, work, raise our families and do business. (Applause) We can do it through community participation and shifting power to the people with education and improvement in their quality of life.

May God bless Eastern St. Catherine and may God bless Jamaica land we love. (Applause)

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, I am privileged… Permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

The Deputy SPEAKER: I was just going to remind you.

(Laughter)

Permission granted.

Mr. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to once again address this august House. I do so only with the good judgment of the people of East Central St. Catherine.

Mr. JACKSON: Very good judgement.

Mr. BROWN: The trust reposed in me by the Honourable Prime Minister, and by no means least, the grace of God.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWN: It has been a year since my last presentation, a report on my stewardship to the people of Jamaica, and to my constituents of East Central, St. Catherine, without whose consent I would not be here today, and with whose consent, I intend to remain here a very, long time. (Applause) Very, very, very, very long time.

Mr. Speaker, as I rise to make my third consecutive contribution to this Sectoral Debate, I wish to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the Deputy Speaker, for your even-handedness in presiding over the sittings of this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, I thank my family for their care, support and understanding as I seek to serve my country in this capacity. (Applause)

I am extremely grateful that we have in our Most Honourable Prime Minister, a first among equals who treats her Ministers and Ministers of State with respect.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes.

A MEMBER: True. True.

Mr. BROWN: A Prime Minister who accords the appropriate latitude to each Member of her Administration to discharge the functions and responsibilities conferred through our Instruments of Appointment. (Applause) I am personally grateful to the Prime Minister for the confidence she has continued to repose in me as her Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, and I know that she's represented here by the Honourable Member from North West St. Catherine, who is acting. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to salute my esteemed colleague and Minister, Senator the Honourable Arnold J Nicholson, QC, for his sterling leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and for his enormous work ethic. (Applause)

As with the Most Honourable Prime Minister, Minister Nicholson affords me the requisite space to carry out my assigned functions.

A MEMBER: Good Minister.

(Applause)

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, I'd to acknowledge the Permanent Secretary who is here, other Secretaries and other members of the Civil Service and of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, including our Ambassadors, High Commissioners,

Honorary Consuls, the Diaspora Advisory Board Members and the members of the Diaspora leadership, they deserve our commendation for their dedication and commitment to excellence. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, there is my support staff which comprises my Special Assistant, my Constituency Administrators, my Constituency Development Fund Consultant, my Constituency Consultant, Cluster Managers and the workers in my constituency. Yes, is a very important constituency, full executive team.

Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the Members of the Diplomatic Corps and the Councillor Corp who are present. (Applause) Certainly the Dean of the Diplomatic Corp was here earlier but I suspect he had other engagements, but I'm grateful for their presence.

I salute my three Councillors - Councillor Oral Gunnings of the Gregory Park Division, (Applause) Councillor Claude Hamilton of the Portmore Pines Division (Applause) and Councillor Ainsley Parkins of the Southboro Division. (Applause) Three out of three. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, all three Councillors have been providing effective service and leadership at the Divisional level. All three reside in their Division and all of them are in close proximity to the people of their respective divisions and I want to salute them, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I also pause to recognize the presence of the President of the Senate, who is here in support this afternoon. (Applause)

(Inaudible comment by a Member) (Laughter)

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, I am supported in the constituency by Community Leaders, Pastors, Principals and Teachers and indeed, several of my constituents are in the Gallery and I also want to acknowledge their presence here this afternoon. (Applause)

In that vein, I pause to pay tribute to the late Mary Royes-Henry, the former President of the Gregory Park Community Development Committee. Mrs. Henry was a retired Senior Superintendent of Police, a relentless community activist. She was a fighter and even when battling cancer, which the Ministry of Health spoke to this afternoon, she continued to serve the community until her last breath. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to her and to express profound condolences to her family, in particular her daughter. (Applause) The community has suffered a great loss. We have suffered a great loss.

SPORTS

Mr. Speaker, This leads me to speak about the Constituency and it is appropriate that I begin with Sports. It is in this area that Mrs. Henry was most valuable to me as Member of Parliament. She led the charge with the implementation of the Hamilton Gardens Cricket facility where the New Zealand Government made available J$2.7 Million Jamaican dollars for the project. Under her leadership, Phase I of this facility was completed in February of this year coinciding with the visit of His Excellency Mr. Simon

Tucker, High Commissioner of New Zealand to Jamaica, on the occasion of his participation in the 2014 Diplomatic Week of activities.

Mr. Speaker, I said earlier, Mrs. Henry Royes, successfully coordinated the implementation of Phase I of the project, which saw the erection of a perimeter fence, the construction of two sight screens, the establishment of a score board, the relaying of the pitch and the upgrading of the outfield.

We are now embarked on Phase II of the project, which has seen the allocation of J$3 Million from the Constituency Development Fund. And I hear Members asking for an increase in this Fund, and I remember, Mr. Speaker, that I was taken to task about my support for the Constituency Development Fund, and I want to indicate that I continue to support the Constituency Development Fund. (Applause)

Under Phase II of the construction of the Pavilion, the construction of stands will commence, along with the building of a parking lot and a park. The intention is to create a first-class cricket facility in Portmore, enabling the Municipality to host first-class Test matches, have a team at the national level and serve as a ground on which touring teams can practice if they so desire.

Phase III will see the upgrading of the Watson Grove Football Field and the lighting of the facility to allow for night games. And I'm glad I heard my colleagues from St. Catherine Eastern speaking about lighting, so I can borrow from her to get the lights in.... (Inaudible comment)

A MEMBER: She's right next door.

Mr. BROWN: Indeed. The facility will enhance the aesthetics of the area and provide an outlet for the positive engagement of young people in the business of sport.

Mr. Speaker, we have submitted the Christian Pen Football and Sports Complex project to the Sugar Transformation Unit and are anticipating a favourable response. This is in furtherance of our commitment to develop proper sporting venues in the constituency.

Also in furtherance of this objective, Mr. Speaker, we were fortunate to have a tour of the Constituency by Mr. Denzil Wilks, the Managing Director of the Sports Development Foundation, and we have aligned the constituency sport development plans with the programme of that Foundation. Indeed, we look forward to the implementation of the very projects that we have identified. (Applause)

During the course of this year, the New York City Police Department Cricket Team, whilst on tour to Jamaica, made a valuable donation of cricket gears to the Gregory Park Primary School and for that we are thankful and we salute Mr. Charles Simpson, the owner of Wilco Sports who organized the event. (Applause)

HOUSING

Mr. Speaker, on the matter of Housing, we note the presentation of the Minister of Housing, the Honourable Member for Central St. Mary, in his contribution to the Sectoral Debate, where he outlined that under the Local Improvement Community Amenities

Act, "Scores of Jamaicans stand to benefit from upgrades as well". In that vein, Mr. Speaker, the Minister announced that the Cabinet agreed to the compulsory acquisition of two properties in Portmore Lane, St. Catherine, that were declared under the LICA to facilitate the regularization of 105 occupants.

Mr. Speaker, Portmore Lane is in the Constituency of East Central St. Catherine and I therefore, welcome this news for the residents who have had insecurity of tenure and inadequate infrastructure and inadequate facilities for too long. (Applause)

This decision by the Cabinet of Jamaica is very important news in its implication for the improvement in the quality of lives of the residents.

Equally, Mr. Speaker, we await the support of the Minister without portfolio responsibility for Housing to bring to the Cabinet the Portmore Villa Housing Project, which has been in gestation since May of last year. This project will see the construction of over 500 units in a mixed development never before seen in Jamaica. This will provide subsidized housing for informal settlers whilst simultaneously providing low income solutions for middle income and young professionals.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, We look forward to the implementation of this project. It will in my view, revolutionize housing and community development in the country.

Mr. Speaker, We are also encouraged by assurances given to this Honourable House by the Honourable Minister of Transport, Work and Housing, the Member from St. Andrew South in relation to the Bernard Lodge Housing Development that will see the construction of over 1,600 units in Bernard Lodge and its environs. This project impacts East Central, St. Catherine, as well as South St. Catherine and in East Central, it is anticipated that at least 300 units will be constructed in the Constituency. Again, adding significant stock to the housing sector.

Mr. JACKSON: Let us enjoy because you and I will represent the rest of the area.

Mr. BROWN: Wonderful.

Mr. Speaker, as a new Constituency which has 90% of the informal settlements in Portmore, I have a vested interest in the expeditious and efficient implementation of these housing projects, and have been making consistent representation to my colleague Ministers, who have been very accommodating and for that I thank them. (Applause)

ROADS

Related to the matter of Housing is the matter of community roads. On my previous two contributions, I have made the point, Mr. Speaker, that private developers too often short-change homeowners with substandard roads and the absence of amenities.

A MEMBER: True!

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, I could not have said it better than the Minister of Local Government and Community Development, the Member from South West Clarendon who said:

"It is the under-served network of parochial roads within communities that are lifelines between families, communities and the rest of the society and social and public services. It is, therefore, obvious that new approaches with respect to the maintenance of these roads are now required".

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Absolutely!

Mr. BROWN: …As a Member of Parliament who is affected or challenged by many community roads in deplorable condition, I welcome the acknowledgement by the Honourable Member that, "Ways to invest in road construction more efficiently" have to be found and particularly so at the community level.

I welcome the partnership between the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, and the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, in assessing road construction technologies with the interest of realizing value for money in the road sector. I welcome, Mr. Speaker, the decision by the Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, the Member from St. Andrew South, for allowing the use of concrete in the construction of roads or any material provide it meets the specification and is competitively priced.

(Applause by Government Members)

We in East Central St. Catherine look forward to the roll-out of the major infrastructure development programme…

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. BROWN: ….or project in the constituency and across Jamaica. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of State, the Member of Parliament for Clarendon North Western who toured my constituency and saw first-hand the challenges being experienced as a result of the deplorable road conditions. Mr. Speaker, as a Minister who gets things done I look forward in the near future to improve road conditions in the constituency of East Central St. Catherine. (Applause)

The issue of roads, Mr. Speaker, is the single most urgent concern for residents in East Central St. Catherine, and I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I am very buoyed by the fact that activities are taking place in South East St. Catherine with the paving of the George Lee Boulevard and that bodes well for roads generally in Portmore.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, the constituency of East Central St. Catherine is open for the use of concrete to repair our roads and welcomes any pilot necessary in that regard, to be conducted in our constituency. Mr. Speaker, apart from roads people want to be safe in their homes and in their communities. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of National Security, the Honourable Member from Central Manchester and the Police High Command for rolling out in the constituency of East Central St. Catherine, the proximity approach to policing. In 2013 we had five homicides in the Lakes Pen Lime Tree Grove communities of the constituency. There were marauding gunmen operating with apparent impunity. Representation was made to the Minister and the Police of High Command, both whom I found responsive.

POLICING

Mr. Speaker, the proximity approach to policing was deployed by placing police personnel on the ground and a mobile police unit was placed in Lime Tree Grove community, and I am pleased to announce, Mr. Speaker, that since the deployment of the proximity policing approach in this area, homicides have dropped from five in 2013 to one in 2014. (Applause by Government Members) And we hope it will go down to zero.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the roll-out of this approach in the Portmore Gardens, Portmore Lane area of the constituency where criminals have claimed the lives of several victims over the last three or more years. The proximity policing approach works and it is our duty as Members of Parliament to support this initiative. Mr. Speaker, communities need healthcare facilities and we in East Central St. Catherine are awaiting the construction of two health Centres of Excellence through the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the National Health Fund. We anticipate the construction of a Type 3 health facility in Gregory Park division during the course of this financial year, the existing clinic in Gregory Park is inadequate and is in need of urgent relocation.

EDUCATION

Mr. Speaker, in the area of education the constituency continues to do well, the Naggo Head Primary School continues to make us proud, the school came second in the primary schools athletic championships this year and we renew our commitment to support its sports as well as its academic programme because it is also doing extremely well academically. (Applause by Government Members) So too is Independence City Primary School, so too Port Henderson Primary School and the Gregory Park Primary School is holding its own as well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, under the JEEP initiative $3 Million was spent to make the Independence City primary school friendly and accessible to students with special needs. We also upgraded the bathroom facilities of the school; we constructed a section of the perimeter wall and painted the school. The constituency of East Central St. Catherine now boasts two institutions one primary and one secondary, or high, which are friendly to persons with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, we have allocated over $5 Million for back to school support last year, assisting more than 1000 students at all levels of the system with books and tuition, and we will continue that initiative this year. We are currently in dialogue with the Northern Caribbean University for the establishment of a campus in the constituency to enable greater access by the 188,000 population of Portmore to tertiary level education. (Applause by Government Members) We hope that as early as next year this will become a reality.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to announce that JEEP 3 is currently being executed in the constituency with two sidewalk projects, one in the vicinity of the Cedar Grove Academy and the other in the vicinity of the Hamilton

Gardens Cricket Oval, these two projects will employ over 300 persons bringing the total number of employment under JEEP to approximately 2000 persons in the constituency. (Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, kudos to the Minister of Land, Water, Environment and Climate Change and the Acting Prime Minister, the Honourable Member from North West St. Catherine… (Applause by Government Members) …for the Soapberry sewer improvement project which is said to get into high gear during this month. This is $1.8 Billion project which will see the employment of hundreds of workers in the constituencies of East Central St. Catherine, South East St. Catherine and South St. Catherine…

Government MEMBER: It's West, St. Andrew.

Mr. BROWN: And West St. Andrew, I am advised.

Mr. JACKSON: No, no, Republic of Portmore.

(Laughter)

Mr. BROWN: This is the second mega project that the Honourable Minister has deployed in the municipality of Portmore, improving the lives of the residents in all three constituencies. I salute him in his capacity as a Member of Parliament for one of these constituencies, which has been and will be positively impacted by the significant injection of development capital.

Mr. Speaker, the housing sector provide significant prospects for development and employment opportunities, and I referred to this earlier, and I am indicating that if these projects could be fast-tracked there would be full employment in Portmore and its environs based on the demand for labour and other skills. This in turn would have a positive effect on local businesses by driving demand for goods and services.

Mr. Speaker, even the private sector is getting in on the action. As the Member of Parliament I welcome the investment of Restaurant of Jamaica Limited in the constituency, with the construction of a casual dining restaurant in Grange Lane. Mr. Speaker, already the impact on employment is being felt as artisans primarily from the West Cumberland community are being given employment opportunities. Further, Mr. Speaker, the prospect of employment during the operation phase looms large. In this regard, I wish to thank the Acting Major, Councilor Leon Thomas, and the Chief Administrative Officer, Ms. Kerry Chambers and their team for expediting the approval process to allow this facility to advance to the implementation stage.

Mr. FAGAN: (Inaudible comment) - the next mayor?

Mr. BROWN: The next mayor.

Mr. Speaker, as an Administration we must continue to do everything within our remit to accelerate the implementation of projects, both private and public which will drive the economy, drive demand, increase supply and deliver meaningful economic activities to our citizens. Mr. Speaker, it is for this reason that the Portmore Agriculture Cooperative has been established to bring

available land back into sugar cane production under the sugar expansion fund. I wish to commend the Honourable Minister of Agriculture the Member from Westmoreland Central, for his support in this regard, I am pleased to advise that land clearing has begun and has progressed and provision is now being made for the planting of cane. (Applause by Government Members) The European Union is to be commended in this regard as well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome in the constituency the presence of Red Stripe, which is conducting a pilot project in relation to the cultivation of cassava for the making of bear.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear! Hear!

Mr. BROWN: Indeed, Mr. Speaker, this activity in the constituency portends well for the agricultural base of the constituency. (Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, I call on the National Land Agency to conduct an audit of the parcels of land under lease for agricultural purposes, to ensure that these parcels are being used as per lease. (Applause by Government Members) Where it is found that there is underutilization or no utilization, appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that the land is put to productive use. (Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, on the matter of training. I am pleased to report that the constituency is becoming logistic hub ready in collaboration with the Maritime Institute of Jamaica. Over 500 persons participated in the logistic 101 course. (Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, it is not lost on East Central St. Catherine that the much touted Caymanas Special Economic Zone will be contiguous to the constituency. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I have made representation to the Minister with Portfolio responsibility for Industry, Investment and Commerce, the Honourable Member from St. Andrew Western, that Portmore be incorporated fully as an active part of this special economic zone as several related activities will take place in Portmore, such as the contact centres and also education and training for the hub. Portmore ought not to be considered a dormitory community going forward. (Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Portmore Self-help Disability Foundation has received J$5 Million from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency to train over 80 persons with disabilities. This training exercise is being coordinated through the HEART Trust/NTA and Mr. O'Neil Jones who is the consultant to the project. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister, the Member from St. James West Central, for his support in this regard, we wish to thank the Government and people of Japan, in particular the Ambassador of Japan to Jamaica. (Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, through the Sugar Transformation Unit we have recommended 60 candidates for training in tractor operation, housekeeping, small appliance repair and entrepreneurship, among other areas, and again we wish to thank the Minister of Agriculture and indeed the head of delegation

for the European Union in relation to the Sugar Transformation Project and the Sugar Cane Expansion Fund.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming days we will formally open the 184th community access point at the Victory Open Bible Church in Lime Tree Grove. (Applause by Government Members) This brings to three, the number in the constituency, and for those persons who are not aware what the community access point is: it is the enabling of the community to access internet *via* the Universal Access Fund, where we have put in computer terminals, we have put in internet service provisions, and, Mr. Speaker, the importance of this particular centre, is that we asked in relation to the machines that were being put in, that they be 164 megabytes - bits that is, because we are going to seek to have animation training done at this site. Very important. (Applause by Government Members) We intend also to establish separate and apart from this site, an animation studio in Watson Grove during this fiscal year.

On Labour Day this year, Mr. Speaker, the national project which was a solar park treating with climate change, reflecting twining of the city of Hagen in Germany and the Municipality of Portmore, took place in Portmore, and we want to express gratitude to the government and people of Germany, through Ambassador Joseph Beck as well as the late George Lee, former Mayor of Portmore, under whose watch this project was initiated.

Special mention to Her Excellency, Mrs. Mathu Joyini, High Commissioner of the Republic of South Africa, who shared in the Labour Day events. (Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Parliament, I have been working, working, working, in the interest of my constituents. And, I must tell you, Mr. Speaker that, like a tree planted by the river, the people of East Central St. Catherine will not remove me as Member of Parliament from East Central St. Catherine. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

(Heckling)

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, I turn now...

(Heckling)

I turn now, Mr. Speaker, to my portfolio responsibility as Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, in the last twelve months the world has witnessed unprecedented and far-reaching socio-economic and political...

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Minister's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended enough to allow him to complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Minister's time for speaking be extended so that he may complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister Brown.

(Applause)

Mr. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me thank my colleagues for their indulgence.

Mr. Derrick SMITH: Don't abuse it.

Mr. BROWN: I will try not to abuse it.

Mr. Speaker, in the last twelve months the world - yes, I am going abroad now. In the last twelve months the world has witnessed unprecedented and far-reaching socio-economic and political changes which have influenced the way foreign relations are conducted. Changes to which Jamaica, as a member of the international community, must respond in accordance with our National Pledge, by playing our part in advancing the welfare of the whole human race. Jamaica, as a small island, has never allowed the shifting global environment to cause us to fear or to doubt that our contribution to the international community is significant. We do not waver in our determination to ensure that Jamaica indeed becomes the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business.

Mr. Speaker, as we continue to address our minds to the kind of Jamaica that we wish to create, we must be cognizant of the many factors at play, which, if properly managed, will serve to ensure our success.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade takes seriously its mandate to participate actively in various international fora, in order to advance Jamaica's welfare. We continue to build on the respect and recognition gained by Jamaica in the international community. We are determined that Jamaica's profile on the global stage is not only maintained, but enhanced.

Over the last twelve months we have been successful in our bid for a Vice-Chairmanship in the United Nations World Trade Organization. We have been successful in our bid for membership of the World Heritage Council. And we have been successful, having been returned, Mr. Speaker, for a third term - a third term to the Executive Council of the International Maritime Authority - or Organization. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the United Nations World Trade Organization and the International Maritime Organization, are international bodies whose work is of significance to Jamaica. (Applause) Given the value of tourism to our GDP, 6.4 per cent in 2012, and the increasing importance of shipping and other maritime activities in our development plans, it is very important that we remain active in these international organizations.

Mr. Speaker, the drive to position Jamaica as the fourth global logistics node, could only be considered because of our favourable geographic location. We understand only too well the significance of the maritime space for our sustenance, and the influence it has on our lives and livelihood.

Mr. Speaker, we are keenly aware that we cannot afford to be absent from the table when rules, regulations and standards for traversing this space are being elaborated. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, there is a popular advertisement here in Jamaica which says, "If you don't have a ticket you don't have a chance". And this is applicable in the active pursuit of our foreign policy. If we don't have a ticket, we don't have a chance.

Mr. Speaker, we have been vigorously pursuing the Trade Agenda, which is critical to Jamaica achieving the goals of Vision 2030. As evidence of our commitment in this area, the Ministry has made it a priority to ensure that meetings which outcome will have far-reaching implications for Jamaica's development agenda are appropriately serviced.

Having regard to the African, Caribbean and Pacific Relations, in October 2012, I led Jamaica's delegation to two meetings in Brussels, Belgium; the first, the 17th African, Caribbean and Pacific Group Ministerial Trade Committee, and the second, the 12th Joint African, Caribbean Pacific-European (ACP-EU) Ministerial Trade Committee.

The first meeting addressed a number of important issues relating to trade relations between African, Caribbean, Pacific and the European Union. Some of the issues discussed included the status and future perspectives of the ACP-EU Economic Partnership Agreements, the European Union trade negotiations with third countries, and the ACP Group's preparation for the 9th Session of the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization. With respect to the latter, ACP Ministers considered and adopted the ACP Declaration on the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference. This document sets out the Group's position on the three main areas which were addressed at the Conference, namely, trade facilitation, agriculture, and development.

Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that the work of the ACP Declaration was spearheaded by Jamaica, in its capacity as Coordinator of the ACP Group in the World Trade Organization in Geneva. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the meeting also finalized the ACP Group's Communique on the Ministerial Conference. The ACP Declaration, which was circulated among the documents for the Conference, provided the framework for the Group's participation in the 9th Session of the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference.

Mr. Speaker, I will speak in some detail about the World Trade Organization 9th Ministerial Conference later in my presentation.

The second meeting provided the ACP countries - including Jamaica - with the opportunity to raise directly with the European Union, concerns regarding specific issues affecting ACP-EU trade relations. These include:

- The potentially negative impact of the various Free Trade Agreements being negotiated by the EU with third countries;
- The erosion of preferences and competitiveness of ACP exports to the European Union;
- Non-tariff barriers facing certain African, Caribbean and Pacific exports;
- The difficulties being faced by certain African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, particularly African countries, in negotiating Economic Partnership Agreements, and
- Commodity issues.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the latter, I made a statement, drawing attention to Jamaica's concerns regarding the EU's decision to end its sugar production quotas and to introduce EU country origin labelling requirements for sugar. Both these measures will have the effect of making sugar exports to the European Union less attractive from small suppliers such as Jamaica. I also used the opportunity to provide and to emphasize to the EU, efforts being undertaken in Jamaica to ensure the continued viability of the sugar sector, particularly given the multi-functional role that this sector plays in the economy, and its contribution to employment and export earnings.

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, having regard to the World Trade Organization, it was my privilege to lead Jamaica's delegation to the 9th Session of the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, held from the 3rd to the 7th of December, 2013, in Bali, Indonesia. I had the good fortune to work with the Ministers and senior officials of other WTO members, to secure a successful outcome to the Conference. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. BROWN: I wish to highlight, Mr. Speaker, how important it was for the WTO members to achieve a positive outcome at this particular Ministerial Conference.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, the Doha Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations was launched in 2001 at the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference held in Doha, Qatar. Twelve years later, there had been an inability to gain any results. It was imperative, therefore, that the cycle of failures be broken. Some success had to be achieved in Bali, in order to provide much- needed impetus for concluding the Doha Round, and for enhancing the creditability of the WTO as a global rules-making institution.

WTO members, including Jamaica, expressed their collective desire for a successful outcome, and worked tirelessly to achieve this objective. I am pleased to state that we did, and in so doing, restored a measure of faith in the multilateral trading system.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministerial Conference focused primarily on the areas of the Doha Round negotiations where it was felt that agreement could be reached at Bali, namely, trade facilitation and certain elements of the negotiations on agriculture and development.

After four days of intensive round- the-clock negotiations, the 9th Session of the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference ended successfully with the adoption of the Bali Ministerial Declaration, which concluded the negotiations on World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation, and contained negotiated outcomes in certain elements of the negotiations on Agriculture and Development. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the conclusion to the Ministerial Conference also resulted in a number of firsts for the Organization:

- The Bali Package was the first set of results in the Doha negotiating round;

- MC9 was the most successful Ministerial Conference held since the launch of the Doha Round; and
- The Agreement on Trade Facilitation, the centerpiece of the Bali Package, was the first multilateral trade agreement concluded since the establishment of the WTO.

It was also a first for the new Director General of the WTO, Ambassador Roberto Azevedo of Brazil.

Mr. Speaker, although this outcome represents only a small part of the Doha Round, it must be viewed as having profoundly positive implications, particularly in terms of providing the momentum to unblock other areas of the Doha negotiations.

It also has significant implications for global trade, as it is felt that trillions of dollars will be unlocked, as a result, thus spurring on the global recovery. The *Financial Times* gave this outcome front page prominence, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to highlight the important role that Jamaica played during the Geneva Preparatory Process, leading to the 9th Session of the Ministerial Conference, and at the Conference itself. Jamaica was highly commended for the key role we played as the ACP Coordinator, both at the technical and ambassadorial levels in Geneva, and at the Ministerial level in Bali. (Applause)

Under Jamaica's stewardship, the ACP Group worked closely with other members to reach consensus on a number of outstanding issues which had proven difficult leading up to the Conference in Bali. We were instrumental in paving the way for concluding the negotiations on Trade Facilitation. During the Bali Preparatory Process, we were able to secure accord on the special and differential treatment provisions of the Agreement, marking an end to several years of deadlock on this aspect of the Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to focus briefly on the Agreement on Trade Facilitation, which is of particular relevance to Jamaica. The objective of the Agreement is to ensure the implementation of transparent, consistent and predictable procedures and practices at the border, aimed at reducing transaction costs, and improving the national trading environment. Trade Facilitation is a key component in improving Jamaica's national trading environment and international competitiveness, and it is critical to the success of the logistics hub. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I now wish to provide some information on the Agreement. Section I of the Agreement contains provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods in World Trade Organization Member States.

Section II of the Agreement contains the special and differential treatment provisions for developing countries and least-developed countries. This section details the flexibilities accorded to these two groups of countries. All developing countries, including Jamaica, will be able to determine the pace of implementation of the Agreement.

Implementation will be closely linked to the extent and timing of implementing commitments on the one hand and a country's

legal, technical and physical capacity to implement on the other hand. (Applause)

The development, or the developing countries and the least-developed countries will be able to obtain technical, financial and capacity building assistance from donor countries and donor agencies to assist them in implementing the Agreement.

A World Trade Organization Preparatory Committee has been established to oversee the entry into force of the Agreement.

Over the coming weeks, the Committee will focus on drafting the Protocol of Amendment to insert the Trade Facilitation Agreement into Annex IA of the World Trade Organization Agreement. This annex contains all the WTO Agreements relating to multilateral trade in goods.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWN: Once finalized and adopted, the Protocol will be open until the 31st July 2015, for the acceptance of WTO Members. The Agreement will enter into force when it has been ratified by two thirds of the World Trade Organization membership.

Mr. Speaker, a National Committee on Trade Facilitation has been established and will be responsible for national consultations and coordination relating to the implementation of the Agreement.

The Committee chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade comprises representatives of the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies, including the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, the Trade Board Limited, the Jamaica Customs Agency, the Ministry of Finance and Planning and JAMPRO. The public and private sector partnership was critical in this exercise as was the role of the Jamaica Customs Agency. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, I recently participated in the World Trade Organization-sponsored National Needs Assessment Exercise which was held from the 26th to the 29th of May 2014, here in Kingston.

The objective of the exercise was to identify Jamaica's needs and priorities in those areas in which technical, financial and capacity-building will be required to assist in implementing the Agreement.

The outcome of the exercise will provide the basis for determining Jamaica's implementation of the Agreement, including those provisions that will be implemented immediately upon its entry into force. The WTO should be advised of these provisions before the end of July 2014.

Mr. Speaker, the Bali Ministerial Declaration also mandated the development of a post-Bali Work Programme to address the outstanding issues in the Doha Round including development, to be completed by the end of 2014.

Work is currently underway in the WTO on the approach to be adopted in order to reinvigorate other areas, such as agriculture, non-agricultural market access and services, on which there has been no agreement. This is a significant challenge as these three areas have been the most contentious throughout the negotiations.

Mr. BARTLETT: And the critical thing for us is servicing.

Mr. BROWN: Yes, I agree with you.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to turn now to the engagement of the Jamaican Diaspora and I must that I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, that every person who has contributed to the Sectoral Debate up to now, including the Minister of Health... (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes, yes.

Mr. BROWN: ...and including the Member from Eastern St. Catherine have made reference to the Jamaican Diaspora.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes.

Mr. BROWN: As you're aware, with approximately 2.7 million Jamaicans residing overseas, the engagement of the Jamaican Diaspora in national development has become an important aspect of Jamaica's Foreign Policy. (Applause) It is undeniable that over the years, the engagement of the Diaspora has provided invaluable service to the Government and the people of Jamaica, and that they are far more than just remittances.

Most recently their commitment to the homeland was demonstrated in their lobbying efforts to ensure the more fair application of the United Kingdom Air Passenger Duty.

It will be recalled that under the current UK tax regime, Jamaica and other Caribbean countries were classified under Band C, which calls for the payment of higher air passenger duty rates to the Caribbean, as against other destinations of equivalent distance, which were classified in Band B.

The implementation of this duty has had an understandably negative effect on the tourism industry, with decline in employment being a major factor.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to the combined efforts of the Jamaican and Caribbean Diasporas in the UK, the dedicated staff of the Jamaican High Commission in London, the tourism partners, including the Caribbean Tourism Organization, the United Nation World Tourism Organization, the World Travel & Tourism Council among others, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in his Budget presentation on the 17th of March 2014...

A MEMBER: The former Minister of Tourism.

Mr. BROWN: Well yes, the former Minister of Tourism.

...that the Caribbean region would move from Band C to Band B as of April 2015.

This move will place the region in the same category as travellers to the United States of America, thereby removing any hint of discriminatory taxation.

Our Commonwealth partners must also be recognized, as the campaign was extended by Jamaica and fellow Caribbean countries to other members of the Commonwealth, which provided support to our efforts.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the members of the private sector for their continued support in this regard, particularly Jamaica National Building Society, which contributed over £20,000.00 to the campaign. (Applause) This is indeed indicative of the tremendous strides which can be made when public-private partnerships are effectively engaged.

While we rightly celebrate this breakthrough, the region considers this only the first step in our quest to have the tax further reduced or preferably eliminated altogether, as it remains a serious disincentive to travel to our region. This is the message that we communicated to the UK at the recently held UK-Caribbean Forum in London, June 13 to 15, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, the Diaspora has demonstrated its unswerving loyalty to Jamaica through tangible contributions in cash and kind to a number of sectors, including education, healthcare, sports and community development.

It is for these and other reasons the Government has put in place mechanisms and structures to strengthen the relationship with the Diaspora. One such mechanism is the biennial Diaspora Conference.

The 5th Biennial Jamaica Diaspora Conference, Mr. Speaker, the last Conference held the 16th to the 20th June 2013, at the Montego Bay Convention Centre, was held under the theme: "Nation on a Mission: Jamaica-Diaspora Partnership for Development". The Conference was rebranded with an increased focus on business, trade and investment; philanthropy, social investment and Diaspora Diplomacy. We also covered other areas during the Conference.

Mr. Speaker, the 5th Biennial Conference was the largest to date. Approximately 1,500 participants were in attendance, including a significant number from the traditional Diaspora countries of the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States, as well as from locations further afield, such as Malawi and the United Arab Emirates. This, indeed, demonstrates that our engagement efforts are bearing fruit and reaching a wider audience.

Miss HANNA: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, the Conference produced a range of tangible outcomes, which can only serve to further strengthen the relationship and development of Jamaica. Among these are:

- The establishment of a Diaspora Conference Implementation Council, comprising public and private sector entities. This body has been charged with the responsibility for developing an Action Plan to implement the recommendations stemming from the Conference and monitoring the work to be undertaken by the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies;

  The elaboration of plans to host a Health Forum the 9th to the 12th July, in Toronto, Canada by members of the Jamaican Diaspora living in that country.

And Minister Ferguson in his presentation spoke to the number of initiatives that the Jamaican Diaspora has been taking on in the field of health.

Mr. Speaker, the creation by the Ministry of Health of an Advisory Body on Diaspora Affairs, chaired by Mr. Victor Cummings, to streamline medical mission is an important development.

The creation of a network of liaison officers, both at home and in the principal Diaspora locations of the UK, Canada and the United States, to streamline the provisions of healthcare resources to public hospitals in Jamaica is extremely beneficial.

Diaspora Youth Connect project was launched in October of last year. And this is where young people in the Diaspora are making connections with young people in inner city communities in Jamaica and transferring entrepreneurial skills to them.

The 6th Biennial Diaspora Conference is planned for the 14th to the 18th of June 2015, and it will be in the area of Montego Bay, and these plans are fully engaged - and you know that would catch the attention of the Deputy Speaker. Members of the Diaspora have been notified of the date, and a preliminary agenda has already been developed.

Mr. Speaker, we anticipate that this Conference will attract an even larger support.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes!

Mr. BROWN: Plans include an expanded Marketplace with live nightly events. It is our hope that these events will bring together not only the members of the Diaspora, but also returned residents, friends of Jamaica, as well as members of the local community. And in this regard we're encouraging, particularly the Members of Parliament in Western Jamaica, to begin to promote this Conference, especially among the Chambers of Commerce and the civic organizations.

I am pleased to announce that the Diaspora Conference will be placed on the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment's 2015 calendar of events. The Minister of States spoke about the 90 days of summer - Jamaica 90 ways to experience, and we're partnering with them in terms of this event.

(Applause)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Shaw)

Mr. BROWN: You're welcome to come.

Mr. Speaker, an inaugural International Symposium on Immigration and Deportation will be held on the 18th of June 2015, the designated Day of Service of the 6th Biennial Diaspora Conference. This Symposium will take the form of workshops; will seek to address some of the challenges being faced by the global Jamaican Diaspora in the areas of immigration and deportation.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, the Jamaican Diaspora Education Taskforce, in partnership with a number of stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education and the Jamaica Teachers Association convened an Education Summit under the theme: "Advancing Education Initiative: A Strategic Alliance with the Diaspora".

The Summit examined ways to improve education in Jamaica, identified projects for Diaspora support, and looked at areas of duplication, gaps and means of leveraging past successes. The Summit also served to examine the feasibility of a Diaspora Six-Year Plan of support for the transformation of the education sector. And a commitment was also made to raise US$20 Million for the sector.

Mr. Speaker, the Government recognizes that interface and interaction with the Diaspora must be done with a stable and predictable framework. To that end, the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, along with other relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and the private sector, have been working on the elaboration of a Diaspora and Development Policy, to give greater effect to our mandate to protect the interest of our nationals overseas. The policy aims, among other things, to:

- Define the role of the Jamaican Diaspora in development;
- To establish appropriate governance systems, mechanisms and processes to facilitate engagement between Jamaica and its Diaspora, and among members of the Diaspora;
- To promote the involvement of the Jamaican Diaspora in enhancing Jamaica's culture, image and profile aboard.

Mr. Speaker, steps are being taken to…

(*Sotto voce* comment by a Member)

Mr. BROWN: Well, it is - I anticipate that it will be ready during the course of this year. Mr. Speaker steps are being taken to activate the Parliamentary Committee on Diaspora Matters and the first order of business will be the examination of the Diaspora and Development Policy. Mr. Speaker, all of this is important if we are to maximize the potential of the Jamaican family overseas and encourage their participation in nation building. We know too well the lack of empirical data on the number of Jamaicans residing in the Diaspora has stymied our efforts at effective planning for Diaspora engagement. In this regard, we have collaborated with the International Organization for Migration to undertake a mapping exercise, which on completion will create a database of Jamaicans worldwide, who are interested in contributing to nation-building through voluntary efforts, whether in cash or kind and investments, as well as to match the skill sets in the Diaspora with the needs that exist in Jamaica for technical and other expertise.

(Applause)

I am pleased to announce that the mapping survey project was launched at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade on the 10th June 2014, and in Birmingham UK on the 13th June 2014 and in London on the 17th of June 2014. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, whilst in London we picked up a very important endorsement for this mapping exercise that of our sprint queen, Merlene Ottey, who has pledged to give support in promoting this initiative. (Applause)

(Cross talk)

Well, you know, the good thing is that in Jamaica we recognize constitutionally dual citizenship and one of the things that we tell the members of our Jamaican community overseas is that they must not be afraid to accept the citizenship else, because it does not dilute their Jamaican-ness. So they are 100 per cent Jamaican and they are 100 per cent Swedish or American or British, whatever else it is, right? (Applause) So they are free to become the citizens of anything.

Opposition MEMBER: They can become parliamentarians?

Mr. BROWN: They can become parliamentarians. You know that.

Opposition MEMBER: Juliet Cuthbert. You neva meet Juliet Cuthbert?

Mr. BROWN: No, but she will give us an endorsement for this I'm sure.

Mr. Speaker, on return to Jamaica, television interviews concerning the projects were carried on Smile Jamaica TVJ on the 24th June 2014, on CVM at Sunrise on the 25th June 2014. On both occasions, I was supported by Mrs. Rukiya Brown, a second generation Jamaican born in Birmingham, UK, married to a Jamaican, now living in Jamaica and working with the International Organization for Migration in Jamaica.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the mapping exercise will be conducted over a period of eighteen months, and will take the form of an online survey geared towards identifying the location, skills, expertise and interests of members of the Jamaican Diaspora. We are hoping that over the eighteen-month period a minimum of 100,000 Jamaicans will sign up and we don't expect that this will happen without promotion, so we're asking all the Members of Parliament, we're asking all the Ministers when they travel to plug and to promote this mapping exercise because it is critical to deepening the engagement the Diaspora with Jamaica. In relation to the cost I must indicate that this project is being rolled out at a cost of US$100,000 and that is a significant figure and it has been provided by our partners the International Organization for Migration. And I must also indicate that the World Bank has also taken an interest in this particular project. And to put it into stark reality as my colleague across the floor would know...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Which one, which one?

Mr. BROWN: ...the amount of resources that the Diaspora generates is the region of US$400 Billion across the globe. It is three to four times the size of overseas development assistance or official overseas development assistance. So that Diasporas are becoming increasingly important in the development and international corporation matrix and Jamaica is ahead of the curve in many respects in terms of the engagement of our Diaspora and, in fact, we…

A MEMBER: Emerging....

Mr. BROWN: Well, we are, in some respects on the cutting edge so that people are actually taking note of what we're doing in Jamaica.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, I therefore invite and encourage all Jamaicans overseas to participate in this survey and to join in nation building.

I turn now to consular issues. Mr. Speaker, with due regard to the link between Diaspora engagement and consular relations, the Ministry has been developing strategies to ensure coherence in our approach to these separate but related areas of responsibility. We are cognizant that as the Ministry establishes mechanisms to engage Jamaicans abroad in national development, we must at the same

time seek to ensure that they are provided with the requisite services that can assist in their protection and general well-being.

Despite limited resources, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry has been successful in fulfilling its mandate, to protect the interests of Jamaica and Jamaicans overseas. At times, this requires swift action, especially when our nationals may be at risk due to political or civil disturbances in the country of residence. A case in point, Mr. Speaker, is the recent upheaval in the eastern states of Ukraine; Working out of our Embassy in Berlin, the Ministry was able to ensure that Jamaican medical students attending Khakiv National University were safely returned to Jamaica. In addition, in the past six months, the Ministry has spearheaded the return of Jamaican fishermen who were reported missing at sea. Nine fishermen were returned from Mexico: two were rescued by the coast guard of the Dominican Republic and three fishermen and a spouse were repatriated from Cuba.

I must state that the Embassies of Jamaica in Mexico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic were instrumental in ensuring that the Jamaicans were adequately provided for by the host States. Unfortunately, these are recurring events and I want to assure the Jamaican public, that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade responds to these issues in a systematic and professional manner at all times.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the implementation of the CSME regime, particularly the provisions dealing with the movement of persons, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade has seen increasing demand for consular services from Jamaicans in various parts of the CARICOM region. The Ministry has established mechanisms to receive and manage complaints from Jamaicans who were not accepted as *bona fide* visitors to our sister Caribbean countries. (Applause) And I want to pause here to encourage members of the Jamaican public who are travelling in the region that if they get into difficulties at the port of entry at CARICOM Nations that their first recourse must be to put in writing their experience at those borders to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. Without the formal written report there is hardly anything that we can do so I want to encourage members of the public to make that their first port of entry.

Opposition MEMBER: (Inaudible) ....education.

Mr. BROWN: Yes, well, this is - yes, I agree with you. This is part of it, this is part of it. We're saying that they need to make their formal report to the Ministry and the Ministry can take up the matter.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to assure the Members of this Honourable House that all complaints received from affected Jamaicans have been referred to the relevant authorities throughout the region with a request that the refusals be investigated or additional information provided. In addition, Jamaica has sought to utilize the complaints mechanisms of the CARICOM Council for Trade and Economic Development. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Ministry, both Minister

Nicholson and myself, we have been very firm on the issue of the full and free movement of people, particularly Jamaicans throughout the Caribbean and we shall not relent from making that representation. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I must also highlight a number of other consular services provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. Authentication of documents, such as, birth certificates, marriage and business certificates play an important role in ensuring that Jamaicans are able to conduct business in other countries, as well as compete and complete settlement requirements overseas. There are times when we are called upon to assist in the location of loved ones overseas and to reunite family members throughout the Diaspora. Mr. Speaker, I want to just sound a warning to Jamaicans, because the sad fact is that many of our citizens end up in the penile institutions of other countries.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes, yes!

Mr. BROWN: I was travelling to Peru recently for I think it was an ECLAC meeting that I attended and I was met by our Honorary Consul in Peru and because I am responsible for the Jamaican Diaspora I decided to ask whether there were any Jamaicans in Peru and he told me, yes, but then he told me there were in prison; five of them and the story is similar everywhere I go. It seems that they are offered US$5000 to courier drugs and they are told that they will get off with a light sentence. As it turns out the prison in Peru for trafficking narcotics is eleven years.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Wow.

Mr. BROWN: And they only get out if they are pardoned by the President, but in that context they have to spend at least three years behind bars. So I'm just saying to members of the Jamaican public who may be inveigled to traffic narcotics that they need to be careful, because the penalties are extremely stiff.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, I turn - well, we have to warn them about, right, that they can't carry it across international borders. They not licenced for them to carry it across international borders.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

Well, they should learn Spanish at it as well, good.

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to the issue of Small Island Developing States. As you are no doubt aware, 2014 has been declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Small Island Developing States. The Third International Conference on SIDS will be held in Apia, Samoa on 1st to the 4th September this year. Jamaica has been actively engaged in the preparatory process and will be represented at a high level at the Conference. We are conscious, Mr. Speaker, that the challenges faced by Small Island Developing States cannot be effectively addressed by individual countries trying to shape their own small corner of the globe.

Challenges such as the effects of climate change, the impact of disasters and even the deleterious consequences of the global economic and financial crises require global partnerships and action to mitigate their

impact. This Conference and the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in Sendai, Japan, next year, afford us an opportunity to develop genuine and durable partnerships for sustainable development; to address the full range of challenges facing Small Island Developing States and bring about lasting and transformative solutions to support national efforts.

SIDS challenges are global and immediate and it is imperative that these are addressed with urgency and renewed political and financial support of the international community, if we are to ensure sustainability of our communities and livelihood.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica recently assumed the Chairmanship of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) for two years, 2014 to 2016. On the 23rd to 25th April 2014, Jamaica hosted the 35th Session of the CDCC and the Third Meeting of the Caribbean Development Roundtable here in Kingston. The Caribbean Development Roundtable is a valuable forum for fostering strategic thinking and stimulating the consideration of policy options to address critical Caribbean development challenges and is a mechanism for forging partnerships between Latin America and the Caribbean through dialogue and engagement.

The CDR was held under the theme: *Exploring Strategies for Sustainable Development and Growth in Caribbean (SIDS).*

Mr. Speaker, among the conclusions and recommendations emanating from both meetings were the need to secure partnerships to advance SIDS, issues including the eradication of poverty and inequality, and advocacy for the inclusion of alternative indicators of development in addressing the vulnerabilities of SIDS. I led Jamaica's delegation to the 35th Session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Lima, Peru on the 5^{th} – 9^{th} of May 2014 where I had the opportunity to present to the wider Latin American community the findings of the third CDR and the 25th Session of the CDC. My key message was: *The Importance of Integrating the priorities of Small Island Developing States into the Post 2015 Development Agenda;* (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is my view that Jamaica should offer to host future sessions of the Organization of American States General Assembly, we should offer to host future sessions of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Mr. Speaker, Jamaica should offer to host the Summits of the Americas. We have pristine facilities in Montego Bay even Kingston. This should be done in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment and all relevant ministries.

(Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. BROWN: Yes, we have the Montego Bay Convention Centre that we can accommodate all of these and I must commend the Minister of Local Government who has led the way in hosting important conferences here. These conferences can assist

in lifting the profile of the country and bring well-needed exposure to the versatility of the island. I have said this internally, and I am saying it here in this Honourable House. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to the National Council on Ocean and Coastal Zone Management. You are aware that the National Council on Ocean and Coastal Zone Management plays a critical role in the governance of the maritime sector. As part of its work plan for the fiscal year 2014-2015, the Council has agreed to focus on the two key areas; Jamaica's Blue Economy and the conservation and protection of marine biodiversity beyond the areas of national jurisdiction.

Currently, the international community is engaged in discussion and the need for a new implementing agreement on the protection and sustainable use or marine biological diversity beyond areas of national natural jurisdiction.

A recent workshop for CARICOM states was held in Kingston/Jamaica from 20th to 21st May 2014 to consider the scope, parameters and feasibility of a proposed new implementing agreement under the auspices of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Marine genetics resources including access and benefit sharing, area based management tools, marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments, capacity building and technological transfers were issues examined during the workshop. The Council will also be paying close attention to the development of hydrographical services in Jamaica. We are conscious, Mr. Speaker, that interaction with the blue economy requires that navigation is conducted in a safe environment. Consequently, the production of correct and up-to-date shipping charts are crucial. This is also crucial to the logistic hub that we are speaking about, Mr. Speaker. So they might sound like abstract concepts or abstract terms but in very real way they underpin what we do on a day to day basis and they are particularly of importance to the growth agenda.

The importance of this to Jamaica cannot be overstated as the majority of our trading activities are done by way of the sea. In addition, the development of the Logistics Hub and increasing the amount and the type of seafaring vessels traversing Jamaica's maritime space is expected. I am pleased to announce that arrangements are in place for the continued development of the country's hydrographic capacity.

Our affiliation with the international hydrographic organization as well as with other maritime states, which have provided technical training has contributed to this development.

I turn now to maritime delimitation negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, as we continued to position ourselves to take advantage of the living and non-living resources in our maritime zones, we recognized that the conclusion of maritime delimitation treaties with our neighbours is important for the country, as these provide much needed legal certainty for any planned activities, including the exploration and exploitation of living and non-living resources

that Jamaica will undertake in a defined maritime space.

To date, we have concluded delimitation agreements with Columbia and Cuba and during this fiscal year will be negotiating with Honduras, Haiti and the Cayman Islands. Mr. Speaker, you will appreciate that without defined maritime boundaries which gives legal effect to the exercise of our rights to explore and exploit the resources of our territorial sea and exclusive economic zone, we are at a disadvantage in attracting potential investors.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is host to the Headquarters of the International Seabed Authority, the only international organization in the region and one of only two in the developing world. This year's marks the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of the International Seabed Authority.

During the Annual Session of the Assembly the Council and Counsel of the Authority on 14th to 25th July 2014 a commemorative ceremony which should be attended by the UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Kimoon will be held. The Ministry will also use the opportunity of this milestone to further sensitize the Jamaican populace to the importance of the work of the Authority and the benefits to be derived from this. After 20 years, the promise of mining the deep sea has become a reality. The authority has now come into an exciting phase of its work. As you must realize, Mr. Speaker, small countries such as Jamaica must position ourselves to be a part of this endeavour and to make sure that the vision of the framers of the Convention for the last global frontier to be the common heritage of mankind becomes a reality. All countries must benefit from the vast resources of the ocean. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this year 2014 marks the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the Group of 77 and China which since its inception in 1964 continues to be a formidable interlocutor with the countries of the North, advancing new ideas and solutions to the challenges that beset our countries as well as supporting efforts at South/South North-South and triangular cooperation. It is the most enduring group of developing countries concerned essentially with development issues.

Mr. Speaker, at the international level, Jamaica has maintained that relationship among States must be undertaken with mutual respect and in a manner conducive to equitable economic development. As such, through Jamaica's active membership of the Group of 77 and China we have sought to promote dialogue with like-minded developing countries and to enhance the profile of the South in the international community. Jamaica's membership in the G-77 has also enabled us to establish common positions and speak with a united voice on issues of critical importance to the economic and social wellbeing of our people. Our common lobbying efforts have sought to ensure that the international environment will continue to favour development and in this respect that decisions taken in various UN forum are compatible with our own development objectives.

Membership of the G-77 also affords Jamaica a place for strategic lobbying for

positions in important international bodies, such as the International Court of Justice. As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, our own Judge Patrick Robinson father of our Minister of State is vying for a seat in this prestigious body.

(Applause)

Jamaica has chaired the G-77 and China twice over the last thirty years holding its first chairmanship between 1977 and 1978 under the leadership of the Most Honourable Michael Manley.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica has consistently maintained that engagement with like-minded countries, particularly countries of the South which have had or are having similar development challenges would redound to our benefits. The emergence of former recipients of aid particularly from the south such as Brazil, India, China, South Africa, the Republic of Korea and Turkey as development partners providing assistance offers tremendous opportunities for deepening of South/South Cooperation with the sharing of knowledge, expertise and expansion of economic and technical cooperation. South/South Cooperation within Latin America in particular has been increasing from 2006 to 2009 nearly 80 per cent of South/South Cooperation was sponsored by Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico and Venezuela. This type of cooperation will assume even greater relevance and importance in the future, as the traditional sources of official development aid decrease, often as a result of concentration on least developed countries.

Mr. Speaker, in this new dispensation, Jamaica can also provide assistance and support and become part of the development cooperation network on the contributing end and not just on the recipient end.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to state that notwithstanding the current global trend, Jamaica's traditional development partners, the EU, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada have been consistent in their support of our development goals, and I wish publicly express our appreciation for their commitment to Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, Jamaica is classified as a middle income developing country and as such, has limited access to concessionary loans and grants. The presence of increased numbers of potential development partners, particularly from the South is therefore, a welcome development.

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. BROWN: We make that representation, we make that representation at the international level but we don't make it in those terms, we said that the classification on GDP is not sufficient.

Mr. Speaker, it is with this in mind that I participated in the recently held international conference on development cooperation trends and emerging opportunities perspectives of new actors in Istanbul Turkey from the 19th to 20th of June of this year. The Conference was aimed at critically assessing the changing dynamics of the international development cooperation landscape and the potential for increased collaboration with new and

emerging actors. Let me put it into context and start with these, Mr. Speaker.

Turkey last year committed US$3 Billion in international cooperation and the year before that they spent US$2.7 Billion. Of particular importance was the increasing presence of non-state actors and non-traditional development cooperation donors from the South. Host country Turkey itself has steadily improved its economic situation to become one of the largest emerging actors on the development cooperation scene and provider of South/South Cooperation.

I had the opportunity during the high level segment on changing development cooperation architecture and file special plenary session on Small Island Developing States and the role of the South in financing sustainable development to raise awareness and understanding of the fiscal and environmental challenges of Small Island Developing States such as Jamaica. I also called on developing partners to give special consideration to these needs when determining their development cooperation agenda.

I wish to thank the UNDP for facilitating my participation and for supporting Jamaica's efforts to advance the development interests of middle income countries so designated and Small Island developing States in particular. Special thanks to Dr. Arun Kashyap, head of the United Nations Development Programme in Jamaica who extended an invitation to me to participate in that Conference. I also took the opportunity in that Conference, Mr. Speaker, to extend an invitation to Miss Helen Clarke, Administrator of the UNDP to pay an official visit to Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, I am heartened by the preparatory work for the establishment of a BRICS Development Bank and Currency Reserve. I eagerly await the outcome of the decision to be taken regarding the proposed BRICS economic cooperation strategy as well as the development bank at the upcoming Sixth Summit of the Bloc to be held in Fortaleza Brazil on the 14th of July this year.

Mr. Speaker, this augurs well for development cooperation, and if the plans materialize will allow developing countries such as Jamaica greater access to development funding. It will also represent an alternative mechanism to existing international financial institutions.

Further, Mr. Speaker, it is the stated intention of the BRICS to capitalize the bank with US$100 Billion to provide loans for development projects.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, regional and hemispheric relations continue to be important to Jamaica, as we chart our way in the international arena. We have employed the principles of good neighbourliness and brotherhood as we interact with countries of our hemisphere. We are active participants in regional and hemispheric organizations such as the Organization of American States and the Association of Caribbean States, which accord us the opportunity to engage with other Governments of the Americas on a broad range of issues of common interest.

Mr. Speaker, I had the honour to lead Jamaica's delegation to the Forty-Fourth Regular Session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, held in Asuncion, Paraguay from June 3 to June 5, 2014, which focused on the theme "Development with Social Inclusion". The Assembly adopted the Declaration of Asuncion, calling on Governments to: *"strengthen the capacity of countries to withstand external shocks, so that the progress made within the region in terms of eliminating hunger and poverty, especially extreme poverty, is sustainable".*

Additionally, the Declaration encourages the OAS to incorporate the results of the post 2015 Development Agenda in its programme projects and activities.

Mr. Speaker, the meeting also afforded an opportunity to interface with OAS Secretary General Mr. José Manuel Insulza, as well as the Deputy Secretary of State of the US on important regional and hemispheric issues, inclusive of security, energy, human rights and democracy, as well as to ensure the continuation of critical technical and developmental assistance to Jamaica and other CARICOM countries.

Mr. BARTLETT: No report on any of the trades imported?

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Speaker… That is still in progress, right.

Mr. BARTLETT: We know.

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, Jamaica's profile in the international community is strong. We have earned respect of countries the world over for our principled stand on issues of interest to the international community.

(Applause)

We, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade have worked hard to ensure that while we pursue the best interest of Jamaica, we do not compromise on our principles. (Applause)

We are committed to strengthening our presence in the world and in doing so, to further enhance the image of Jamaica. This is not the time for us to be complacent. We do not have the luxury of only contemplating the severity of the challenges confronting our people, but we have to take the decisive steps to address them. (Applause)

Ours, Mr. Speaker, is not the privilege to languish in ongoing analysis, while the opportunities that would allow us to go for growth and development for our people pass us by. (Applause) We have been accorded this time and space, so let us work to make a positive difference in the lives of our people. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROWN: We live in a dynamic and ever-changing world which forces countries to confront increasingly complex issues in international relations. And Jamaica is meeting this challenge head-on.

We cannot afford to remain stationary, even with limited resources. We must continue to make our mark on the international scene, continually raising the profile of Jamaica, while ensuring that all our endeavours result to the benefit of Jamaica, land we love.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

(Applause)

(Standing ovation by Government Members)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended for us to do any further business this evening. I therefore, move for the adjournment of the Parliament until tomorrow, July 2 at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House now adjourn until tomorrow, July 2, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at approximately 6:06 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015

WEDNESDAY, July 2, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:27 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Dr. Lynvale Bloomfield

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, our Acting Prime Minister in his role as Minister of Water, *et cetera*, will make a Statement.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister Pickersgill.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of this Honourable House and the public a serious situation with regard to our water supply.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that inflows into a number of water supply systems are now well below normal resulting in many sections of the country being faced with water supply challenges. The reason for this, Mr. Speaker, is that the amount of rainfall that we had expected during May and June, which traditionally are our rainy months, did not materialize. Indeed, the amount of rainfall we received islandwide fell below the 30-year average for what is normal at this time of the year and was not enough to make up the deficit of the dry season between December 2013 and April 2014.

For example, Mr. Speaker, in May the parish of Clarendon received only 27% of the 30-year normal rainfall while the parishes of Manchester, St. Mary, Portland and St. Thomas all received significantly less than the 30 year normal rainfall. This has significantly reduced the inflows from rivers into several of our facilities islandwide.

Mr. Speaker, based on the most recent figures from the National Water Commission storage levels at the largest two reservoirs: the Hermitage Dam and the Mona Reservoir are 83% and 37%, respectively, and are falling daily.

I should note Mr. Speaker, that the Hermitage Dam is heavily silted and only about 30% of the designed capacity is useable, only 30%. Inflows from the Yallahs River are now at 5.5 million gallons per day down from its peak of 18 million gallons per day, while the Hope River is at 2.6 million from a high of 30 million gallons per day.

This has affected production at the Mona Treatment Plant, which has limited its output from 16 million gallons daily during the wet season to 10 million gallons daily. Inflows from the Hope River into the Hope Treatment Plant have also fallen off significantly with average inflows currently at 2.3 million gallons daily and average production of 4.2 million gallons daily. Inflows into the Hermitage Dam from the Wag Water River currently stand at 9.6 million gallons daily down from 18 (MGD) during the wet season.

With the Constant Spring supply zone being extended to augment the supplies from Mona and Hope, the projected (dropping) level for the Hermitage Dam is 3 million gallons per day. Many rural water supply systems, Mr. Speaker, especially in eastern and southern parishes are also being faced with below normal inflows. Affected water supply systems include 2 systems in Hanover; 5 systems in St. James; 3 systems in Trelawny; 6 systems in St. Elizabeth; 5 systems in Manchester; 24 systems in Clarendon and 5 systems in St. Catherine; 21 systems in Kingston and St. Andrew; 19 systems in St. Thomas; 4 systems in Portland; 5 systems in St. Mary and 11 systems in St. Ann.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see it is an islandwide challenge bordering on a crisis. What is even more troubling are the meteorological projections. We are now in a dry period and the next rainy season is from October to November; October to November with September being a transitional month. Even if the situations were to change, Mr. Speaker, and we receive the expected rainfall during the next rainy period which is October to November, it perhaps would not be enough to make up for the shortfall in the May/June rainy season.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the global prediction, the global prediction is for 2014 to be the hottest year on record. This prediction is based on a weather phenomenon known as El Niño as well as climate change. Mr. Speaker, the El Niño phenomenon is characterized by unusually warm ocean temperatures in the central eastern pacific region which have a major impact on the climate around the world. During El Niño the Caribbean, including Jamaica, is predicted to be warmer and drier. The drought we experienced in 09/10 resulted from an El Niño phenomenon. The scientists have predicted that there is an 80% chance that we will continue to experience the effects of El Niño during the months of September through December and indeed beyond.

Mr. Speaker, what this means is that the already serious supply situations we are experiencing will most likely worsen. We, therefore, have to be proactive and prepare for the worsening impact of the El Niño phenomenon and the consequent below average rainfall predicted across most of the island.

Mr. Speaker, given the current situation, a major part of our response must be the imposition of water restrictions and regulations in affected urban and rural communities served by the National Water Commission. Regarding water restrictions, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the unseasonably low yield and the dire forecast the NWC is forced to implement new restrictions to customers served by the affected water supply system in an attempt to best share the limited supply among its customers and at the same time stretch the available supply.

Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that all steps should be taken to ensure that customers receive water during the stipulated supply periods. In addition, Mr. Speaker, we will be trucking water to the most affected areas

through the Rapid Response Programme. As of tomorrow we will be making available two 8,000 gallon trucks from the Rapid Response Unit to truck water to persons in Clarendon. In South St. Elizabeth, in addition to allocation of funds for the trucking of water, we will also be dispatching three 8,000 gallon trucks for the trucking of water.

I saw a news item last night, Mr. Speaker, in which persons in St. Elizabeth were complaining that they had to travel to Mandeville to pay for water. But as of tomorrow they can go into any commercial bank and request a manager's cheque payable to the NWC to purchase the water.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to point out to the Members of this Honourable House that during the last financial year we spent approximately $300 Million on the trucking of water, and for this financial year-to-date we have expended $80 Million on the trucking of water. We will also be continuing our programme of upgrading and rehabilitating the existing storage tanks of which there are some 445 islandwide. Already, Mr. Speaker, we have completed just over 70 of the (280) catchment tanks islandwide.

In addition, as I have noted, it is our intention to repair 100 systems under the Tank and Pump Programme. The National Drought Management Committee will plan, coordinate and execute all actions. A joint public education programme will also be immediately implemented by my Ministry and the National Water Commission.

Mr. Speaker, while my Ministry and the Government deal with the immediate situation, we are pleading with all Jamaicans to conserve on their use of water at all times, but especially during this dry period until the next expected rainfall period - every drop counts. We are therefore urging everyone to do simple things: turn off all the tanks when not in use; refrain from washing your cars with a running hose or watering your lawn while supplies are low; fix leaks around the homes. Those of you who can invest in low flow showerheads, sometimes called energy efficient showerheads and low flush toilets.

(HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. GEORGE ANTHONY HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took his seat.)

(MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

(DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. Speaker, although we are appealing to persons to conserve on their use of water

during this critical period, we will be adopting a zero-tolerance approach to certain activities. And so I have instructed the NWC to issue a prohibition notice by this weekend on the washing of vehicles, the watering of lawns and filling swimming pools among other activities. Persons who are found to be in breach of the prohibition will be taken before the Resident Magistrate's Court and will be directed to pay a fine. We must also re-embrace rainwater harvesting as an integral part of our water security efforts now and for the future.

In the not too distant past, Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will remember, it was commonplace to find a backyard concrete tank in almost every rural household where water would be stored for domestic and agricultural use.

Mr. CHUCK: And a five-gallon drum.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Rainwater harvesting systems for development will be enshrined within the building regulations. To that end, rainwater harvesting policy guidelines are being prepared, which will be an integral consideration to the planning approval process. I firmly believe that this is the route we must take in order to ensure our water security, particularly in the face of climate change impacts which will intensify drought conditions. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the World Meteorological Organization, the WMO, on June 19, this year, issued a statement that May 2014 was globally the hottest month on record since 1880, since 1880 when records began. And earlier, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned this will be the hottest year on record.

Locally, the predictions are for higher temperatures and Kingston has been singled out as one of the first cities that are likely to experience climate change with significant increases in temperature. From as early as 2023 these high temperatures lead to increase evaporation and transpiration, as well as the increased demand for water and reduced rainfall.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude, my Ministry and our agencies are fully aware of the magnitude of the water situation and the measures I have outlined are intended to mitigate some of the challenges that we are facing due to the water scarcity. I am appealing to my colleagues in this Honourable House that when we leave here it must be with the intent to sensitize our constituents, and to encourage them to conserve on their use of this precious commodity. The water situation facing all of us is real; it is current and it will continue to be a challenge which we must meet through the sustainable development of our water resources. If we fail to do so, Mr. Speaker, we could be facing a real crisis.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Warmington.

Mr. WARMINGTON: It's of concern that administration after administration, raising the same concern about the problem of water when it comes to summer, and the lack of that resource. Each time we have summer

there is no water. When you have rain both the Hermitage and Mona Reservoir overflow. They both overflow, you know, when it rains, and as soon as the rain ends, there is no water at all and the Minister just said only 30 per cent capacity they have at this stage.

I have been asking for years, why don't we look at the possibility of desilting both the Mona Reservoir and the Hermitage Dam? I remember when I spoke in the 80s about the same thing, this Minister told me then it couldn't happen. When he was Minister of Public Utilities and what have you.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Is Pearnel you must go and blame.

Mr. WARMINGTON: And I heard Ministers after that saying the same thing, it cannot happen. It can be desilted, and my recommendation is for the Minister, is for the Minister and the National Water Commission to look at the possibility of dredging and desilting these two facilities, that they can have a greater capacity that when it rains we can retain the water flow in those huge facilities, that we can have it during this time, but not coming each time and say you must restrain and what have you when we are not doing anything about it, because we are going to have the same thing next year, the year after, the year after unless something is done, and my recommendation, they need to look at the possibility of desilting both facilities.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Pickersgill)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles had indicated. Mr. Charles, did you indicate that you…?

Mr. CHARLES: The Member, Mr. Speaker identified me as being reluctant to desilt the reservoir.

Government MEMBER: As the senior Minister at the time.

Mr. CHARLES: What I did then was to advise him that since I was not an expert on desilting reservoir…

(Laughter)

…I sought advice from the experts.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: And what they said?

Mr. CHARLES: And they enlightened me that you cannot desilt in dry weather. You can only desilt when there is so much rain that the reservoir is overflowing. You can't take out mud in the quantity that is there, and it is now the same thing. Yes, you can desilt but you can only desilt when you are overflowing with so much water to get the mud with the water go. So, Member, that was the position.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I didn't say what time to desilt, you know.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, I think that the Minister's statement is really one that has jolted us all particularly those of us in rural Jamaica who have had to deal with this issue of water shortage not necessarily because there isn't adequate availability of water, but because of the incapacity in terms of the distribution arrangements that have been in place by the NWC, and further because of how untimely the repair is carried out by the NWA. A pump is removed…

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: NWC.

Mr. BARTLETT: NWC, I am sorry. Thank you very much. A pump is removed; it

takes an eternity for that pump to be replaced. The result is that people, citizens, customers, if we want to define them in that sense, are left without the supply of this important commodity.

The Minister spoke about the issues of climate change, and yes, we accept. He speaks about the fact that the rain isn't falling in the way that we anticipate at this time of the year. Yes, we accept, but only three months ago one of the great hydrologist of the country, who for us is the repository of great knowledge about water sources and supply to this country, said publicly that there is no difficulty in Jamaica with water availability, that surface water is adequate to supply the needs of Jamaica for now down into many, many decades down the road, and that person to my best knowledge is one of the chief advisers to the Government and the NWC concerning those matters.

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)
(MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

So it concerns me that from time to time we come to this House with these statements. Painful yes, but Mr. Speaker, it is time that we decide to take the step to deal with the matter of appropriate harvesting, storage and distribution of water in Jamaica, because the truth is, that most other countries with our availability of water would not have this problem.

Finally, I just want to say, Mr. Speaker that the Minister has asked us to go back to our constituency to educate and try to assist our constituents going through this period with the minimum of dislocation. We recognize it's a tall order. You made a commitment for $300,000 for some of us, I don't know if it's for everybody. Three hundred thousand dollars.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: What?

Mr. BARTLETT: You not aware of it, sir? I got a letter yesterday, which said that there is a commitment for $300,000 to assist us in trucking water for the areas concerned, and we recognize that, we do.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Pickersgill)

Mr. BARTLETT: Yes, yes, I got it, and we recognize it.

Government MEMBER: How I don't get none?

Mr. BARTLETT: Well, luckily for you, you don't have the problems we are having.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Who give you that letter?

Mr. BARTLETT: But, but, but the whole truth is that some of the problems that we have which require outlay of funds now can be alleviated, can be prevented, in fact, Mr. Speaker, and I say it very loudly without equivocation, if the NWC would be more careful in its maintenance work and to ensure that when pumps are taken out they are replaced timely so that there is no dislocation. My constituency is suffering at this time in the whole central area of Adelphi and Content and Paisley and Orange, simply because the pump at the Canaan source has been taken out, and

every day we are told it's going to be replaced the next day, and until today. I got a call from the constituency up to this morning, after I was promised that the pump would be back in place this morning. Until now it's still not done.

So I appeal to you, Minister, just to make sure that these arrangements are put in place and that the efficiency with which the NWC carries out its duties is at the level that is satisfactory.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Robertson.

Mr. ROBERTSON: Thank you, sir.

I heard the Minister mention that there was 19 areas in St. Thomas that have water challenges. Am I correct, sir?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes, about that, yes.

Mr. ROBERTSON: Well that means you did not include East St. Thomas because I know in West St. Thomas I have way over 19 areas, districts and major areas that have major challenges and I would not wish you not to include…

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I spoke of systems.

Mr. ROBERTSON: Systems.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes.

Mr. ROBERTSON: I want to ask you, sir, if you could make a comment or two, about the Rio Grande back water project. That was a project that we have been looking at for years, because year after year we come here and we look at these issues and that bringing water from North to West, back water project, sir. That's a major project that would have solved a lot of these problems.

I would also like to hear you make a comment, sir, on the Tulloch Springs. That would really be the Bog Walk area, water coming across to Ferry, how far can that water supply go now in terms of Kingston and St. Andrew? And I ask these questions in light of the fact that West St. Thomas and St. Thomas is a major source for Kingston and St. Andrew, and we are already challenged, as you have indicated, with 19 areas. Those are two major projects that I believe we would have to hear some details on, because year after year we are not doing what we have to do.

Minister, finally. Do you have any figures on what you have accomplished with the K-Factor projects in terms of savings for electricity? Because water and pumping costs go hand in hand, and in terms of gallons saved.

Finally, sir. I just put it to you. When people harvest rain water, when individuals store water in black tanks, whatever it is, the use of black tanks, these tanks vary in sizes up to 1000 gallons. When a truck holds 8000 gallons and makes two trips a day, at times you are only serving, with that truck, less than 16 yards. Sixteen homes, not a district, and I have witnessed in recent times individuals being very unkind to those who we entrust to deliver this commodity.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Samuda.

Mr. SAMUDA: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, in regard to the question of making provisions for additional storage space at the Hermitage, I am familiar with the plans you have to desilt the dam and I am aware that the request for it and the need for the sand

originates with your colleague to your left, who have requested permission to desilt the dam and to store the sand for future use in assisting in the laying of pipes and other things.

Now, Minister, do you not - and this is a specific question. Do you not think that it would be courteous of your agency to communicate with the Member of Parliament in whose constituency the Hermitage Dam falls? And in case you are not aware, it falls in my constituency.

(Laughter)

Number one. Number two. Number two. I understand that it is going to take in the first phase some 400 truckloads to start the process. Could you at this stage give any indication as to the manner in which these haulage contractors would be hired?

And number three. Should the anticipated damage to the newly resurfaced roads leading to the community most affected by the desilting exercise, are you in a position to give an unequivocal commitment to the residents of upper and lower Hermitage, that the Water Commission will repair fully any damage done to those roads? And you may apply to your colleague to your left at the end of the day to see if he has any money to help you out to fix them, but failing which there will be a real heavy outpouring of anger, if you don't.

Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central, entered and took his seat.)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister, will you yield to Dr. Baugh before you give your…?

Dr. BAUGH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister.

Minister, given that this is a recurrent problem, it happens every year, and it is getting worse, and given the fact that we get most of our water from pumping from aquifers, and that costs - well the last time I heard it was half a billion dollars per month to pump water from the aquifers. I am thinking about the cost of energy, and knowing that you are the Minister of Climate Change and Global Warming, what plans are there for us to exploit other ways of acquiring resources of water other than pumping from the aquifers? Whether we are going to use any new technologies. What are your plans for the future, because we can't - we keep repeating every year just trucking water to resolve the problem, and I am happy to hear you speak about rain water harvesting, you and I were at a project, which I am going to speak about, in the hills of Giblatore, but that is for private homes and small farms. Are there any other plans for greater harvesting of rain or storm water, so that we can improve the catchment availability? And, Mr. Minister, could you also, if you have knowledge of it, explain to us what smaller countries like the Bahamas and Cayman who don't have rivers, what do they do to resolve there…?

Well, I am asking you that so that I can understand whether we have looked at it, we have looked at those possibilities for Jamaica,

especially on coastal plains, the question of desalination.

Thank you.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Minister.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, the first question came from the Member from St. Catherine, I don't remember what part of St. Catherine - and it was followed up by...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...and he received valuable information from your intervention.

The fact is Mr. Speaker - and let me just say, you know - and I don't want to be divisive or - just before we took over we were told by the former Administration that this is a thing no more we will hear about. So I will just make that point, okay.

However, when it comes to desilting, Mr. Speaker, we are on our way. The first thing we had to do was to check the integrity of the dam to see if it would be worth the while to desilt. And I gather that we have passed that and we are now speaking to at least two firms, two firms have indicated their capacity and capability to do the desilting.

You asked about 400 trucks. The fact is, Mr. Speaker...

Dr. BAUGH: Four hundred loads.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes - waste is now a valuable resource. Waste is a valuable resource. Even the sewage going down to Soap Berry - and I will come back to that. But with this, what is coming out of Hermitage Dam is precious material...

Mr. SAMUDA: Good for fertilizer.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: ...and it is sought after. So we are going to be dealing with it in the most productive way.

Mr. SAMUDA: We are hoping that the people who are in the area with trucks can get some work.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I don't reach to that yet, I know your interest there. All right. So let's get that behind us.

Mr. SAMUDA: I don't want them coming from Linstead.

(Laughter)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: So we are not - what? What?

Mr. CHUCK: Or St. Mary.

Mr. SAMUDA: I don't want them coming from Linstead.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Why?

So, Mr. Speaker, let's get rid of that part of it.

When it comes to pumps, several pumps are on order. And I agree with you, it's the same thing I quarrel with the Water Commission about. But, what's the word they use, something about redundancy pump - you need to have pumps in storage to...

(Inaudible comment from Mr. Bartlett)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Right. And we have not been doing that, and the new CEO is dealing with that.

And you mentioned that the great - and I am sure you are talking about Mr. Fernandez - surface water - what he has said is that there is enough water in Jamaica, generally speaking. But I just said to you what is happening to surface water; all the rivers are drying up, all the rivers.

Mr. CHUCK: So are all the wells.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: We coming back to the wells.

Mr. BARTLETT: Something is wrong with that analysis, because if the aquifer... (Inaudible)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: No, no, now you gone to aquifer.

Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of recharging the aquifers. Very shortly I will be announcing One point Two Billion Dollars ($1.2B) in the process of recharging the aquifers.

Mr. BARTLETT: How you going do it, with rain water? How you do that?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Just be cool, just be cool, just be cool. This is - that's very high science. (Laughter) Yes, okay. So, that's the aquifers. But, in my last presentation here, you know, if you were listening, you recall what I said about the aquifers in the Corporate Area? They are polluted. And, so, because they are polluted we have to deal with the sewage system.

Mr. HENRY: How did all that happen in a 2.7 million consistency population? (Laughter)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: But listen, get some order over that place, nuh, just chatting... The next thing you going ask me 'bout is repatriation.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Minister, please continue, sir.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I gather it's reparation not repatriation, reparation.

Mr. HENRY: You going get both of them to save you.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Get what! If you get any of those monies, give me some to give Jamaica people water.

Mr. HENRY: I will give you some... (Inaudible)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Okay.

(Inaudible comments from Mr. Henry)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

(Laughter)

(*Sotto voce* comments from Mr. Henry)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to answer all the questions here.

The Rio Grande...

Mr. ROBERTSON: Go back to your questions. Stick to your script.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes. The Rio Grande...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. BARTLETT: This is important because the large sources...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Why are we so garrulous and loquacious? (Laughter) When you were asking I sat and took my notes. Now I get up to respond and all I can hear is eternal babbling!

Mr. WARMINGTON: Just answer the question!

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Shut yu mout'! (Laughter)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) There is no need for us to have this kerfuffle... (Laughter/Applause) ...over a matter.

Minister, please, continue.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes, sir. I hope I have not contributed to the kerfuffle.

We signed an MOU with - if we are talking about the same thing - with what you spoke about. They have come back to have the MOU changed somewhat. We are dealing with that, and that will be dealing with Water and Energy. But it is a work in progress. But what it suggested was that the water would be more expensive than what we are paying for it now, so they have gone back.

Mr. ROBERTSON: Don't talk price of water, talk availability first.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes - no, I think that's beyond question.

All right, what was the other...?

Mr. SAMUDA: ...to repair the road network...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: (Laughs) Now that - I want to cross that bridge when we reach it. No, but it's an important point, Mr... because we experience that in many constituencies. In mine it is the bauxite trucks that, you know, cause the road to deteriorate so quickly. I am just trying to - oh, one last point, Mr. Speaker.

The single biggest problem facing the Water Commission - separate and apart from energy cost that you mentioned, which is half a billion ($½ B) every month - with the Tank and Pump Programme that is to get the electricity cost down - and we are dealing with over a hundred and odd of those islandwide, and of course we are looking at solar systems to deal with them because it is a serious problem to the NWC. But the one that is even more serious is what we call "non-revenue water". We cannot account accurately for the amount of water that we are producing.

A MEMBER: Unaccounted for water.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Unaccounted for water, good.

Now, we are about to sign a contract for some Forty-two Million US dollars (US$42M) to deal with, for the first time, because all Ministers, including, myself, because I have had this portfolio for quite some time - and from your side - have spoken about non-revenue water.

But for the first time the system will be checked over a six-month period to see exactly what is to be done. And one of the beautiful things about this contract is that the people who are there, they are going to put their money where their mouth is so that it can be measured as to how much water we save before they get payment. But more anon. I will be speaking about that in much greater details. I hope I have answered the questions.

Mr. ROBERTSON: Yeah, man.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we continue with the Sectoral Debate this afternoon. We have three presentations. Firstly, the Member from West Central St. Catherine, followed by the Member from North East St. Elizabeth...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PAULWELL: Very well. The Member from Eastern Westmoreland, and closing, the Member from North East St. Elizabeth, in that order.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Baugh.

(Applause)

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker, thank you for once again affording me this privilege in speaking in this highest Court of the land.

I take the opportunity to commend you, Mr. Speaker, and if you saw my written document you will see that I am commending both the Speaker and the Deputy for the continued tone of Parliament, the gentle manner in which the Parliament is being handled, and the firmness and fairness of your rulings. In so doing, you have kept the lid on potentially explosive occasions in this highly competitive environment.

I pay tribute to the Leader of the Opposition, former Prime Minister Andrew Holness. I am indebted to him for this appointment which reveals some degree of confidence. I admire his courage and determination to be a transformative leader, to tame the monsters of inequity and poverty, and to achieve growth with equity. He is very scholarly in his approach to the business of Government, and very rational, and I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, when the time comes and the reins of government are handed over to him, that he is going to do a great job. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am indebted to the constituents of West Central St. Catherine for their endorsement. To them I am ultimately and finally accountable. They are my bosses, they give me instructions. I work very hard to bring about growth and improvement in the quality of their lives, for children to access education for the honing of skills through professional, vocational and technical training.

Mr. Speaker, the most important thing is for people in the communities to be able to generate an income that will enable them to purchase a decent and good living.

Mr. Speaker, much has been done in the constituency to alleviate the obstacles, the physical obstacles of infrastructural weaknesses, mostly roads and water supplies.

But, Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled at this juncture to add to my goals the fundamental rights of children - because this is now very topical - placing emphasis on the conditions of the home, the wider community that will foster normal mental, emotional and physical development. Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that we advocate balanced parenting involving males and females in the homes.

I agree, Mr. Speaker, that a major contributor to boys, in particular, becoming unattached, disadvantaged and drifting into the arms of gangs, is the absence of fathers' active involvement and authority in the home, and men of authority in the community.

Mr. Speaker, with us today are the GSAT students of the Garden Hill Primary School, they are our guests today. They are here with their principal, Mrs. Morva Rhule, and some of their teachers. Present also is Mr. Elkanah Rhule, former principal and husband of the current principal. He was a Councillor in West Central St. Catherine constituency for 17 years. He is the author of many children's books, some of them used throughout the education system.

(Applause)

I particularly invited them here today because I'm proud of their performance in the last GSAT examinations. It is a school that has achieved 100% literacy and numeracy on several occasions over the years. (Applause) One graduate achieved 99% in Math, and there are at least five of these children whose average is between 92% and 97% overall. It is a school that deserves our commendation.

A very importation observation that I gleaned from discussions with the Principal was that there is an agreement with the community that no child is going to be coming from a home where ganja is smoked in that home. Parents and teachers agreed, and I believe that contributes not only to discipline, but to the fact of the performance of these children.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents, I express gratitude to the Minister of Education. He has made initial efforts to provide additional classrooms for the Tacius Golding Secondary School, and four classrooms are under construction. While visiting the school, Mr. Speaker, it became apparent that eight more classrooms were needed to achieve the goal that we have set, which is to get rid of the shift system in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I record also the gratitude of the people of Belfield for the efforts of the Honourable Prime Minister and the Minister of Youth, the Member from South East St. Ann, who through CHASE Funds, have recently built and opened a new Basic School for the community.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. BAUGH: Parliament should also record that the Prime Minister is a regular visitor to her home district in this constituency.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. BAUGH: She has continued to demonstrate her caring for the people of her community of origin... Yes, you would know about that. ...and as a consequence she has ensured that electrification is done in that community.

(Applause)

This has given me a great opportunity, Mr. Speaker, because I've used it as a lever to acquire some electrification in other communities. And I want to say to the people of Barry, who've been waiting a long time, a distant rural community without electricity, that there is a commitment on the part of the Prime Minister, on the part of the Minister of Mining and Energy and on the part of the Chairman of the Rural Electrification Programme, that the work that was started from the previous Administration where poles were planted, that this in effect is going to be done now. A commitment has been given and I receive it in good faith.

Mr. Speaker, my next topic is Water Resources and Supplies. With the increasing population and agricultural activity in the constituency, water is rapidly becoming a diminishing resource. We've heard it from the Minister awhile ago, that this is in fact islandwide.

The Minister of Water, Housing, Environment and Climate Change *et cetera*, *et*

cetera, recently visited the constituency to commission a project for rainwater harvesting in the Giblatore/Springvale community, a very dry area, Mr. Speaker. The project is a compromise because originally we'd planned to use a well to transport water. But because it's a small community - it's small because of the lack of water because the economy is obviously poor; lack of water creates poor communities - and therefore it was determined that the cost of putting in a tank and pipes could not be recovered because of the small population in that community. So they settled for rainwater harvesting.

But at the function that was there to commission the rainwater harvesting, it was noted by several speakers, that in effect, no rain had fallen for the year so far. And we have meteorological reports indicating a dramatic fall-off in rainfall for the last two years in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, although conclusions can't be drawn from just two years, it is obvious that many of us who've been around for a very long time, that the climate of Jamaica has undergone dramatic change. The main rivers in my constituency, as the Minister said, a river passing through Watermount and going - ending up in Old Harbour is now just bone-dry and trees are growing up in the bed of that river.

But, Mr. Speaker, the river appears for a short distance - 200 yards - and I think that indicates what the problem really is, it's not just the lack of rainfall, but because we have a limestone based topography that a process called calcification takes place where the water disappears because it cuts through the limestone, it dissolves the limestone and goes into the aquifers, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, it appears for a short distance and then disappears again, but this is a problem in Jamaica.

And I hear the Minister depending on the aquifers and I pointed out to him that to pump water from the aquifers cost half a billion dollars a month. And I always wondered, why it is that we do not explore the building of dams and in coastal towns to look at the question of desalination, which might be expensive, but there are countries like the Bahamas and Cayman and Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, where they do these desalination and it works; it's a good supplier. I don't know what the cost is, but I wonder why it is that we're not undertaking a feasibility study to look at the relative cost, as compared to the pumping from the aquifers and desalination.

And if - the sea is a very good resource and in the Bahamas there is no surface water, they all get brackish water from below and they desalinate it and they have a big tourism industry. And I've been there several times and I've never heard anybody complain of the shortage of water.

Mr. Speaker, no effort should be spared to correct these infrastructural deficiencies, especially water supplies for domestic use, but also for agricultural use. And I hope we not planning to use waters being pumped from the aquifers for agricultural use. That would be frightfully expensive and make us noncompetitive.

I'm grateful to the Minister of State in the Ministry of Water and Housing for the emergency provision to continue trucking water to these hard-hit communities. I must express my disappointment, however, that the extensive work done to bring water for the first time to Kitson Town, undertaken by the last administration, has come to a dead halt for want of a few minor connections.

During the last administration, Mr. Speaker, we were able to commission new tanks, new pumps, a good piping system at the cost of some US$6 Million to bring water to Kitson Town and its environs. Water is in Kitson Town and the people are grateful, but neighbouring communities are not getting water - I'm sorry the Minister is not here; I hope he's listening to me - just for the want of minor connections, because if you do that - and the Water Commission knows this - then you're bringing on stream a lot of people who're anxious for the water, who are buying water in these dry seasons every day; they're paying money for it and the amount of money they paid the trucks to deliver water is more than they would pay if they had the water coming through pipes. (Applause)

So it is in the interest of the Water Commission to make sure that these people are brought on stream; it is important for their revenue and so it is a feasible thing to do. So I am appealing to the Minister - and when the Government change he was the first Minister I visited shortly after the change of Government, to appeal for the continuation of that project, pointing out these important considerations.

I'm however heartened by the announcement by the Minister of Water and the Honourable Prime Minister, that a contract to carry out necessary repairs and strengthening of the Gold Mine River system and other community, to supply water to Brown's Hall and its environments, that that contract is at last being prepared for tendering, and within weeks we should be able to start work.

I'm also heartened by the announcement by Rural Water Supply that the Watermount River Dam has been enlarged. And, Mr. Speaker, I paused here because this is probably due. more to the work at the Council by my Councillors, and I want to take the opportunity to welcome - I don't know if they've arrived - Councillor Devon Wint; Councillor Alvin Beckford who told me that he may be late because he is a Justice of the Peace and he has Petty Sessions to go to today; Councillor Keith McCook, all of them very hardworking Councillors.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: And your best Councillor John Wilson.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Oh keep quiet! Shut yuh mouth!

Dr. BAUGH: I noticed that every time you come there you're visiting up there very often yuh nuh, I hope you're not concocting anything with John Wilson.

(Laughter)

Mr. WARMINGTON: You won't succeed anyhow.

(Cross talks)

Dr. BAUGH: But this fixing of Gold Mine water system - and its named Gold Mine

because gold used to be mined in the area - that it is a very important system for thousands of people including the district of Wood Hall where the Prime Minister hails from.

I'm also encouraged by the news from Rural Water Supplies that the Point Hill/Brown's Town communities will also receive attention. Because, Mr. Speaker, here is another small water supply that supply thousands of people. The community is growing; 14, 15 years ago that was adequate, now we have to expand entombment of springs and make connections to a three quarter million gallon tank that will supply water to these people. I'm encouraged because work is being done on it.

Mr. Speaker, I turn to Agricultural Productivity, because this is the heart and soul of a constituency and if there's no agricultural productivity there's no education; there's no social life because this is where the economy really comes from. While I'm fully on board, Mr. Speaker, with the efforts to maximize our involvement in BPOs - Business Process Outsourcing - and ICT's - Information Communication Technology - along with other initiatives in the knowledge and service economies for which Jamaica holds a strategic position, it should be noted that the Philippines have overtaken India in having the largest BPOs and are hoping to earn US$26 Billion by the year 2016.

And while, Mr. Speaker, we pursue our dreams to become a logistics hub with multimodal - and I've taken it from the Central Clarendon MP - multimodal transportation inclusive of shipping, aviation, railway and highway connections, requiring sea-port and air-port development, and I will say inclusive of the Goat Islands, as long as we are assured of the continued sovereignty of Jamaica over the Goat Islands and that environmental measures are put in place, Mr. Speaker, I'm of the view... (Applause) ...I'm of the view that we cannot ignore agriculture and agro-processing, linked to the tourism-based economy, or that we can ignore the enormous value of our fertile lands.

And I'm saying this, Mr. Speaker, I'm saying this...

(Inaudible comments)

Dr. BAUGH: I wonder if I can get your protection, Mr. Speaker.

...I'm saying this because I don't believe that we really take serious the value of fertile lands. We're building houses, building industries and the amount of land available for agriculture is getting less and less.

I just want to make the point, Mr. Speaker that food, water and energy are the inescapable priorities for the next 30 years to meet the global challenge of nine billion people on the planet earth by the year 2050, 70% of which will be urbanized, demanding food, water and energy, as never experienced before. It's a critical thing. There may be wars over water, as a matter of fact, a lot of the displacement taking place in Africa, is because of the desertification that is expanding across that country; because of the reduction in rainfall and water resources and other resources that support life.

History has also shown that true industrialization begins with agricultural activity and agro-processing as it uses our own primary products, raw materials and labour as a low import content for its raw materials and therefore not subject to the vicissitudes and the devaluation and inflation.

Why are we not hearing the outcome of initiatives to link hotels and producers with rural farmers? Why are production targets not being set and communicated to our farmers? I remain incensed and disappointed at the closure of two shrimp farms because of a bias in taxation on imported raw materials compared with taxation and finished products coming from Guyana. I appeal to the Government to put our land and local resources to good use by maximizing agricultural production.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the Agro-Parks and I'm following them with keen interest. I note recently the news that IDB is spending funds on the old Spring Plains area to establish these agro-parks, but these things are not reaching the distant rural communities like West Central St. Catherine. It seems to me that the Minister of Agriculture needs to have a broader more comprehensive programme where opportunities are created for distant communities; communities in rural Jamaica in particular.

We have to cope with global factors, Mr. Speaker. Global warming and climate change is making it more difficult for us. The global financial economic crisis of 2008, which continues and lingers on; globalization of world trade and the failure of the Doha Round - and may I just explain that, Mr. Speaker. The Doha Round of the WTO follows on liberalization of trade for the large industrialized countries. The Doha Round was meant to focus on developing countries to give us an opportunity to take part in globalized trade. But what has been happening, in effect, is that this globalized liberalized trade which is like a rising tide supposed to lift all ships, but the big ships are floating, Mr. Speaker, but the small crafts, that is, Jamaica and small countries like ours, they are sinking fast. It is not working out in our interest and mostly because we have opened our economies in good faith but, in effect, we are faced with the fact that subsidized products are competing with our own agricultural products, such as pork, which was imported recently by your Administration to wipe out our pork industry.

Mr. Speaker, if we are not conscious of the fact that large countries like the Unites States of America, Europe, Canada these countries have very creative subsidization programmes making certain that there is great investment - in Europe it is €45 Billion, almost a third of the European Economic Community's budget and that subsidy is for agriculture to make sure they maintain the quality of their market…

(*Sotto voce* comment by a Member)

Dr. BAUGH: That's right. But that's where it failed, because the Doha Round has been going on for some thirteen years now and it has failed because these countries continue to subsidize. I just want to make the point that we can never succeed in agriculture, we will never succeed in Point Hill and Duxes

unless we realize the disadvantage that our famers are put to, or although we are a country with an open economy - and we were one of the first to do that - the fact is that we have to be conscious of our domestic indigenous economies and protect them just like they protect them in the United States, Canada and Europe.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Hey!

Dr. BAUGH: I don't think you understand the EPA.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, I will not be distracted but I will continue.

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Continue, Dr. Baugh.

Dr. BAUGH: Jamaica is a Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and it is obvious that we have other disadvantages and yes, there is a movement globally, regionally to address the special vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States, and we have to be conscious of it. Those things that we are vulnerable to, Mr. Speaker are climatic conditions and crises. In Jamaica, in recent memory, for some reason maybe global warming we are having a whole lot of hurricanes. Every time a hurricane occurs in Jamaica like Gilbert, like Hurricane David that came before Gilbert that wiped out our banana industry, we recovered. Hurricane Gilbert came and wiped it out again, we recovered and in 1990s several hurricanes wiped it out again. Now every time that happens we go back several years in terms of our gross domestic product, in terms of our growth. We have to recognize these difficulties, because if we want to plan growth we have to plan for the hurricanes, we have to plan for those disadvantages.

Another disadvantage is the fact that we are way behind in technological development. I believe that poverty is due to the lack of technology. And there is an effort to understand factor productivity in Jamaica - the human factor productivity, because we have to make our country more productive. But the reason for poverty is because we have not applied technology to add value to the things that we export and the Member from Ministry of Foreign Affairs is looking at me, because they are now involved in trying to establish another trading agreement with Canada to be followed later on ... the United States, because the preferential agreements we had has disappeared. I'm just taking a little time to explain this. But if we don't work into those agreements a development chapter we're just going to put ourselves at an disadvantage for opening up again our market to another big, big country and we will be at an disadvantage. If we don't make certain that a part of the agreement is to help us to develop the technologies that we can add value to our raw materials and on our primary products to qualify to be able to export to the market place in these countries.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the point I want to make is in Point Hill, in Duxes, neighbouring communities our people suffer from poverty and it is not improving, because not only do we not utilize our resources but we have

allowed ourselves to lose competitiveness in the global marketplace and there is no way you can grow your GDP now without being competitive in the global marketplace because the world has become inter-dependent and connected. And I am appealing that we try to make certain that our agriculture and agro-processing is well developed to meet the standards of HASOP and the ISO standards across the world; that the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Industry pool their resources, but start taking a look at community-level economic development.

And I want to make a point here, Mr. Speaker, which is of the utmost importance I'm going to give an example, the story an initiative taken by Mrs. Jane Taylor who is an ex-patriot married to a Jamaican who saw the need in Point Hill, spent her time at Point Hill Primary School assisting in developing reading skills among the children her efforts led her to mobilize resources from multi-lateral partners through JSIF to construct on the school compound a reading and learning centre fully equipped with computer technology and offered services to the community, including evening classes at a minimal charge. It turned out, Mr. Speaker, that even those minimal charges were unaffordable to the community, and it closed. It is now run by the Ministry of Education, but it is a fitting example that in the absence of parallel economic development there are several factors that impair the ability…

(Cross talk)

Sorry, there is an emergency.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Dr. Bloomfield will… So you can proceed.

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker, I've met with my teachers on several occasions and what is apparent out of that meeting is that we have adequate schools. We have good teachers and teaching is taking place adequately, but there are many children who attend school at a disadvantage, because of the poor economy of their community.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the issue of the economic crises and how it is affecting the lives of people and how it is affecting our health services. I paid keen attention to the Minister yesterday when he made his presentation and mostly, Mr. Speaker, I have no quarrel with the issues that he discussed concerning tobacco and the framework convention tobacco control concerning chronic diseases, concerning maternal and child health mortality, concerning all the programmes that he's pursuing. One suggestion I would make to him is that in his quest to eradicate cancer of the cervix - I believe you targeted cancer of the cervix, which is good thing to target - to eradicate in Jamaica and I wish him good luck with it - but I would suggest to him that one of the easiest ways and to do that in which he must not forget one of the strategies is that there is a vaccine available…

(*Sotto voce* comment by Dr. Ferguson)

Dr. BAUGH: Yes, but you didn't mention that in your presentation and the best of way of dealing with that is to make sure that all young women from age ten - I believe they have targeted adolescents...

Dr. FERGUSON: It's expensive.

Dr. BAUGH: ...and even women who are in the childbearing age should be given that vaccine, because HPV virus (Human Papillomavirus) is the one that causes cancer of the cervix and we are still seeing distressing cases of women who present when you can hardly do anything to cure them, too many women are still dying from cancer of the cervix. So it's a worthwhile goal and I support him on that, but there are simple ways of doing it. He says it's expensive. It's $12,000 for each vaccine. So I would suggest that you look into the NHF Minister, and try your best to find some way of subsidizing. You don't have to pay all the cost. Women would pay the cost because they know the value, but right now it's prohibitive.

In the past we have been very successful with our immunization programmes and we have eradicated tetanus, neonatal tetanus, which used to kill children at birth, and tetanus who used to kill a lot people who suffer minor accidents. We have eradicated polio in Jamaica. A host of infectious diseases have been eradicated by our very active and very good immunization programmes. And, therefore, he has a resource, because people have experience. But, Mr. Speaker, I take issue with the Minister, because I am concerned about his omissions. What he has said is good, but what he has not said is also important, which is the impact of the economy and the austerity programmes being pursued by the Government.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended enough to allow him to complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time for speaking be extended so that he may complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Baugh.

Dr. BAUGH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues.

The issue of the effect on the economy of the health services there is nothing as important as this, because all those programmes that we talked about can be affected and will be affected if the economy continues in the vein - in the track that it is going. And the lives of people is also being negatively affected and we have to be conscious of this, because we will take the wrong decisions, establish the wrong priorities if we are not conscious of the effect on the lives of people.

As you travel Mr. Speaker, from suburban Spanish Town through the hills and valleys to the distant rural communities apart from the large tunnel coops of investors and pig farmers, many homes have their small coops and small pig pens but they are now empty because the price of chicken and pig feed has escalated from $980 per bag to $1830 per bag over the last two years. At the same time demand is down because consumption is low in this contracting economy and sales are slow and with the price of chicken meat moving from $120 a pound to $190 a pound, Mr.

Speaker, it is affecting the lives of these people. It is now clear that price increases are far in excess of what would be expected based on inflation figures. The prices of basic commodities to the wholesalers have increased by large amounts such as rice by 70 per cent, flour by 31 per cent, sugar by 70 per cent while sales have been reduced in some instances by over 50 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, some wholesales turn off the cold rooms in the days and only turn them on at nights because of the high cost of electricity. Mr. Speaker, people are being forced to make ridiculous choices between paying for a prescription or sending their children to school or paying the light Bill or purchasing food. Street side vendors with their *lickle* corner shops struggle to pay their light bills. And I have one case in mind, Mr. Speaker, one man who just set up a corner shop, because he was having difficulty getting work, finding a job and has been doing fairly well in his little corner shop for about two, three years and while he was trying to pay a Bill of $10,000 for his light it turns out he was visited by revenue enforcement officers from the parish councils to collect from him $18,000 for his trade tax.

Mr. Speaker, I have outlined these details so we can have a good understanding of the agony and the pain being experienced at the roots of society. But turning to health, there is a recent renewed exodus of skills - and even outside of the health service institutions - well, such as the banks are merging, staff are being cut, surviving staff members feel overburdened and stressed - and I see this first hand because my practice is in New Kingston. We're losing experience and skills of professionally educated people from the marketplace and I believe that as the economy goes down these losses are going to create irreparable damage to our economy.

Mr. Speaker, it is abundantly clear that the Austerity Programme has placed a great burden on the ordinary Jamaican, resulting in the inability to afford even the most basic needs. The establishment in the health sector is also being affected, a recent batch of nurses who graduated somewhere in January has difficulty finding employment. I learnt from one of these graduates that approximately 90 of them are seeking jobs unsuccessfully.

Mr. Speaker, it is also clear that health delivery services are also being affected. Only last week medical staff doctor and nurses resorted to industrial action based on instructions communicated to them to cut overtime, by 40 to 50 per cent. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I heard directly that the figure of 80 per cent was mentioned; the doctors said to me, how can we staff the hospital after 4.00 o'clock, nobody will be on duty. So the reaction was predictable, but the Government moved quickly to quell the dispute and close the gap of communication because this decision has been handed down to them indirectly, it came from the Regional Health Authority, and the administrator of the hospital, it never came from the Ministers and the politicians who ought to be the ones that when you have news like that, these are the

people who must communicate directly to the professionals or to the staff or to their association. I speculated that the unfortunate decision was in an effort to close the gap of the some $7 Billion of contingent liabilities including arrears to creditors, and statutory and loan deductions not paid-over to the appropriate institutions, as was revealed by Opposition Spokesman on Finance, the Member from North East Manchester.

However, Mr. Speaker, the impact on health services of the Austerity Programme leaves it in a precarious position. It is ironical that while nurses claimed that they are understaffed and have vacancies, citing the presence of one nurse per ward; several recently graduated nurses have failed to find employment. What it mean obviously, Mr. Speaker, is that although there are vacancies in the establishment post are frozen because of the cutting back on the service.

The curtailment, of nursing sections at the Kingston Public Hospital has meant that operating time has had to be shortened making waiting list for surgery much longer. What happen is that, the operating list usually goes on from 6:00/7:00 in the mornings and sometimes until late at night depending on whether emergencies come, but now-a-days they have to stop operating at 2.00 o'clock because the nurses that no longer have their sessions have to leave at 3:00 so an hour has to be allowed for them to clear-up and tidy-up before they can leave. That means that waiting list for surgery becomes much longer, it also means that the elective cases don't have a chance of being done, patients will get an hernia appointment for two to three years and doctors make every effort to make sure that cancer goes on the list as urgently as possible but even that is challenge.

Doctors are very concern about the effects on people with chronic diseases especially those with diabetes whose erratic control results in a higher incidence of complications. Of greatest concerns are patients with cancer because of the high cost of treatment and in some cases the long delays in getting treatment and time is of the greatest essence in the importance of treating a cancer. The Minister himself has expressed his concern about this and he is taking steps to alleviate the situation and I am completely in agreement with the steps that he has taken.

However, Mr. Speaker, it is well known, that the Jamaican health status, at a longevity of seventy-three (73) years average is that of an upper middle income country while the resources available to health are very small and it is entirely due to the medical and nursing staff and the profession supplementary to medicine working excessively, efficiently beyond their call of duty.

The health delivery system has been like a car running with an empty tank existing on fumes for a long time. It can be easily dislodged from it precarious perch to go into a state of collapse. Health expenditure is 5.2 per cent of the GDP, placing us at 136 in the world a lowly place in the ranking.

The number of physicians per thousand population set at a minimum of 2.3 per

thousand population, by the World Health Organization is point four one (.41) in Jamaica placing us at number 129 in the world.

Our maternal mortality, which the Minister has expressed concern about, is at 110 female deaths per one thousand live births. Stubbornly refusing to budge for more than a decade, as a matter of fact, for more than twenty years, compare to Cuba which is at 73 ours is at 110 Cuba is 73, Mauritius at 60, Barbados at 51, Trinidad and Tobago at 46, Costa Rico at 40, United Kingdom at 12 and Sweden at 4, this high rate of 110 deaths is an indication of the state of our services. The current Austerity Programme and its impact on health delivery systems could be a tipping point for the Jamaican health sector. The failure to provide for maintenance of the elevators at KPH to the point where all four failed a few weeks ago caused cancellation of surgery and other critical interventions. For some time, all autoclaves at KPH are out of service necessitating the farming out of sterilization all over Kingston, major hospitals. In addition, the lack of essential medicines, sundries, IV fluids, in particular, for a period of time are critical problems over the past few weeks. As I mentioned the curtailment of nursing session has resulted in the reduction of operation time at our largest hospital, the Kingston Public Hospital.

Clearly, the austerity programme is having an effect on the delivery of health and the ability of patients to access adequate care. The question has to be asked, is there a better way of coping with the fallout of the economy; are there other options? I believe it necessary to outline copping strategies for the Ministry of Health while at the same time addressing the issue of choices made by the Government. Whether there are other options, Mr. Speaker, the global debate revolves around discussions, and I am going to venture a little bit here into the economic situation because, the problem with the Ministry of Health is ready the economy. And the question is how do we treat with a period of recession or depression. Is compression of the public and private sectors resulting in the contraction across the board, is that the only way? It is not the first time that Jamaica has had to meet these challenges, Mr. Speaker.

In 2008, the JLP faced the same challenges in the context of the peak of the worst global recession since World War II, but at that time the JLP Government applied a creative stimulus package that resulted in the stabilization of the economy, a revaluation of the Jamaican dollar and a growth rate of 1.5 per cent by 2011. No, Mr. Speaker, the Government did not have money and I am about to list for you the strategies that were used because they were all small, but you know, like one cocoa they full baskets. These small strategies added up to create a good stimulus package that save the economy and those strategies are:

1) The Government sharply reduces import duties on imported barrels to a low flat rate, Christmas was approaching at the time and barrels were coming in
2) The government abolish cost-sharing in country education.

3) Abolish User Fee in health care, and the reasons were obvious and the benefits are also obvious. But what is not so obvious is that it puts more money, more spending money in the people's pocket for consumption, it helps the economy as well.
4) Reduce transfer taxes and stamp duties from 7.5 per cent to 4 per cent.
5) Abolish Estate Debt Taxes.
6) Abolish the custom user fee for imported raw material on capital goods.
7) Sharply reduce interest rates for mortgages and business loans to single digits, 9.5 per cent.
8) Keep the currency stable for two years despite the worst global economic crises in 80 years. And
9) Re-engage with multilateral institutions as the Member was just saying - and borrowed some $3 Billion. We applaud your Eight Hundred Million that you are now borrowing from the International Capital Markets, but this $3 Billion from the multilaterals at 2 per cent interest *per annum* instead of the 9 to 12 per cent on the international capital market.

Additionally Mr. Speaker, we can go back to the 1980s when there was also a crisis, when the word fiscal deficit and fiscal discipline were heard of for the first time in Jamaica and we passed through a painful process of structural adjustment and deregulation of economy, so painful was the adjustment that a social programme entitled: '*structural adjustment with a human face'* was designed to deflate the pressure and build in safety nets and hence,the birth of the Food Stamp Programme which has lead on to the PATH programme.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Dr BAUGH: The dollar was kept stable at $5.50 to $1.00 and the economy was stimulated...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Dr. BAUGH: I don't want them to lose this point, you know, DK is remembering all of it - I am sorry the Member from Hanover is remembering all of that.

The economy was stimulated by an aggressive programmed of skills training and everybody knows about HEART, infrastructural works, creative agricultural programmers which were famous, the textile industry in the form of 807 Garments resulting in a growth rate of roughly 5 per cent *per annum* from 1988 to 1993, and that was the growth, Mr. Speaker.

These strategies were complimented with a comprehensive tax reform that reduce the tax burden on individuals and on corporations which acted as a stimulus at that time there was no GCT, the GCT came on in the 1990s.

These two examples, Mr. Speaker, in terms of periods of time is in sharp contrast distinction to applying austerity across the board along with devaluation, physical cuts in the public sector and heavy taxes on the private sector. I don't have to repeat about the

unbridled devaluation, the Leader of the Opposition has made heavy whether of it to bring it to the attention of the country and this Parliament and so has been the spokesman, the Opposition Spokesman on Finance. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we are not the only ones who believe that too much austerity is harmful. As the head of the IMF, Christine Lagarde in April 2013 was quoted warning Spain against too much austerity in which she said and I quote:

> "*We are pleading for a reasonable and sensible financial restructuring for Spain as this meant",*

and I am quoting here again.

> *"...this meant more than putting an exclusive and excessive focus on deficit reductions that only have numerical objectives".*

This was in support of a request by the Spanish Government to increase the target of their fiscal deficit from 4.5 per cent to 6 per cent of GDP.

Ms. Lagarde is further quoted from an earlier period in the *Financial Times* and I quote from the report:

> *"Ms. Lagarde also urged countries more generally to refrain from new austerity measures amidst signs that the IMF is becoming increasingly concerned about the impact of the Government cut-backs on growth. She cautioned against countries front-loading - spending cuts and tax increases, the fund warned earlier this week that Governments around the world has systemically underestimated the danger done to growth by austerity".*

Mr. Speaker, those words are very significant, I am not saying that we can't employ austerity, but obviously you have to have different formulae for different countries and different circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, it is apparent that fiscal responsibility is necessary within the context of the framework laid out by the previous Government, and placed on the table of this House by the current Opposition Spokesman on Finance. However, crippling the private sector with devaluation and imposition of heavy taxation as well will result in severe austerity and contraction of the economy with decreasing revenues and a vicious downward cycle, which we are now experiencing. The price of commodities including drugs and medical supplies has increased by some 25% to 43% over the past two years.

Mr. Speaker again I warn against the knee-jerk response which is to reestablish out-of-pocket payments at the point of service, many people are still calling for that. It has been proposed that user fees will reduce the load at Accident and Emergency, Hospital and Clinics. This is wrong as it is using User Fees to discriminate against the poor and people who are incapacitated by illness.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. BAUGH: I take the opportunity to reiterate the position of the Opposition that the charging of fees at the point of service, especially accident and emergency, became a barrier to healthcare in the past. It was a burden on the poor, who predominantly use public institutions and only serve to drive people deeper into poverty. The postponement

of care as a result, results in more complicated illnesses, costing the individual and the country more money.

When the fees were removed by the then Minister of Health, the Member from South East Clarendon - who is not in the House today - there was a surge in utilization of services including pharmacy, which indicated a pent-up need that was not being filled. These findings are well documented in Jamaica and there's a publication which I used in my presentation last year when I spoke about this issue by local researchers, which confirmed our greatest fears.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has done extensive work in this area and their findings have been published in a World Health Report 2002 and another one in 2010.

Similarly, the new Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), a Caribbean doctor and graduate of the University of the West Indies, with years of experience with the World Health Organization, spoke in Jamaica and commended us for having abolished user fees, stating that the imposition of fees, of user fees is dangerous to the health status of a people and should be avoided at all costs. Consequently, Mr. Speaker, there has to be other means of alternatively financing the health services to augment the budgeted amounts.

The Minister of Health needs to embark on a consultation about the appropriate use of resources, especially the use of the National Health Fund. It is feasible to contemplate building new.... Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I was distracted a little bit. Is it feasible, to contemplate, building new hospitals or new wards in the context of a contracting public sector in which posts are being frozen and costs are deliberately being reduced by cutting services?

The accumulation of arrears in the Ministry of Health of some J$7 Billion is a clear indication that there is a financial crisis affecting the health services. How do we plan, therefore, to finance expanded services? There is a clear inability to sustain the existing services. Rather, let us use the NHF to consolidate those services now in existence. The Minister need to develop a framework for coping with the austerity measures affecting the Ministry of Health and preserving equity. It is even more important now to emphasize the principles of Universal Access, which was our policy from in the years 2004/2006. And Universal Coverage, which means utilizing prepaid health schemes from people when they are healthy and working.

The important principles of a framework would be:

1) To preserve equity and balance without barriers to health care;
2) To maximize the use of primary health care and use the health card to avoid duplications.

The Minister has addressed this in his presentation, and we welcome the Health Card. It seems to have straddled both Administrations, because it was started by the former Minister of Health, the Member from Clarendon. And it is now completed and implemented by the current Minister.

3) Review the use of the National Health Fund and give priority consideration for the needs of things like IV fluids, drugs and medical sundries.

That is in keeping with the original idea of the National Health Fund to help people to finance healthcare, which it does in part. But, I believe and I've told the Minister this, it is my opinion that a lot more could be done to assist people in other categories of illness who need assistance and especially cancer.

4) Review the structure of the health delivery system to integrate public and private care to avoid duplications, and to build insurance companies appropriately.

Just last week I was speaking to a doctor from Montego Bay, who said they still have a restriction, a limit on how they can build insurance companies. They are not being built appropriately; more revenue can be earned from it.

5) Expand insurance coverage, especially for new enterprises.

Mr. Speaker, I am suggesting that every time we negotiate a BPO, a ICT or a new hotel is built, or new categories of staff are being put in place, that we plan and negotiate a Health Protection Scheme for these people that they can get coverage for when they are ill.

6) Urgently explore medical tourism.

I've been saying this several times in my speeches annually. I heard the Minister yesterday speak of Medical Tourism, but one thing I would like to suggest to him that he explores the possibility of public/private partnership incorporating international and local insurance companies.

Before I explain that to you, Mr. Minister, let me just point out that the Resolution laid on the Table of the House concerning Universal Coverage, concerning Pre-paid Schemes, that Resolution has twice fell off the Table... (Order Paper) ...and has been put back on. I am still awaiting the opportunity to debate that. When we debate that, we can discuss the details of how it is to be structured and what opportunities exist. And in looking at it in some detail, we have to look at the National Housing Trust, the National Health Fund, the National Insurance Fund and many other Pre-paid opportunities. I believe pooling them together can offer us great opportunities in offering coverage.

Dr. FERGUSON: Bring it back. Bring it back.

Dr. BAUGH: It's on the Table. It's still on the Table; you just have to decide when. Let me turn now to public/private sector partnerships.

Mr. Speaker, I again go back to the 1980s for lessons learnt. When there was a proposal for a comprehensive Health Sector Reform, I was the Minister at the time. The IDB component valued at US$100 Million was to renovate and expand central hospitals. We planned for 10 hospitals, but we ended up with six (6) plus a Government Laboratory. We did not have the capacity to undertake all of that construction.

Based on my personal experience at the Cornwall Regional Hospital where I worked before I entered politics, we reversed a

decision taken by the previous Government, who had decided that there should be no private wards in public hospitals. And we included the construction of private wards in the plan. That part of the plan was not fulfilled. You understand, Mr. Speaker, that we lost the election in 1989 and therefore it was handed over to the People's National Party as Government to complete the plan, which was completed somewhere in the late 1990s. It ended up in rebuilding the Cornwall Regional Hospital, the Kingston Public Hospital, Mandeville Hospital, St. Ann's Bay Hospital and a new hospital in May Pen, and also the Bustamante Children's Hospital.

However, although the private wards in Public Hospital was not included in the Plan, Professor Peter Fletcher, Professor of Surgery at the University Hospital of the West Indies quite independently, proposed that a private wing be constructed at the University Hospital. That wing is now called the Tony Thwaites Wing, constructed as a private initiative at no cost to the Government. That project has been exceedingly successful and now has a second floor and a state-of-the art operating theatre and Intensive Care Unit. It contributes significantly to the public- side of the hospital, employs nurses from the Nursing Administration of the public part of the hospital, and has carved out a reputation for itself in the wider Caribbean and the Diaspora; Medical Tourism for them is already a reality.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Dr. BAUGH: Patients come from all over the world… (Applause) ...to come to the Tony Thwaites Wing. In the Caribbean, it is known as the place where you can get the best private care and the best treatment in the Caribbean, and many people come here regularly from the Caribbean.

It also employs qualified Doctors as Honorary Consultants from the practice. And so that, other consultants apart from those employed to the University Hospital can admit there. It uses the facilities of the public institution; the CAT scan, the MRI, Radiology, Ultrasound and so the public hospital earns a significant amount from it. It has been deemed a great success.

Mr. Speaker, the Cornwall Regional Hospital has also come a far way and is considered to be the most efficient hospital in the island. It is renowned for research and the employment of unique methods. If they were not so technically complicated I would explain some of them to you, but I'm very impressed with the doctors at Cornwall Regional Hospital, who are exploring new ways and bringing new state-of-the-art equipment and techniques to the Cornwall Regional Hospital in plastic surgery, in orthopedics, in general surgery and other areas. It is now responsible for the training of undergraduates and post-graduates in specialized areas. As a matter of fact, some of the consultants there are involved in the University and one is a Deputy Dean of the University. (Applause)

The Cornwall Regional Hospital is now ripe for a similar private sector initiative to construct a private wing with related services by the private sector at no cost to the Government. I understand, Mr. Speaker, that there has already been interest - I won't call

any names because I don't want to - don't want them to shy away, but they have been well known people, have indicated a clear interest. So I'm certain that Sandals will be interested in a project like that.

The CRH is now ready for Medical Tourism and can greatly expand its income and it contributes to underwriting the cost of the Public Hospital.

I believe other hospitals like Mandeville, May Pen, and Spanish Town can be similar treated and there's no reason why we should not include Kingston Public Hospital that has very, very good doctors and it's a huge hospital and can accommodate changes to put in a private wing for service.

Mr. Speaker, this is how Medical Tourism has to develop. I do not believe in creating a stand-alone hospital for tourists who get sick. I believe that the Public Hospitals we have that are already equip with Intensive Care Units and other supportive services that it is appropriate to add to them and to build up a high quality service. And then the people of Jamaica will benefit, because there are people in Jamaica who can pay and who are willing to pay. And they are given trimmings, they are given things that make them comfortable or make them feel good. I put those patients in Group A, those patients are the ones who will have the kind of insurance policies that can cover all their costs, they want a private ward and they want direct access to the consultants and the lecturers.

Group B patients are patients who can afford to pay half the cost and the Government will have to subsidize the other half, but we are already doing that. So when you offer to those people in the Group B category, the opportunity to have a Pre-paid Health Scheme, it's not going to cost them as much as the Group A patients, but they are entitled to the same consultants, they are entitled to the same care, the same facilities it's just that the wards would be a little different.

And the Group C patients who go on the public wards, and some people will sometimes go on the private wards and next time they go on the public wards, especially if they run out of funds, it works, Mr. Speaker, they can move from one to the next. But all of them, the total population would be covered; it's just that some people pay a little extra for extra trimmings.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that utilizing the big hospitals, the central hospitals in Jamaica will offer us a great opportunity to contribute significantly to the income of the health sector.

Coming to Oncology.

Mr. Speaker, care for cancer in Jamaica is very disappointing and full of danger for those suffering with the disease. We have excellent professionals who know their work and can master all aspects of treatment, many of whom have worked in Oncology Centres abroad. I agree with the Minister entirely in his decision to purchase linear accelerator machines which include simulators important in the mapping and planning of treatment regime for patients. It would be a major boost for the St. Joseph's Hospital - purchased under the aegis of former Minister of Health, the Member from South East Clarendon - to be converted into an

Oncology Centre for the organization and bringing together of all aspects of cancer care in Jamaica. It's a long time I have been calling for that, Minister. The fact that St. Joseph's is there now, owned by the Government, not being used fully...

Mr. SAMUDA: Wasted.

Dr. BAUGH: ….wasted, giving us a great opportunity. It was my idea to put it at the National Chest Hospital, but in speaking to some of the Oncologists they have suggested that St. Joseph's Hospital would be an ideal place. The appropriate housing for the accelerator would have to be built as well as additional accommodations for patients coming from outlying areas.

In the cases where treatment will take place over an extended period of time you have to house those patients. I am certain that this could again become another successful partnership between public and private sectors. And I don't see any reason why that should not be. But Oncology is a great opportunity to develop something.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say to the Minister, I heard you with your plans to build an adolescent hospital. Again, I would suggest that there are more urgent priorities. The Cornwall Regional Hospital now if you go there to Accident and Emergency you will find anywhere between 10 and 30 patients, especially medical patients who are waiting in Casualty for a bed; patients have died waiting in Casualty for a bed. They are short of beds because the hospital has become very busy.

Dr. FERGUSON: They will have 50 shortly.

Dr. BAUGH: They will have 50 shortly. But at the same time, Minister, I would like to suggest, even the Paediatric Wards up there, if they are suitably refurbished, can accommodate your paediatric needs. There is a whole floor for paediatrics. I don't think an adolescent hospital is the priority. I think the attention should be given to building a private wing to create more beds so that will take a lot pressure off the hospital; assist them with the Operating Theatres on the 4th floor, because those are out of action now and they would like to reopen them. That could take a lot of pressure. But the Cornwall Regional Hospital is doing a large volume of work and the facilities have become crammed because of the volume that has come down on them. So I believe that we can agree, Mr. Speaker, with the Minister that the priority ought to be those things that I mentioned which will attract private investments so the cost is not a burden on the Government.

Mr. Speaker, I turn to marijuana as a special interest group. I believe that we all are agreed that the decriminalization of ganja is necessary. It is also agreed to expunge retroactively all records of criminal charges imposed for the possession of small amounts of ganja. Research on ganja for the development of drugs for medicinal use has always been recognized as acceptable and desirable. Legislation should consolidate this aspect. The CNN's Sanjay Gupta dramatically demonstrated a child with a certain type of fit being controlled with CBD rich extracts from marijuana. I have no objection to that. As a matter of fact, in Jamaica research has been

done. As everybody knows OSMOSAL and CANASOL come from ganja by virtue of research done here.

Recreational use and sacramental use are more controversial. Smoking regulations should be subject to the same regulations as those for tobacco use. Ganja smoke contains 50 carcinogens; irritants and carcinogens are 70% more than tobacco. But there seems to be a protective factor in ganja. In other words, it doesn't completely add up; although there are a lot of carcinogens in the ganja smoke the statistics don't show a parallel relationship in terms of the actual occurrence of cancer. So there may be a protective factor and I believe that the US Institutes for Research are looking into that factor.

Ganja is particularly harmful for growing children. I would like to list a few of the things, Mr. Speaker, that can happen to people, because I believe that one of the things the Minister will have to see to is proper education of the people. Azoospermia in young men, it means absent sperms in the semen, causes infertility...

Mr. SAMUDA: Can't fertilize.

Dr. BAUGH: ….a motivational syndrome which affects - and this is particularly important for us, because a lot of our young boys who come from rural Jamaica drift into urban areas, get involved in the inner city. Those people are already demotivated and feel a sense of hopelessness. Although ganja operates as a sedative and it is a good sedative, it also causes something called a motivational syndrome where they lose ambition and they lose desire to improve themselves, starting dressing sloppily and not caring about the future.

Mr. ROBINSON: It was studied?

Dr. BAUGH: It was studied, yes. A motivational syndrome is something that's well known. As a matter of fact, they have experimented with rats.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Government Member)

Mr. CHARLES: Listen to the doctor; voice of wisdom.

Dr. BAUGH: As you know, rats and wild animals will defend themselves if you try to cage them. When they are exposed to ganja smoke you can pick up a rat by the tail and just drop him back; he hardly scampers away. He has lost the ability...

Dr. GUY: Him high.

Mr. SAMUDA: He gets on a high.

Dr. BAUGH: Him on a high.

Mr. Speaker, ataxia and confusion in children when exposed to edibles - I am going to deal with that a little later. We have to look at the countries or the states that already experiment; there is no reason why we should learn all over. We must look at them with a sense of caution to learn from what they are doing.

Acute and chronic psychosis, especially if the exposure occurs before the age of 17; a lot of young people develop acute schizophrenia and some of them never get better; impaired memory and learning and that is well established. It affects that part of the brain, the hippocampus, where actual recording of

information and events take place; impaired spatial judgement and reaction times important in motor vehicle accidents…

Mr. CHARLES: Buchanan, listen to your medical condition!

Dr. BAUGH: It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that intense education is compulsory. States in the United States of America are cautiously watching the Colorado experience. We should do the same and review the experiences in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

Mr. SAMUDA: I see signs of it in here.

Dr. BAUGH: In 1976 the Dutch developed a policy of non-enforcement.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Government Member)

Dr. BAUGH: I am trying to bring your attention to the Dutch experience.

Mr. CHARLES: Buchanan, you have been diagnosed, listen. (Referring to Luther Buchanan)

Dr. BAUGH: They developed a policy of non-enforcement for violations, it's not legalized, it is more decriminalized. As a matter of fact, they used the word de-penalized.

In 1995, the 30 gram limit was reduced to 5 gram limit for an individual and 500 grams for stock in a coffee shop. The rules for the coffee shops were they may not sell more than 5 grams to any individual. They may not sell ecstasy or any other hard drug, they may not advertise drugs; they must ensure that no nuisance takes place in their community. They may not sell drugs to persons below the age of 18 years. As a matter of fact, they should not allow 18 year olds to enter the premises. There are some 700 outlets in the Netherlands and it employs 3,400 workers.

In 2005, 600,000 Dutch used ganja and 26% of their 4.5 million tourists used ganja or visited a Cannabis coffee shop. Ten per cent of the tourists say that's why they came to the Netherlands. The value of the business varies between €311 Million to €650 Million per year; 80% of what is grown in the Netherlands is exported. An important observation, based on research, is that ganja did not operate as a gateway and possibly reduced the gateway effects. That means that although it was feared that if you allowed the use of ganja it would lead to hard drugs.

The decriminalization era was followed by legalization by the Dutch, resulting in a dramatic escalation of the use in the mid-1980s. As a result of that in 1995 the policy had to be reversed. That's the policy of legalization.

A Swedish Study showed that there is a risk of developing schizophrenia if ganja is used before the age of 18. It was 2.4 to 3 times more than in the normal population. There is a dose-response relationship. In other words, if it's intensely used, frequently used than the young people are more likely to get schizophrenia.

In South London one psychiatrist estimates that 90% of psychosis are marijuana-related. In Colorado, unintended exposure, children eating edibles from those people who have a card so that they can buy ganja, it's cooked into cookies and into candy bars. These candy bars infused with marijuana end up in the hands of children. They are

seeing an increase in the number of children being admitted to hospitals for confusion ataxia. Sheriffs in neighbouring states report that stoned drivers leaving Colorado are coming across the border and there is an increase in cross-border trade. There is a 61% increase in the seizures of ganja in Kansas, Texas.

Mr. Speaker, the word is caution and we must learn from the experience of those who have legalized this drug. The Dutch are refusing now to legalize it, they have continued with the decriminalization or the de-penalization with certain strict rules. At this time, I support decriminalization, expunging the records. I support the Leader of the Opposition's call for a referendum on the issue of ganja. (Applause)

Mr. ROBINSON: You are against legalization?

Dr. BAUGH: I am against legalization, yes.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister in his presentation mentioned Chikungunya. I believe that the health authorities must be commended on the fact that Chikungunya has surrounded us in the Caribbean but we have not yet had any cases. And I do note that there is an effort to make sure that the vectors are controlled.

We should keep an eye on the Ebola virus which is now in Western Africa, and they have had several hundred, at least 400 deaths, I believe, caused by the Ebola which is a very virulent virus which affects by contact; people came into contact with dead animals that suffer from zoonosis. It springs from animals to human beings. And what has happened is that there are people in their communities who are infected and once you come into contact with it you will get it and the mortality is high, sometimes 60% but as high as 90% of the people exposed die from it. It's quite possible that it can spread beyond those borders in West Africa. It's quite possible that it can come here. I think we have to be very watchful that it doesn't come here.

But, Mr. Speaker, I close where I began, with concerns about the interrelationship between us and the global community. I would like to record here the Preamble of the Earth Charter emanating from the global effort at sustainable development, because I think it's a quote to govern a number of us in terms of our activities, and I quote:

> "*We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace… The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of the earth's vitality, diversity and beauty is a sacred trust."*

Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility to the next generation.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: Excellent presentation.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, I seek your permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

(Heckling)

The Deputy SPEAKER: All right. Notwithstanding certain statements, permission granted.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, once again I rise in this Honourable House to make my contribution to the sectoral debate, as the proud elected representative of the great constituency of Eastern Westmoreland.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear! Hear!

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, let me not hesitate to thank the most Honourable Prime Minister for my appointment as the Minister of State in her illustrious Administration. I use the word "illustrious" Mr. Speaker, to describe this Administration because we are well known for our commitment to empowering the people and for involving them in important decisions that will affect their future.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, prior to us forming the Government, the people of Jamaica were made promises, were committed to external obligations over which they had no direct control. Despite this, they were responsible as a people to carry out the requirements of the programmes that were thrusted upon them in order to meet the obligations to which they were blindly bound.

Mr. Speaker, the then Administration could not fulfill the promises and ignored the commitments to these obligations resulting in a crisis that this Administration has had to fix and has been managing creditably.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, we have been building back Jamaica's good international image since we were once again elected to serve the people in December 2011, after a short break.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the people of Jamaica for their support, discipline and cooperation, as we progress steadily along the pathway to development and relief, despite the present economic struggles, we are approaching the light at the end of the tunnel faster than we were two and a half years ago, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, I hasten to thank my parliamentary colleagues as I enjoy the camaraderie we share, including you, Mr. Speaker, whose task is sometimes difficult because of the robust cut and thrust of the House, but which is a common feature of Parliaments and across the globe, and you just experienced some of that, Mr. Speaker.

(Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, because of the nature of my function as Minister of State I have had to interface with many Ministries and agencies and I really want to thank them all for their

kind assistance in carrying out my duties.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, I want to single out the leadership and staff of the Ministry of Health and the Minister of Health and Member from St. Thomas Eastern, Dr. Fenton Ferguson, for acknowledgment…

(Applause by Government Members) -

…because of his guidance and latitude since my assignment to his Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, I want also to thank the staff and leadership at the Office of Prime Minister for their assistance and guidance pertaining to my many duties, but, Mr. Speaker, my immediate support staff must be commended for their commitment and dedication to our task.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker…

Mr. SAMUDA: Why you laughing so much?

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: I soon tell you, Karl.

(Heckling)

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the support of those who have taken time to be present here today and are now seated in the Gallery. They include, Mr. Speaker, Councilor Danree Dellancy of the Bethel Town Division, who is the Deputy Mayor of Savanna-la-mar. (Applause) Councilor Cebert McFarlane of the Leamington Division. (Applause) Councilor Trevor Jamison who is the Councilor of the Darliston Division. (Applause) Councilor Valdence Gifford of the Whitehouse Division and the constituency office Secretary Ms. Dianne Drummond, along with members of my constituency committee and friends. (Applause) But, Mr. Speaker, bear with me as I make special mention of my darling wife who is also in the Gallery.

Government MEMBERS: Aah! Aah!

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Who is the wind beneath my wings.

Mr. Speaker, sometime ago when I spoke in this Honourable House, I referenced the period of political independence of Norman Washington Manley, social empowerment of Michael Manley, regionalization of PJ Patterson, and now the true experience of people power and the progressive agenda of the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller.

(Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, the fact that as a people we are not very ideologically inclined politically anymore. I firmly believe the era demands that we must operate on the pillars of participation, accountability and responsibility. (Applause by Government Members) Mr. Speaker, I represent my constituency on those three pillars, because no mendacity nor political propaganda can pierce the fabric of such an approach, neither at the national nor local level. (Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, of note is that our people are fully apprised of the challenges that confront us and they are prepared mentally and emotionally to stay with trusted leadership and representation that have been tested and proven over the years. I have heard from the people that this Administration has really brought a sense of stability, trust and hope to Jamaica. (Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, as usual I will not delve deep into much constituency matters today, but I want to make the point as Ellen Glasgow said, "He who demands little gets little" but for me, Mr. Speaker, to whom much is given, much is expected. That is why we continue to see so much progress in Eastern Westmoreland. (Applause by Government Members)

In the Darliston Division, the Bigwoods district road is being repaired. Phase I of the Darliston Primary Health Care Centre of Excellence is completed and Phase II is underway. I am happy to report that the Darliston Police Station has been retained and the police now operate from a more comfortable space. The Content community tank has been repaired and rural electrification approved for Townsend Gully. Mr. Speaker, in the Leamington Division we have continued the progress; we have provided potable water for Cedar Valley, Johnson district and Stonehenge under the JEEP Programme. We are building the Belvedere community centre, and as a part of joint venture with the Government and the Caribbean Local Economy Development Project, work is underway for the New Roads Rest Stop. (Applause by Government Members)

In Whitehouse division, Mr. Speaker, Phase I of the road rehabilitation of the control section Ferris Cross to Scott's Cove has been completed. Work is in progress for Phase II which is Scott's Cove to Bluefields. We have made improvements to the water supply line from Belmont to Scott's Cove and improved agro technology in Beeston Spring, again through partnership with CARILED by putting in place a shade house plant nursery. (Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, for the Bethel Town Division. There has been extension of potable water into Argyle Mountain, Galloway and Welliban. Road rehabilitation work in progress under JEEP from Ramsey Corner into Lambs River. As for the hub of Bethel Town, Mr. Speaker, which is the town square, we are establishing a tranquility park through the Tourism Enhancement Fund. (Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, the sorrel processing facility has been completed and was done in partnership with JSIF. A transport centre will soon be established through the Westmoreland Parish Council and the Constituency Development Fund because the lands have now been secured. (Applause by Government Member)

Mr. Speaker, to put the icing on the cake in regards to Bethel Town, I must say thanks to the Embassy of Japan for their generosity in donating two fire trucks and two ambulances for the parish of Westmoreland. (Applause by Government Members) A fire truck and ambulance for Savanna-la-mar, the parish capital, and a fire truck and an ambulance for the establishment of a fire post in Bethel Town for the first time at last. (Applause by Government Members)

Mr. Speaker, that is people power in the vein of representation and development, guided by the steady hands of a responsive Government.

Mr. Speaker, I will also use this opportunity to talk a bit about project Education Eastern Westmoreland.

We have seen over the last two years four Early Childhood Institutions built, namely; the Cedar Valley Basic, Reid's Mountain Basic, Kings Infant and Belmont Basic Schools. We have seen significant infrastructural upgrade at the Salem Primary and the Junior High, New Hope Primary and the Junior High, Mount Hermon Basic, Chantilly Primary, Enfield Primary and New Works Primary Schools.

Government MEMBER: Work, work. (Applause by Government Members)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, the Belmont Academy is undergoing expansion as we speak. Five new classrooms are being added to the Belmont Academy. Mr. Speaker, it is an open secret that every school year $5 Million is spent from the office of the Member of Parliament for education assistance through the Constituency Development Fund. Mr. Speaker, we have two skills training centres in Eastern Westmoreland that complement our primary and secondary education system. They are the Seaford Town NCTVET and the Culloden NCTVET. However, presently there is uncertainty and tension with respect to the tenure of the Seaford Town Skills Training Centre in the constituency.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Development in the 1970s conducted training through its Vocational Training Division or by the Social Development Commission, over time, over time, Mr. Speaker, Vocational Training was transferred to the HEART Trust/NTA which was established about 1982. I recall as a youngster very well, living in the constituency, that funds came to Jamaica to expand and equip the training facilities at Seaford Town. My understanding was that that represented a gift to Seaford Town and surrounding communities, and was not intended to generate a stream of income through rental to landlords. For this reason I understood that rental was never paid by the Ministry of Youth or the HEART Trust/NTA. It is my opinion that these training facilities belong to the people of Seaford Town.

Mr. Speaker, I wrote my colleague Minister on the matter, but I want it placed on record that if Seaford Town Centre has to be closed because HEART Trust and the present landlord cannot reach an agreement, we have ready and waiting another facility owned by the Government that can accommodate the Centre and its training programme. Mr. Speaker, no infrastructural work - (Applause by Government Members) - no infrastructural work would be needed at this new location to house the training programme offered at the Seaford Town NCTVET.

Mr. Speaker, no infrastructural work would be needed at this new location to house the training programme offered at the Seaford Town NCTVET.

Mr. Speaker, I will not accept - we will not accept a programme compromise or losing this training programme, because skills training and education are paramount to sustainable development. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

(*Sotto voce* comments from Mr. Samuda)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Karl, just come over and done, nuh man, and forget over that side!

(Laughter)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: He was here, you know.

Mr. Speaker, I now move into my portfolio responsibilities. Mr. Speaker, at OPM, I have specific oversight responsibility for the Disaster Risk Reduction Committee, and the Rural Development Task Force. These two areas, Mr. Speaker, are critical to national development but often times don't get the detailed attention they deserve. Some persons are even of the view that they can operate on auto pilot.

However, Mr. Speaker, Prime Minister Simpson Miller is in total disagreement with that view, hence, for the first time, there is a Ministry that deals with Climate Change and a Minister of State with specific oversight responsibility for Disaster Risk Reduction and Rural Development. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I will speak to these two very important issues within the constraint of time, because I have another critical issue to deal with within the same constraint; that has to do with my special assignment to the Ministry of Health, as it pertains to Primary Health Care Infrastructure Development. But, Mr. Speaker, I will speak to Disaster Risk Reduction.

Mr. Speaker, successive governments have had to confront the challenges of storms and flood rains that severely impact our economy and progressive sustainable development plans. Between 2002 and 2010 the island suffered damage from weather events to the tune of some Eighty-five point Five Billion Jamaica Dollars (JS85.5B), and losses amounting to about 2.7 per cent GDP *per annum*.

Mr. Speaker, in the recent past, we experienced Hurricane Sandy, where an average of Ten Billion ($10B) was estimated in damage. And the truth be told, there are manmade causes that aggravate the negative effects of some of these "act of God" occurrences. There are some who purposefully block waterways, throw garbage in gullies, and we could go on and on, Mr. Speaker. We have to educate our constituents so that they desist from these negative and destructive practices.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't use this opportunity to mention my experience at the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing. Mr. Speaker, I salute the Minister, Minister Omar Davies and his Permanent Secretary and staff of the Works portfolio at the NWA.

Mr. Speaker, of fundamental importance to my sojourn at the Ministry, short as it may have been, is not my intervention which resulted in the increase in the Special Routine Maintenance allocation for Works given to all constituencies during the November/December period, but my experience because of the heavy rainfall which impacted road infrastructure at that time. (Applause) That, Mr. Speaker, has led to a greater understanding of the broad impact of manmade and 'act of God' disasters on our infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is, if you fail to plan you plan to fail. And as we all know, failure is not an option for this Administration. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, for more than a decade several committees from various Ministries and Agencies/Departments have been looking at disaster risk reduction and mitigating these challenges. They have done tremendous and commendable work, but independently. However, Mr. Speaker, for the first time at last, a committee comprising all these Ministries, Agencies and Departments has been established. Mr. Speaker, I have established this committee so as to accelerate in a coordinated way the framing of the comprehensive Disaster Risk Reduction Management process.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is susceptible to a number of natural hazards that threaten lives, property and the natural environment, and ultimately the economy. The threats posed by these hazards worsen as a result of the development and the redevelopment, in some case, in impact zones. Mr. Speaker, as the impact of disaster, both realized and projected becomes greater, how to protect the public's interest must come more into focus. One recommendation is to establish "no-build zones."

Mr. Speaker, the legislation being carried by the Ministry of Local Government - which is the Disaster Risk Management Bill - will soon be tabled in the House, as the Disaster Risk Reduction Committee continues to work hard on the process of developing a regulation for no-build zones. This regulation is a subsidiary to the soon to be Disaster Risk Management Act, and, Mr. Speaker, we are moving with alacrity and decisiveness in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, I was the guest speaker at the ceremony for the first graduating batch of the Jamaica National Emergency Response GIS team. The assembly of this team is so that we can leverage the use of geospatial data for disaster impact assessment and emergency management in the country and regionally. This is an indication that we are further strengthening our resilience by utilizing a comprehensive disaster risk management mechanism in keeping with sustainable development through a joined-up government approach.

(Applause/*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, I will speak now to Rural Development. Mr. Speaker, we can recall the Prime Minister's commitment to the establishment of a Task Force on Rural Development. The Committee chaired by Mr. Karl Salmon - and, Mr. Speaker, please allow me to recognize the presence of the Chairman of the Rural Development Task Force, Mr. Karl Salmon, who is also in the Gallery. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this Committee has the mandate to be that strategic bridge between communities, Ministries and Agencies, as we talk with rural elected representatives, our partners acting as vanguards for sustainable rural development impact programmes.

Mr. Speaker, of importance is that this Task Force will not overlap the functions of a JSIF or CHASE Fund. As a matter of fact, the

Rural Development Task Force will develop the policy concept for holistic sustainable rural development strategy to transform rural areas into vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities and promote social cohesion. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Planning Institute of Jamaica, in collaboration with the Social Development Commission, will be required to prepare an updated poverty map, and this map will inform the selection of pilot communities in which targeted and coordinated interventions will be made to effect the transformation process.

Mr. Speaker, there is great potential to truly build out rural Jamaica. For example, in the hills of South Trelawny exists a registered group, the Stettin Farmers. They have an idea to establish a yam processing plant, but have no lands for such an important project critical to the livelihood of the citizens of that constituency. Mr. Speaker, situations of this sort I bet are not unique to them. The same would apply to farmers who are desirous of developing lands for agricultural purposes wherever they exist, but do not own the lands. Mr. Speaker, the Rural Development Task Force will over time address developmental challenges of such sort.

Mr. Speaker, there is no need to reinvent the wheel, but there is a need to tweak it in a rural direction, and that shall be the core function of the Task Force as we seek to unlock the full potential of rural Jamaica. This will help to alleviate the brain drain and over-populated urban age centers impacting sustainable development.

Mr. Speaker, I will move now to my assignment at the Ministry of Health. Mr. Speaker, I was only too happy to accept the challenge when presented to me by the Most Honourable Prime Minister that I assist in the Ministry of Health. I am humbled by the confidence shown in me by my colleague Minister and Member from St. Thomas Eastern, Dr. Fenton Ferguson, who made this request. Mr. Speaker, often there is a nexus between health care and development, and of importance is the need to ensure that the public health system serve the needs of all Jamaicans. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health spoke to the many investments that we have been making in the health sector to improve service delivery and to pursue client-centered approach. Mr. Speaker, this also includes a commitment to providing equal access to health services to all vulnerable groups, including the 400,000 members of the disabled community. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, during the last financial year Nine Million ($9M) was spent through the NHF in partnership with the UWI Centre for Disability Studies for the training of health workers in customer service, specific to persons with disability, research as well as public education and sensitization. Over 200 health workers have already been trained and the UWI-CDS is undertaking pioneering research in the areas of diabetes, hypertension and disability in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, in this financial year, UWI-CDS will focus its research in the southern section of the island, which has the highest

prevalence of disabled persons. Through this research, which seeks to establish the causes of this phenomenon, the Government will be better able to put in place evidence-based interventions. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to announce that come September, 100 individuals will be trained in sign language to provide assistance to hearing-impaired clients we serve. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: We will also continue to train additional health workers in customer service specific to the disabled community. Mr. Speaker, equal access to quality health services will be the foundation upon which we will build the first-class health service that Jamaica is poised to provide. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, of significant importance is the drive to develop our primary health care facilities across Jamaica through our Infrastructure Renewal Programme.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica has come a far way, in terms of the development of its primary health care infrastructure. Primary health care was introduced to Jamaica before the *Alma Ata Declaration of 1978*, which promoted primary health care as the key to all peoples of the world, attaining a level of health that would result in a socially and economically productive life.

Mr. Speaker, that vision started with this Administration and today we continue to build on that foundation.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time be extended sufficient for him to finish his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time for speaking be sufficiently extended so that he may complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Buchanan.

(Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you my colleagues and the two on that side.

(Laughter/Inaudible comments)

Mr. WARMINGTON: It's three.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Oh three, oh my God; sorry, Mr. Speaker, he's sitting in the independent seat.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, we already have a solid foundation boosted by our team of talented, dedicated and committed staff. I will describe them in one word, Mr. Speaker - Patriotic. We are now seeking to build on that solid foundation by ensuring that we upgrade our infrastructure and environment for service delivery and provide a more comfortable working environment for our health workers.

Mr. Speaker, the health Minister already spoke to some of our accomplishments in primary healthcare. He delivered on the promise to put in place four Primary Care Centres of Excellence. He also spoke to an

overall programme of primary healthcare renewal.

Mr. Speaker, the development of the network of health centres is a part of this thrust he spoke of. Mr. Speaker, since I began work at the Health Ministry in January 2014, I have visited 36 health centres in various constituencies across the political divide. I want to make it clear, Mr. Speaker, that sickness is not partisan and neither is our approach. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I have before me, a proposal to transform the Alexandria community hospital back to its former glory. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, health is not something to get controversial about and healthcare, but I heard the Member from West Central St. Catherine spoke to the period of the 80s, and that was the dimming era of the Alexandria community hospital.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Yuh don't know what you're talking about.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: However, Mr. Speaker, Alexandria is a historic structure in that St. Ann community, and provides primary healthcare and maternity services to its 32,000 residents and others from surrounding areas. Mr. Speaker, we are presently in discussions about the possibility of a Public/Private Partnership to develop the infrastructure and expand services at this facility. (Applause)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: True, true!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, it is a known fact that the Government cannot, at this time, provide all the financing necessary to develop our health systems and to provide the types of services that our people deserve. But, Mr. Speaker, of note, Public/Private partnerships are therefore a part of the strategy which we must employ to achieve our health goals. (Applause) Mr. Speaker, the development of our heath infrastructure requires input from all sectors. I therefore urge the private sector, non government organizations and all well thinking Jamaicans to partner with the Ministry in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, since 2012, nearly $620 Million has been spent in addition to what was expended in the previous years to advance the primary health care infrastructure renewal programme. This year, we will continue the development of primary health care in partnership with JSIF, CHASE and the Sugar Transformation Programme, by making strategic investments in several communities.

Miss DALEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker…

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Is a discussion we're having right now yuh nuh.

A MEMBER: Finish the thing nuh man.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, in St. James we will spend $30 Million for Cambridge health centre and we're seriously looking at infrastructural work at Adelphi and Green Pond centres. And, Mr. Speaker, as it pertains to Adelphi, the Jamaica Social Investment Fund has indicated that they are in a position soon to deal with Adelphi in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, in St. Ann we're spending over $40 Million to build a brand new health centre in Exchange with significant support

from CHASE Fund. (Applause) In Runaway Bay, Mr. Speaker, we are acutely aware of the fact that the population has outgrown the present facility. As such, Mr. Speaker, I will say to the clients of the Runaway Bay Health Centre that we're presently dealing with alleviating the inconveniences that confront you in this regard. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, nearly $40 Million has been spent on the expansion of the Portland Health Department through financing from the NHF and the World Bank. (Applause)

- Twelve Million is being spent to refurbish and equip the Williamsfield Health Centre in Westmoreland Central. (Applause)
- Over $8 Million is being spent on the Ulster Spring Health Centre in Trelawny South Trelawny. (Applause)
- Forty-one Million was spent on James Hill Health Centre in Clarendon North. (Applause)
- Mr. Speaker, more than $29 Million was spent on Rocky Point in Clarendon, South East. (Applause)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Ruddy? Weh Ruddy?

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: And, Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Health and myself visited Rocky Point, we observed that the road infrastructure and the network around the Rocky Point Health Centre was in a deplorable condition, and we made representation to the NWA and had the road infrastructural network in and around the Rocky Point Health Centre repaired.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Yeah? So weh Ruddy?

(Cross talks)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker:

- We spent about $35 Million on infrastructure improvements and purchasing equipment for the Oakglades Health Centre in St. Andrew South West.
- And $5.9 Million to refurbish the Connors Health Centre in St. Catherine, West Central.

Mr. Speaker, we have put in place a refurbished and expanded Health Centre in Brainard, St. Mary South East at a cost of $13 Million. We have completed a brand new health centre in Golden Spring, West Rural St. Andrew in partnership with JSIF at a cost of close to JA$40 Million.

Mr. ROBINSON: Working, working.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, the Nannyville Health Centre...

Mr. ROBINSON: Yes!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: ...in St. Andrew South East, was started from the 1970s...

Mr. ROBINSON: But never been opened.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: ...but was never commissioned, Mr. Speaker, we will open Nannyville in August, after a near $52 Million for the first time at last! (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. DALLEY: Working! Working! Working!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, like Nannyville, there are some communities in which we are making investments to respond to the increase in population and growing demand. The expansion of the Greater

Portmore Health Centre in St. Catherine Southern is a part of this plan... (Applause) ...Mr. Speaker, Whitehouse in Westmoreland is one that must be looked at too in this regard.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, in partnership with CHASE we completed and opened the Tivoli Health Centre in West Kingston. (Applause)

- We re-opened Trinityville in St. Thomas Western.
- We will re-open the Llandeway Health Centre in St. Thomas Western in a few weeks. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: And, Mr. Speaker, we have completed work on several others:

- We refurbished Buff Bay
- We refurbished Cascade
- We refurbished St. Margaret's Bay
- We refurbished Islington
- We refurbished Enfield
- We refurbished Gayle
- We refurbished Robin's Bay
- We refurbished Annotto Bay
- We refurbished Blackstonedge
- We refurbished Moneague and we're working on a number of others, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

So soon we can go on, and on, and on.

(Laughter)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the CHASE Fund and JSIF for the work that they are doing in the area of primary health care infrastructure. JSIF has facilitated work on 23 health centres, providing funding in excess of $200 Million and CHASE has spent nearly $65 Million. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, the renewal of the Primary Health Care infrastructure, is a part of the strategic approach that we are taking to develop our primary health care system. This approach is also integral, Mr. Speaker, to our strategy to reduce the prevalence of non-communicable diseases which are responsible for the highest percentage of premature death and disability within our population. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, I call on my Fellow Parliamentarians to encourage constituents to increase their utilization of the health centres that serve their communities...

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: ...so that we can ease some of the pressure off the hospitals.

(Applause) (Cross talks)

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica is on a journey to have a world class health sector, and if we are to truly realize this, primary health care must be the foundation on which we continue to build our health system. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, parallel to our efforts in primary care, we continue to make investments in secondary care facilities. We have spent nearly $1.5 Billion since 2012 in infrastructure improvements and equipment acquisition for our hospitals.

(Applause)

- We are spending over $325 Million at the St. Ann's Bay Regional Hospital in St. Ann North East. (Applause)

- We spent close to $155 Million at Mandeville Regional Hospital in Central Manchester. (Applause)
- We spent close to $108 Million at Cornwall Regional in St. James, West Central. (Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: The Minister needs to correct that, it's not West Central, it is St. James Central.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Okay, Mr. Speaker, St. James Central. No problem, Mr. Speaker.

- We spent over $90 Million at Annotto Bay Hospital in St. Mary South East.
- We spent $41 Million at Port Maria Hospital in St. Mary Central.
- We spent $85 Million at Princess Margaret's Hospital in St. Thomas, Eastern. (Applause)
- We spent more than $65 Million at May Pen Hospital in Clarendon, Central. (Applause)
- We spent $35 Million at the Noel Holmes Hospital in Hanover, Western.
  (Applause)
- We spent close to $51 Million at Linstead Hospital in St. Catherine, North West, the constituency of the Acting Prime Minister. (Applause)

And the list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, this Administration is on a steady path towards development with the health sector playing a major role. Mr. Speaker we are acutely aware from all indicators that it is not an easy task, but we are committed to the task, Mr. Speaker. At the executive level we have the full support of the formal workforce as we create employment by way of administrative and infrastructural expansions. For example, Mr. Speaker, through projects in the health sector we have created employment for numerous persons and we will continue in this vein, Mr. Speaker, making Jamaica the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business. (Applause) We are on the right path towards national development and towards national development and universal health coverage, Mr. Speaker. I am confident that we will achieve our goals.

Mr. Speaker, Hamilton Holt once said:

"Nothing worthwhile comes easily. Half efforts does not produce half results. It produces no results. Work, continuous work and hard work, is the only way to accomplish results that last."

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Government MEMBER: Working, working, working.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Pryce.

(Applause)

Mr. PRYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, as I rise to make my contribution to this year's Sectoral Debate allow me this simple convocation: May all that I think, all that I say and all that I do, indeed, *ad Majorem Dei Gloriam:* To the greater glory of God. (Applause) And as I continue to thank God for his many blessings for life, health, good friends and a strong loving family allow me to salute my parents

and to dedicate this presentation to them as to my constituents equally. If I am half as good in raising my own children as they have been in raising me then my children shall have an exceptional beginning.

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker, the tone of my presentation today will be one of thanksgiving. I give thanks for the support I have received from the members of my constituency. I thank them equally for their criticisms and for the high standards they have set for me. I note their enthusiasm, their anxiety and their gratitude all of which they freely and often express in direct colourful and indirect ways filled with passion, compassion, emotion and energy they display truly Jamaican qualities and I continue to try with all my might and with God's guidance to meet their expectations which are in keeping with the tenets of honesty, sobriety, integrity, decency and legality.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, allow me also to thank you as well the senior Speaker, the Clerk and staff of the Houses of Parliament, and allow to specially recognize our colleague who among the community of persons with disabilities is often describe as the 64th Member of Parliament. Of course, Mr. Speaker, I speak of Miss Antoinette Aiken from the Jamaican Sign Language Association (Applause) who opens the proceedings of this House to the Members [or] the persons with disabilities so that, indeed, they understand that this House and what we do here is also in their best interest.

Mr. Speaker, over the years since my last report, we have had many achievements in St. Elizabeth which are worthy of public reporting. However, for the best use of the time allotted to me today I will highlight only a few symbol achievements which continue to confirm as I stated last year that we are seeking to achieve in our constituency that model of rural development outlined by the Most Honourable Prime Minister in her presentations on the subject in this House and elsewhere. It is a model that emphasizes human capital development, the delivery of better social services, including health, education and social security as well as infrastructural development all integrated in such a way as to deliver improvements in the quality of life and living standards for the constituents within the limited resources available to government for public spending.

While as Member of Parliament from the Government benches and while I understand clearly the fiscal realities within which we govern, I will continue to be assertive and unending in my representation and advocacy that the goodly citizens and taxpayers of North Eastern St. Elizabeth get our fair share of the national treasury to which, through our patriotism and compliance, we so givingly contributed.

Miss DALEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker, I start this year's report with our achievements in education. I note with humble pride that we have achieved noticeable improvements in the performance of our students at the GSAT and CSEC examinations. A result which equally

confirms the dedication of our teaching professionals within the constituency as it does the investment of good parents into the lives and the education of their hard-working and diligent students.

Mr. Speaker to support this objective, as Members on both sides of this House do daily, allocations from the Constituency Development Fund are made for tuition assistance, educational materials and supplies, building repairs and upgrade at all levels of the educational ladder. Frankly, the resources fail to match the demand and the demand is only outstripped by the genuine needs, but we do what we can with the little we have to spend on the right priorities that will yield the best results. Where the CDF allocations end, the representation to various agencies such as the CHASE Fund, JSIF, PATH, the Sugar Transformation Unit and the National Health Fund begin. Let me, therefore, place on record that we have received tremendous support from all five agencies mentioned to support our educational efforts in the constituency. This has been reflected with the improvements physical and otherwise at Thornton Primary, Roses Valley Primary, Balaclava Primary, Leeds, Bogue and Burnt Savannah Primary Schools as well as at Braes River Primary and Aberdeen Primary.

Mr. Speaker, I will now highlight the activities at Aberdeen Primary, especially as they bring into sharp focus the integrated approach to education that we are pursuing in the constituency. Arising from his visit with us in January by the Minister of Education and with the affirmative response of JSIF to our advocacy tomorrow during the graduation ceremony at Aberdeen Primary, Mrs. Scarlett Gillings, Managing Director of JSIF will sign a community partnership agreement that sets out the commitments in financial, technical and human resources from JSIF and the community for our community improvement project that will see a total overall of the physical plant, the playfield, the school farm and the onsite water harvesting and distribution system.

I'm further permitted, Mr. Speaker, by the Minister of Education to indicate to this House that Aberdeen Primary is soon to be converted in to a high School. (Applause) This along with the St. Elizabeth Technical High School and the Sydney Pagan High School and the Balaclava High School brings to four the number of high schools in the constituency. It will also allow more of our students to not only grow where they are planted, but to be planted for growth closer to the watchful communities in which they are from. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Education Minister, *in absentia*, parents from the Northern parts of St. Elizabeth and the adjoining communities from Aberdeen in the constituency are already expressing their thanks for your partnership with us which will see less money being demanded from them to pay extremely high transportation costs for their young children to pursue education many, many miles away. For as it's only too

well known despite contributing to the Government's tax coffers we in North East St. Elizabeth are denied subsidies for public transportation for our students. It's an awkward irony, indeed, for in some countries, it's against the law for taxation without representation. In this case, we submit gladly to taxation, but our representation for equality of opportunity under the stated national policy for subsidized public transportation for students is denied us. We see this as a major hurdle to climb and, therefore, express our singular appreciation to the Minister and his Cabinet colleagues for the support in the upgrade of the institution to a secondary school in lieu of the subsidized transportation to which we're still entitled. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we prefer the approach of the upgrade than the approach of the subsidy.

Mr. Speaker, I focus briefly on developments at the Sydney Pagan High School. I borrow from an excellent presentation by His Excellency the Governor-General when on the occasion of his recent visit with us in the constituency on June 12, stated, and I quote:

> *"This is my first visit to the Sydney Pagan high School and it is my last, because I'm advised that come September makes history, it will become the first STEM academy in Jamaica and will then be known as the Sydney Pagan STEM Academy*." (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. PRYCE: His Excellency was indeed, correct. In fact, the original vision of former Member of Parliament for North Eastern St. Elizabeth, the late and legendary Sydney Ralph Pagan, is becoming even more real with the transformation at the institution which honours his contribution to national development by keeping his memory alive.

Miss DALEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. PRYCE: In partnership, Mr. Speaker, with the Governments and people of Columbia and Spain as well as with the continued support and interest of the University of the West Indies, this school has been selected to be a new model of education in Jamaica. Accepting that Jamaica's new economy is entirely dependent on greater levels of proficiency in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics these partners have come together to give new life to the Sydney Pagan High School under the guidance and stewardship of our Board Chairman, Mr. Ian Maxwell, my unending visits with Regional Director for the Ministry of Education, Dr. Nadine Leachman, the partners have already provided two greenhouses, a multi-purpose interpretive centre and the jewel of the crown, Mr. Speaker, a brand new cassava processing plant. (Applause) All have been achieved in under two and half years and all are to be seen manifest within the precincts of the school and will be available to students, so that they will learn in real time and through practical experiences the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics to improving profitability and prosperity through agriculture other modes of economic activity.

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with my theme of thanksgiving let me publicly acknowledge the

support of their Excellencies the Ambassadors of Spain and Columbia and their Governments for their kind contributions to this project (Applause) as well, Mr. Speaker, to the Ministers of Education and Agriculture who have supported in this project from the very beginning. Of course, the Minister of Agriculture of Fisheries himself a former Member of Parliament for North Eastern St. Elizabeth avails himself constantly to support our activities within the constituency. Again, I also thank his Excellency the Governor-General for his inspirational and supportive words when he reminded his audience that we are the only ones who build walls to confine ourselves and we are the only ones who can tear down such walls. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, at some time in our recent past, this House and the nation heard the Balaclava High School described in a most disparaging way.

When I became Member of Parliament, I decided to give special attention to this school; Minister Thwaites again was there with me supporting my efforts from the very beginning. He has since twice visited us at the school and will be recognized at tomorrow's graduation ceremony for his stellar partnership with our efforts there.

He has permitted me to state on his behalf the following as the tangible manifestation of his continued support and this administration's objective to achieve transformation in the lives of Jamaicans in rural Jamaica through better education.

This summer, Mr. Speaker, work will commence to build a new classroom block at the Balaclava High School, new bathrooms and multipurpose rooms will also be constructed. The Honourable Minister of Sports Natalie Neita-Headley has also confirmed in her contribution to these debates that a new playing field and supporting infrastructure will also be built at the Balaclava High School. Upon completion, all of these improvements at the school will ensure that it is taken off the shift system. (Applause) A development which will allow us to better able unleash the talent and the potential of our students there.

The Sports Minister, always a support of our efforts in the constituency will be pleased that one of our representatives at the upcoming games in Mexico and later this month at the Commonwealth Games, Young Donna Lee is from the Balaclava High School, she along with young Janelle at STETHS who will also be at both competitions have expressed to me their dreams of one day representing our homeland at the level of the Olympics, in fact, Mr. Speaker, Members they intend to compete in Brazil in 2016. With the improvements that are being achieved in the constituency, I make bold to say their dreams are now possibilities.

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to the St. Elizabeth Technical High School. STETHS is known as the pride of Santa Cruz and my colleagues from the parish in this House will allow me to go further to say that it is the pride of the parish. (Applause)

In fact, Mr. Speaker, STETHS holds a very special record in this House...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PRYCE: ...as it contributes rather significantly to the... (Applause) As you can tell, Mr. Speaker, the next point I make is true. STETHS contributes significantly to the current talent pool in this House as it is the Alma Mater of the most Members now serving... (Applause) ...on both sides and in both Houses.

The entire parish celebrated with us the victory of STETHS in the DaCosta Cup, their prowess in cricket is in a word legendary, and their dominance in western Jamaica in track and field can only be described as superb...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PRYCE: Their scholastic achievements are as exemplary, if not more so as their prowess in sports. At STETHS the way of life is to set new standards and boundaries and this year[1] they lead the way among educational institutions, leveraging the power of the sun to power their activities. Let me on their behalf express our sincere thanks to the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining who through the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica has included STETHS in a pilot project to solarize the campus.

(Applause)

It is also fitting to note that young Akeem Burton from STETHS was the national winner of a competition sponsored by the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change on renewable energy. I go further to state that the message of young Burton's poster will now be manifest in the changes at STETHS and at Sydney Pagan STEM academy and at Balaclava High with respect to the use of solar energy on-site water harvesting and better approaches to conservation to mitigate against the negative effects of climate change and for cost-cutting measures.

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the theme of thanksgiving, let me therefore publicly express our gratitude to the Minister of Sports, the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and the Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change. (Applause)

I now turn to our achievements in health. Yesterday when the Minister of Health gave his presentation, he confirmed that one of the four centers of excellence in primary health care services delivery that have already been open since Prime Minister Simpson Miller returned to that office is in Santa Cruz. He also permits me to state that the works done there, have all been completed within budget and within schedule. He permitted me further to say that the work for Phase 2 is proceeding at pace, ahead of schedule and within budget. And further to say that the dental clinic there is the best in central and western Jamaica. (Applause) And that is a fact.

The constituents have permitted me to say to you, Minister, the Member from Eastern, St. Thomas that we thank you for being there with us all along, we thank you for your visits and for your ongoing partnerships. And we thank equally your Minister of State, the Member from Eastern Westmoreland who has also visited and tour the facility and was so impressed that he has taken a public oath to achieve the same at the health centre in his own constituency.

(Applause)

I say thanks to both of you and we look forward to your commitments for similar improvements at the clinic in Balaclava and in Siloah.

Mr. Speaker, I look now to Human Capital Development. Through the CDF, PATH, the Ministry of Youth and Culture and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security we have been able to focus significantly on human capital development for our out of school youths, young adults and adults. The Sugar Transformation Unit has come on board in this regard as has the 4-H Club, the National Youth Service and the Jamaica Agricultural Society. Recently, we got a boost as well through the Youth Upliftment through Employment Programme (YUTE) combined all sources have allowed us to make significant improvements in the outlook and fortunes of budding professionals and entrepreneurs. The most obvious of these stimuli came from the Ministry of Labour through an allocation that was used for business startups and I am pleased to state that most of the recipients were women. (Applause) They have used the allocations as intended and are being closely monitored through our partnership with the Social Development Commission.

Again, in keeping with the theme of thanksgiving, I must publicly thank the Minister of Youth and Culture, me Minister of Local Government and Community Development and the Minister of Labour and Social Security for their support and their partnership.

Let me state further that we are busily going across the constituency ending the concepts of unattached youth and replacing it with the concept of Youth for Progress.

(Applause)

The most recent of these occasions was this past Sunday, sorry this past Saturday, June 28 youngsters from Bagdale Mountain, Thornton, Siloah and Aberdeen gathered in the Aberdeen Square in the Siloah division to which I have been called for a meeting. There is a post on my Facebook page which details the seriousness of their energies and enthusiasm to be a part of their own solution and to avoid the adversarial approach to representation to which some have become experts. They made a few declarations among them was that they wanted to enlist in the Youth for Progress Programme. The Minister of Health will be happy to note that they declared to eschewed smoking and alcoholism for education. They identified an abandoned underused building in the square and asked for it to be converted to a Youth and Health Information Centre. Minister, they would be happy to post on the walls of that centre your posters to promote healthier living to reduce non-communicable diseases or NCDs.

The Minister of Youth would be happy to note that they are willing to become attached to her national youth policies and programmes from their center. The Ministry of Sports would be happy to note that there is a ‘commons’ which can be leased for a sports ground and a cricket pitch to be built.

The Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining will be happier to note

that they want each of you and all four of you to help to cut the ribbon to establish yet another community access programme - community access point and to use the computers that will be furnished through the Universal Services Fund, of course, with the help of all four Ministers just named and thanked in advance. In North East St. Elizabeth, we are paying it forward and we are thanking a head of time for the support that we are seeing by the nods of approvals will be coming from the Ministers.

Mr. Speaker, there is a special programme I would like to share a few movements to discussed; it is called '*Beat Drums not Women*'. Under the Human Capital Development Initiative, Minister Sandrea Falconer has permitted me to confirm her support and that of the Prime Minister for an initiative soon to be launched in the constituency to stem the high incidence of spousal abuse and violence against our women. The initiatives to be entitled '*Beat Drums not Women'* will see us in partnership with the relevant governmental and non-governmental agencies building resilience in our young women and our young men to achieve and promote more positive relationships, to emphasize, correct values and appropriate attitudes and to avoid or reduce disputes and of course, hopefully to end all conflicts.

We intend through sports, music, drums, skills training and spiritual development to create positive spaces for interactions which will be drug free, smoke free, alcohol free and violence free. We intend to go back to the African tradition of elders in community's being able to set examples through positive vibrations and levity for our young people to follow. (Applause)

We have started already; Members of this grouping gave three days of voluntary service to prepare the grounds at Aberdeen Primary ahead of the start of the construction of the new facilities already highlighted. They will submit to the training in the youth programme and the STU programme to which fifty youngsters have already been selected, they will participate in the construction works at Aberdeen, Balaclava and the new National Housing Trust Project announced by the Prime Minister during her budget debate which will be located in Balaclava.

In keeping with the spirit of thanksgiving, let me therefore say thanks again to the most Honorable Prime Minister as this project has her DNA, her fingerprint, her thumbprint and her image and is done in her tribute and with her blessing, blessing and patronage. And I am pleased to be the vessel she has chosen to bring this initiative into being.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot, simple cannot, as a nation, continue to promote or accept violence against our women and young girls in any way shape or form. (Applause) It is reprehensible, it is barbaric, it is unbecoming of Jamaicans and we need to stop spewing this kind of hatred and malevolence and replace it with honour, respect and positive vibrations to all.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, and while I don't intend to be controversial, I hear that CAUSE Jamaica, a recently launched initiative wants

to have rallies across Jamaica in every parish. Well, I am willing to host CAUSE Jamaica in North Eastern St Elizabeth. I intend to invite them and do so now to the launch of the '*Beat Drums not Women'* initiative because I want the churches to unite, to emancipate Jamaica from violence against our women.

(Applause)

I publicly issue invitations to the Members from North East St Ann, Central Clarendon and all other women in both Houses of Parliament to joint Minister Falconer and the Prime Minister to mark that line in the sand, to lead the emancipation of Jamaica from violence against women and children and to start that process in North Eastern St. Elizabeth that is a cause for CAUSE Jamaica that receives my full support.

Mr. Speaker, a related initiative is Sisters United for Change. The scourge of violence is a problem that threatens to undermine our every effort to advance national development. We have not escaped it in North East St. Elizabeth, therefore, earlier this year, when the Minister of National Security launched the Unite for Change Programme; a contingent of young people from across the constituency attended the launch. They participated in the Workshops and have designed a local project for which we are now actively seeking financial and technical support.

Over the last two years, there have been five murders in the constituency. In each case, it is a mother or a sister, or a daughter or a grandmother who is left to pick up the pieces and reconstruct whatever can be reconstructed in terms of a happy family space. We have approached the Minister of National Security and he has referred us to the relevant Officers in his Ministry, to bring this project into reality. One female from each of the five families has been selected as a 'Sister for Change'. They will receive training and support from the Disputes Resolution Foundation and will travel across the constituency to schools, churches and community gatherings to promote "dispute resolution" and "conflict avoidance" among young people. They see it as a meaningful way to heal and to help others prevent and escape the experiences that they have had. It is an organic response at the community level to a national crisis and we mean to support them fully for its success. (Applause)

Through you, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I express my thanks to the Minister of National Security for his immediate endorsement to the initiative when it was presented to him. Details of the financial support, which he's still to provide are still however being determined.

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to **Physical Infrastructure Development:**

The Honourable Minister of Transport, Works and Housing. His colleague, the Minister without portfolio and especially his Minister of State, the Member from North West Clarendon are to be thanked for their tremendous mentorship and support for securing the improvements we have achieved in infrastructure development across literally, every *nook and cranny,* main street and minor street, drain and gully, retaining wall and bridge so far addressed within the

constituency, so far addressed. They are patently aware of the list of such pieces of infrastructure which are still left to be addressed.

Here too, I publicly thank the Minister of State in the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Ian Hayles, who has walked and toured sections of the constituency and in whose contribution earlier to these debates, confirmed that the projects we have advocated for are now to come on stream.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time be extended sufficient to allow him to complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Pryce. (Applause)

Mr. PRYCE: Thank you, sir.

To the Senior Minister in the segment Ministry, the Member from North West St. Catherine, whose advice is always available, whose time is always available and who backs up both his advice and his time with actual projects on the ground, a grateful constituency says, thank you for the improvements being achieved to our water supply.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: You hear!

Mr. PRYCE: We look forward to the start of the Improvement Projects through Santa Cruz, as well as the Pump and Tank Projects across the constituency.

Mr. SHAW: I want to tell you thank you too, you hear, Bobby!

(Laughter)

Mr. PRYCE: (Laughter) These projects document the meaning you have provided to the expression that 'Water is Life'. We are living a little better for your efforts, Minister. (Applause)

In this segment of physical infrastructure, I must also thank the Minister of Tourism and Entertainment, whose visit to the constituency in February of this year, allowed him to see firsthand the dynamic opportunities for Community Tourism which exist in our constituency. While there has so far been a disconnect between the commitments received and the response from the team at the TPDCo. I am advised by the Minister that those hurdles are soon to be torn down and that we can look forward to receiving him and his delegation again at the opening of the Braze River Rest Stop in the constituency.

Mr. Speaker…

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. PRYCE: And I believe in him. I believe in him. I don't know what your experience has been but he's a man to his word.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker, I now turn to **National Development:**

The Member from Central St. Catherine in her contributions last week reminded us of the many roles we have as parliamentarians. She confirmed that we have a national role as MPs to bring our minds and talents to the process of national development. Since my last report

here, three of the Private Member's Motions I have advanced have been debated. Two have been passed and one has been referred to a Committee for further deliberation. All three have impact on our way of life at the national level. I deal briefly with each in turn.

Issues of sovereignty: While the House has approved the renaming of the Governor-General's presentation at the start of the legislative year, the Cabinet has varied its own response to the Resolution passed by this House.

The House Leader advised that the Cabinet's preference is to deal with our republican status first to include arrangements regarding our final Appellate Court. The attendant Bills, however, have not yet been tabled. We are about to rise for our summer recess, yet these matters remain off the Order Paper, at least so far.

I note positively that the Member from Western St. Mary is now also agitating for us to settle these outstanding issues with respect to our sovereignty. House Leader, I expect and anticipate an appropriate response to these matters when you close the Sectoral Debate next week.

The issue of the decriminalization of ganja:

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, what a difference a year makes.

A MEMBER: Yes!

Mr. PRYCE: Suffice it to say that the staunches opponent of the motion I tabled and which debate prevailed in favour of the motion, now wants the First Agro Park for ganja to be in his own constituency of North Western, St. Ann. Enough said, Mr. Speaker, we are getting the importance of this new and exciting sector for national development. (Applause)

While I will not, nor need not reopen those debates, I want to publicly thank the Most Honourable Prime Minister who, as Chairman of the Cabinet has given a most clear signal of Cabinet's response to the Resolution on the subject. The Justice Minister made public on June 12, that the Cabinet at the meeting of June 2, approved changes to a series of laws including ultimately the Dangerous Drugs Act.

Already, as he promised, one of the Bills to secure the relevant amendments was tabled in the Senate on Friday last. Mr. Speaker, a mother from my constituency upon hearing the plans to remove and expunge criminal records of persons found in simple possession of ganja asked me to thank the Prime Minister for giving her back her son. (Applause) I asked her to explain how it is that her son had gone missing. She explained that it was her son's dream, Mr. Speaker, to become a Security Guard. A criminal record for possession locks him out of that dream.

It is admittedly, a humble dream. We in this House and others hearing me may scuff at that dream, but after all, it is his dream nonetheless. (Applause)

She went on to say, that with his record being expunged, when it is expunged, he will be able to recover and pursue his dream of becoming a security Guard.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker isn't that our basic purpose as legislators, to advance legislation that allows the people of Jamaica to fulfill their dreams, their ideals and achieve their full potential. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You hear that, Pearnel!

Mr. PRYCE: I think it is our basic purpose. Therefore, on behalf of my constituents and the many thousands of families across Jamaica, I am pleased that my advocacy, on this subject, at the national level has impacted them in such a positive and direct way, but most of all, I thank the Cabinet, the Justice Minister and the Prime Minister for the bold decisions they have been taking in this regard. (Applause)

I look forward to those robust debates and commit to the people of my constituency and this country, that we will achieve in Jamaica a legitimate ganja sector as part of our new creative economy as we transition from the old extractive economy. (Applause)

Miss DALEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. PRYCE: A colleague recently brought to my attention, notes from the House of Assembly, from a Sitting - and this is a copy of the Minutes of that meeting, taken from the Institute of Jamaica - of a Sitting in the late 1870s where a petition by then Member, Nicholas C. Van Eker Hossen was presented to the House and read and approved. It set forth the importance of establishing in Jamaica from 1873 a nutraceuticals industry built around the Moringa plant. And the entrepreneur behind these brands is seated in the Gallery today. (Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: Mind dem lok you up, you know.

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker, more than a century…

Government MEMBER: Meringa, Meringa not morona.

(Laughter)

Mr. PRYCE: We should direct him to the assistance upstairs so... that... he... can... understand... what...she...is signing.

(Mr. Pryce signs and refers to the signing expert in **Hansard**) (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, one century and a half later...

Government MEMBER: 'im pas yu, Pearnel. (Laughter)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Charles)

Mr. PRYCE: One century and a half later, our entrepreneurs in the nutraceutical sector are still being stifled.

Like ganja, as is being pursued by companies of good repute such as medic-ganja, they are able with herbs, weeds and other shrubs to have immense medicinal and health benefits given on to Jamaican consumers. We are not properly harnessing the possibilities.

Upon our resumption therefore, after the summer recess, I will bring another Private Member's Motion and this time, it will detail a proposed solution to the deficiencies in providing technical and financial support to our entrepreneurs in the neutraceutical sector. I will when I table that motion, give homage to then Member Nicholas C. Van Eker Hossen for his vision and hope that this Parliament will achieve on his behalf and on behalf of all of the entrepreneurs a vision and a policy that

can allow them to achieve their full economic and academic potential.

Mr. Speaker, the third resolution I brought to the House was one that ask for the registration of lobby groups and civil society organization. An attack on freedom of expression; an attack on freedom of association; an attack on democracy; an attack on Jamaicans for Justice. "Who does he think he is any way!" said one leader of that organization. "How dare he think he can speak to me? I registered my bank accounts. I have to open bank accounts. I have to state where I get my funding from. I give a report to my annual general meeting", and her pejoratives against me went on and on and on. And those were just some of the harsh remarks my critics flung at me for tabling a Private Member's Motion, calling for registration and conformity to public transparency of civil society groups and lobby groups. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, old time people would have say, "Story come to bump." With the experiences in this country over the last three weeks on the subject of agenda, transparency, level or age appropriateness of content and intent, *et cetera*, old time people wuda seh, cananapum (phonetic).

(Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, House Leader, I believe the country now better understands the hazard I was seeking to protect the society from.

(Applause by Government Members)

Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PRYCE: Perhaps upon our resumption from the summer recess appropriate instructions will be given to the committee to begin the deliberations on the motion I tabled to resolve the now obvious hazards the Resolution was seeking to prevent. Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I turn my attention to another vexing matter affecting many Jamaican consumers which has now taken my full attention.

Sometime ago, an earlier Parliament, our predecessors in this House decided by an act of Parliament to subsidize the insurance sector with respect to motor vehicle insurance. It was once known as the act policy. A product which no longer exists in the marketplace, by the way, and very few industries have received that kind of parliamentary subsidy through legislation, which through an act of Parliament forces consumers to purchase a product or a service. Yet it is now the case that the industry which receives this parliamentary largesse has taken a view that they may not, or in the case of some, will not provide motor vehicle insurance to parliamentarians. We are required to list all of our relatives, all of our dependents and all of our associates, and they are required to list us on their application forms for insurance coverage for anything from health, to life, to property, to motor vehicle insurance.

Today, at Emancipation Park no less a place than Emancipation Park, the Insurance Association of Jamaica is observing Insurance Week. Well, I have relatives and close associates in attendance at those activities and they will ask, as I am asking here, what gives the insurance companies the right to infringe on freedom of association. Do members of the teaching profession have the same experience?

Do members of the legal profession have the same experience? Do members of the journalist profession have the same experience? Do members of the Clergy have the same experience? Do Rotarians or Kiwanians have the same experience? Is the insurance sector saying that as a politician, or the relative of a politician, we are to be treated differently than any other consumer?

And on the issue of getting what you pay for. I am told of many complaints by consumers, that when an insured's vehicle hits into someone's private premises, that insurance company does not honour claims to restore said premises. I am told that when an insured's vehicle strikes a light post it is the JPS and therefore us as consumers who have to repair and replace it. I am told that when an insured's vehicle destroys a fire hydrant it is the Fire Brigade that has to repair it, yet, Mr. Speaker, my research confirms that in the countries that we love to love, that is not the case.

I am also told that taxi and bus operators are treated quite peculiarly by insurance companies when they seek to insure the source of their livelihood and the employment they provide for themselves and others. I am told of concerns of the cartelization of the motor vehicle insurance subsector. I am told that reviews of the Fair Trading Act, the Consumer Protection Act and the Charter of Rights confirm that the behaviour of a motor vehicle insurance company who will say to a relative of a Member of Parliament, that because you are the relative of a Member of Parliament we are denying you insurance.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. PRYCE: Well, I am being asked to bring the evidence, and, of course, I think people know that even if I speak a year before they get the point, I don't speak until I have done my research. I am told that when they are challenged they make bold to state that just by one phone call or one e-mail they can blacklist any consumer so that that consumer never gets insurance anywhere again in the island of Jamaica. I wonder if their powers express to Lime Cay or Navy Island, or Goat Island?

Mr. Speaker, I am inviting through the assistance of the media a response from the Insurance Association of Jamaica as to the fairness of trade with respect to taxi operators, bus drivers and politicians, and the members of our families and close associates and friends of parliamentarians.

(Cross talk by Opposition Member)

I will write you a letter, sir.

Let us say that, if succinct and sufficient responses come from the Insurance Association, including an explanation as to why a consumer willing to testify before a committee of this House, that when it was disclosed that he is related to not only a politician and a Member of Parliament but a PNP Member of Parliament, he was denied insurance.

A MEMBER: What!

Mr. PRYCE: If succinct and sufficient responses come, then I will be satisfied. If, however, inadequate responses were to come, or any response at all is not forthcoming, then upon the resumption of sittings, after the

summer recess, I will table a Private Member's motion to ask this House to review the ethicacy of the legislation which causes consumers to have to purchase motor vehicle insurance, which is a concept I support, but which also needs to review the constitutionality of the insurance company refusing any consumer insurance because of a relative's profession. Because, Mr. Speaker, if we allow such things to happen, what next do you refuse a consumer insurance for? Because he is associated or related to a Jew? The way professionals are refused jobs in Jamaica sometimes because of their address, the world has gone that way before, Mr. Speaker, and Jamaica must not go there now. Xenophobia of any sort must not be tolerated.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this is my conclusion. It is not by coincidence or buck-up that I have been able to state these achievements, earned on behalf of the constituency of North Eastern St. Elizabeth, or having contributed to developments across our society and our homeland. It is through the support from Members on both sides and from members of the society beyond this House. Indeed, it is also from the support of members of my constituency.

When I became the Member of Parliament, for North Eastern St. Elizabeth, it was clear that I had big shoes to fill. All the men who previously held the seat I now speak from are iconic for different reasons in Jamaica's political history and landscape. Each of them did the best they could with the cards they were dealt and in the times within which they served and operated as Member of Parliament.

It is publicly known that I became the candidate to represent the People's National Party literally on the eve of the 2011 General Elections. My immediate predecessor did not seek reelection to contest those elections. In the interregnum a former Senator had been selected and subsequently was withdrawn. My selection has been described in many ways. Portia *gi 'im* pension. Him a *di* back up. Is a buck up. A lottery. Band-Aid. I deem all of them as noted, and I place for the record, as well, an expression that I always heard while growing up. "We cannot Lord thy purpose see, but all is well that's done by Thee".

The facts are simple, Mr. Speaker. I am the Member of Parliament for North Eastern St. Elizabeth. My duration on this earth will be determined only by the Lord. It is His will that will be done, and it is to His will that I always submit. Then if I don't know how long I will be on earth, because tomorrow is a promise which we desire but only God delivers, and today is all we have to do what we can to deserve tomorrows, then, how am I going to determine how long I will remain the Member of Parliament? But I will say something else.

Of late, and you have supplied the proof I needed right on time. Of late there have been all sorts of innuendo regarding tenure and political longevity. Well who knows what tomorrow brings? Some have sought in the media and elsewhere to draw me out, to comment about ramblings and rumours and the like. Names are called to me by members

of the Press always seeking responses to statements they allegedly have been told by names they so freely call. Well, like Bob Marley, I am sick and tired of the *ism skisms.* I will not be drawn out nor will I be distracted. As I have said elsewhere, I continue to say for the record, I have no desire or intention to speak neither badly about my family, friends or my constituents, nor about Members of my Party. I maintain positive vibrations for all. However, I have noted as well, some public servants in some Government agencies who make the same innuendo when I would have called to follow-up on issues pertinent to my constituency's development, to their offices. Should we do it now? Or should we wait to see if you are still there? Well, that might be fine for you to say since you can flit and float from one side to the next, but it's not fine for public servants to say. Moreover, what has been achieved in two and a half years, since I have had the honour of being the Member Parliament has been achieved, as I said before, through partnerships, not on my own frolic or by my own machinations.

The other achievements throughout my tenure will also require partnerships, therefore I thank the Councillors, which include the Mayor of Black River, Everton Fisher, Councillor Donavan Pagan and Councilor Audie Myers, for their support and their partnership. I thank the support staff at my constituency office, Grace Dunkley, Marvin James, the Pastors and Ministers fraternal, the Principals Association and the community leaders as well as constituents themselves. I equally thank my detractors as much as I thank my supporters. Special thanks as well to the members of my security detail who have had on occasion to go beyond the call of duty, and by extension I thank their families. I also thank my able assistance, Dava Rowe and Jessica, and Mr. Speaker, when I said the theme of my presentation was one of thanksgiving, I believe you now know what I mean.

I close with this simple remark, Mr. Speaker. The rumours of my political death have been gravely exaggerated. With God's help and the support and love of my family, the continued confidence and support of my Prime Minister and Party President, and the support of my Party and constituents. You just watch and see what we will achieve in that constituency in my next term and the terms thereafter. (Applause by Government Members) Mr. Speaker, let us continue, all of us, to do all that we do "*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*" to the Greater Glory of God.

(Applause by Government Members)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the work of today coming to an end as it just did, I move for the adjournment of our Parliament until next Tuesday, the 8th of July at 2.00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Members in the Gallery, please sit.

The question is that this Honourable House now adjourns until next Tuesday, July 8, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at approximately 6:30 p.m. until next Tuesday, July 8, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

TUESDAY, July 8, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:28 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mrs. Dalrymple-Philibert.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 115**
  PetroCaribé Development Fund Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year ended March 31, 2013
- **Ministry Paper No. 116**
  Cabinet Agenda Issues dated 16, June, 2014
- **Nutrition Products Limited**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial

Statements for the Financial Year ended March 31, 2013

- The Judiciary (Salaries) Order, 2014 Under The Judiciary Act

BILLS BROUGHT FROM THE SENATE

The Clerk read the following message from the President of the Senate:

"To the Honourable House of Representatives:

I have the honour to advise the Honouarable House of Representatives that on the 4th of July, 2014 a Bill entitled: AN ACT to Amend the Criminal Records (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act was passed in the Senate with nine (9) amendments.

Signed: Floyd Morris

President of the Senate"

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, I signify my willingness to take charge of the Bill.

Bill entitled:

"Criminal Records (Rehabilitation of Offenders) (Amendment) Act, 2014"

read a first time.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of second reading of the Bill.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

The SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next sitting of the House I will move:

Whereas paragraph 1 subsection (1) of the First Schedule of the Electoral Commission (Interim) Act states: The Commission shall consist of nine (9) members which includes the Director of Elections; and

Whereas paragraph 1 subsection (c) makes the Director of Elections eligible to vote at the meetings of Commission; and

Whereas in its Report dated October 1, 2008 submitted to Parliament, the Electoral Commission appears to suggest that the Director of Elections should not be eligible to vote:

Be It Resolved that Parliament takes immediate action to amend paragraph 1 subsection (1) of the First Schedule of the Electoral Commission (Interim) Act so that the Director of Elections will no longer be eligible to vote.

(MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, entered and took his seat.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERES TO QUESTIONS

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, I just want to express my disappointment again that the questions that were supposed to have been answered by the Minister last week is again being put off until next week. I do hope that the next time that we sit again that we are not faced with another delay, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the question will be answered next week. I wish to recommit Item, Notices of Motions Given Orally.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal of Item, Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY
(Recommitted)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move to introduce and have read for the first time a Bill shortly entitled: The Municipalities (Validation and Amendment) Act, 2014.

The SPEAKER: We are back to questions and answers to questions.

Mr. WARMINGTON: In reference to what the Minister just said…

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith, you are on the floor.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Paulwell)

Mr. D. SMITH: Thank you very much. I am getting directive from the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at the expiration of 21 days...

The SPEAKER: No, we are not at questions yet.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Local Government talked about taking this Bill here today or laying this Bill.

The SPEAKER: He didn't say later today.

Mr. WARMINGTON: All right.

The SPEAKER: He gave notices of motions. You are moving too fast today. Now we are back to Questions. Notices of Motions

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, may I address you from a position other than my own?

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

> Be It Resolved that in accordance with Standing Orders 73 that the Judiciary (Salaries) Order 2014 under the Judiciary Act, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 8th day of July, 2014, be referred to the Regulations Committee of the House of Representatives for consideration and report.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today, I will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the motion.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days it is my intention to ask the Minister of National Security the following questions:

Question 1:

Will the Minister indicate whether our International Partners have made any requests regarding measures to be taken to deal with alleged breaches of Human Rights during the 2010 West Kingston incursion by the Security Forces or in relation to killings allegedly committed by the Police in the parish of Clarendon?

Question 2:

If the answer to the above is in the affirmative have those requests included the requirement for the removal of the Police Commissioner?

Question 3:

Will the Minister confirm that restrictions have been imposed by certain of our International Partners on the sale and use of military equipment and material to Jamaica until steps have been taken to remedy alleged Human Rights breaches? Do these steps include the removal of the incumbent Police Commissioner?

Question 4:

Will the Minister advise this Honourable House if the provisions of the Leahy Act have been invoked by the United States Government in relation to certain occurrences in Jamaica, including but not limited to alleged police killings?

Question 5:

Will the Minister state what steps are being taken by his Ministry and the Government to restore Jamaica's good standing under the terms of the Leahy Act of the United States of America?

The SPEAKER: Dr. Chang.

Dr. CHANG: Mr. Speaker, I wish to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days I intend to ask the Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change the following questions tabled in my name.

Question 1:

Will the Minister confirm that a desilting exercise will be conducted at the Hermitage Dam?

Question 2:

Can the Minister advise of the estimated cost of said desilting exercise?

Question 3:

Can the Minister advise as to where and how the silt removed from the dam will be stored?

Question 4:

Will the Minister advise as to the benefits to be derived from the desilting exercise in terms of the number of days of additional water capacity?

Question 5:

Is the Minister aware of the Bristol

University study which made some observations and expressed certain opinions on the desilting of the Hermitage Dam?

Question 6:

Can the Minister advise as to when the desilting exercise will commence and when it will be concluded?

Question 7:

Can the Minister confirm that denitrification of wells in the corporate area is an activity to be undertaken shortly?

Question 8:

Will the Minister advise of the technology to be used in undertaking said denitrification?

Question 9:

Can the Minister point to any jurisdiction in which the technology identified in the response to Question 8 has been used in the production of potable water?

Question 10:

(a) Has the Minister made any attempts to active wells in the Caymanas Plains?

(b) Will the Minister advise as to whether or not he has been briefed on hard rock drilling in the Blue Mountains that will generate potable water and therefore enhance the supply of water?

Mr. Speaker, I further beg to give notice that at the expiration of 21 days I will ask the Minister of Transportation, Works and Housing the following questions tabled in my name.

Question 1:

Will the Minister advise of the traffic projections for each leg of the toll road, including the Portmore leg?

Question 2:

Will the Minister advise as to what the actual traffic flow has been?

Question 3:

Can the Minister advise of the shortfall on each leg of the toll road to which a shortfall is applicable?

Question 4:

Can the Minister confirm whether the Portmore leg of the toll road is the only one meeting and exceeding its revenue targets and as such is subsidizing the others?

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will deal with the item, notice of which he gave earlier.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the matter is a simple one. The Judiciary Salaries (Order) 2014 under the Judicial Act having been signed, it is standard procedure to refer it to the Regulations Committee of the House for its consideration and report. This is a matter that has been outstanding for some time, Mr. Speaker. It is here with us now and I move that the Judiciary Order be referred to the Regulations Committee of the House for its consideration and report.

The SPEAKER: Is that the wish of the House?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we will be concluding the Sectoral Debate this afternoon hopefully before we get into evening. We have three presentations. Firstly, the Member from North Clarendon, Minister without portfolio in the Ministry of Finance will commence, followed by the Member from East Central St. James, the Opposition Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and then I will close the debates before 6:00, in that order, Mr. Speaker.

SECTORAL DEBATE

The SPEAKER: Minister Dalley. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Charles)

Mr. DALLEY: Well I want to face you because I want you to hear.

Mr. Speaker, Members of this Honourable House. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, for permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Mr. DALLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as we come to the last day of the Sectoral Debate, I am very much aware that elsewhere there is a major match taking place.

Mr. CHUCK: You only have 15 minutes.

Mr. DALLEY: And some people I am sure will be crying after this because the greatest team in the World Cup this year will be sending home the host. (Applause) I didn't know that the Leader of the Opposition is a Germany supporter but it is really the best team in World Cup. I really hope that good sense will prevail in Rio after they are defeated.

Mr. Speaker, the Sectoral Debate has been long and many members of the Press have expressed their feelings about the debate. In fact, one of them, a young man on Sunday said hooray the thing done. One more said the boring debate is finally over. And more than anyone else a very astute and bright member of the media, Mrs. Dionne Jackson-Miller said the boring Sectoral Debate has started. But let me say, Mr. Speaker, all of us in this House were elected by our respective constituents, were elected by the people to come here to make representation on their behalf, and when we come here we vote on Bills, we debate Bills, but this is the only time that Members have a chance to speak on the needs of their constituency and to speak about the developments in their constituency. (Applause)

And I want the Press to understand that this part of the work of the House is a very important part as far as we, the elected Members, are concerned. Our people expect us to speak on their behalf. So, boring, though they may be - and we have had a number of speeches, wide-ranging presentations, fifteen minutes talking about the partition in Barbican and why the police put it up there, to - I think one of the most amusing part of it was that it was a Member from that who said, Colorado needs weed, ship it there now! As part of the whole debate.

(DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas Eastern, Minister of Health, entered and took his seat.)

We have had some good presentations, though, we had some fun.

(Heckling)

My contribution to this Sectoral Debate today, will seek to inform this House of the significant gains that have been made in the public sector during the 2013/2014 fiscal year, as well as the remaining challenges going forward into 2015. My presentation will focus on the Government's efforts to meet its commitments to modernize the public sector, which itself is a fundamental plank of Jamaica's Economic Reform Programme.

This programme of reform on which the Government has embarked, Mr. Speaker, is concentrated on macro-economic stability through the elimination of the fiscal deficit, and consequential reduction of Jamaica's national debt, as well as the promotion and maintenance of fiscal discipline in Government, as solid foundations for achieving sustainable growth.

It should be well understood by now that successful implementation of public sector transformation, pension reform and the overhauling of the public procurement regime are essential to meeting the targets and goals of economic reform. Tremendous strides have been made. And as my colleague Minister, Dr. Phillips, disclosed in his opening Budget Presentation earlier this year, the Economic Reform Programme is on track.

The IMF Programme is in place and on sound footing. Jamaica has met all its obligations and passed all four quarterly Tests and met all benchmarks. (Applause) The latest IMF review which was done in May concluded that the country's overall performance on the Programme remains strong. The economic outlook is improving, crisis risk has retreated, growth has picked up, inflation has been brought under control and our reserves are starting to improve.

The Current Account deficit of the Balance of Payments declined to an estimated 9.6 per cent of GDP in 2013 - the last financial year - down from 12.9 per cent of GDP in 2012. The NIR started to recover and stands at the end of June at One point Three Seven Six Billion Dollars ($1.376B).

Jamaica has recorded three consecutive quarters of growth. In fact, the World Bank Economic Prospects in its latest Report revised upward the growth prospects for Jamaica, projecting growth at 1.1 per cent in 2014, 1.3 per cent in 2015, and 1.7 per cent in 2016.

According to the GDP, the World Bank Report, Jamaica saw the largest fiscal improvement in the region, going from a deficit of more than 4 per cent in 2012 to a surplus of 0.1 per cent of GDP in 2013. This is the best performance since 1995. (Applause)

Let me quote from this World Bank Report:

"Spending restraint, high tax revenue intake, a lower interest and amortization payments on restructured domestic debts, together with assistance from the

multilaterals, supported this remarkable fiscal improvement."

The debt to GDP ratio is trending down, and now stands at 139 per cent of debt to GDP, down from 147 last year. (Applause)

The public sector wage bill is trending down, and we are on target to reach the 9 per cent of wage to GDP by 2016.

But, very importantly, Mr. Speaker, Jamaica went to the International Capital Market last week Tuesday with tremendous success, securing Eight Hundred Million Dollars ($800M) support for our bonds at a rate of 7.62 per cent, the lowest ever since Jamaica started to borrow on the Capital Market. (Applause)

Mr. McKENZIE: A yu a de Minister of Finance!

Mr. DALLEY: Our performance and what we have raised will reduce - will help us to pay down coupons that were issued at a rate of 10.5 per cent some years ago.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. DALLEY: US, US.

The tremendous Capital Market response to Jamaica came one business day after the Managing Director of the IMF, Madam Christine Lagarde, visited Jamaica with us on the 27th and the 28th. It sent an expression of confidence in Jamaica's implementation of the IMF programme.

A Government MEMBR: Hear! Hear!

Mr. DALLEY: There are clear signs that confidence has returned to the Jamaica economic management performance.

(Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. DALLEY: I repeat. There are strong signs...

Mr. McKENZIE: Tek de wool from ova yu eyes!

(Cross talk)

Mr. DALLEY: There are strong signs worldwide, that confidence has returned to the Jamaica economic performance.

These achievements, Mr. Speaker, have come with tremendous sacrifice, tremendous sacrifice from the entire Jamaican population, including our workers, our pensioners, our bond holders and our consumers. Led by our Prime Minister, Portia Simpson Miller, this Administration possesses the will of steel to carry through the economic reforms and social reforms necessary in order to secure a better future for our people. To that we are committed and we will not resile. We will not squander the fruits of the people's sacrifice, but we will strive to stay the path of fiscal prudence. Simultaneously, we will spare no effort to place the highest priority and work toward the implementation of policies and strategies to boost investment in Jamaica and to secure more jobs for our people and expand more opportunities.

A most important part of these reforms which I speak of is human resource and development in the public sector. You cannot have a modern economy without the capacity to implement and manage change. That's what Public Sector Transformation and Modernization is about. Indeed, many writers, including people from civil society and

workers' representatives and the private sector, have said that the pace of Public Sector Reform is slow. The progress might be a bit slow but you have to be aware that the Jamaican public sector is extremely complex. The work to achieve Public Sector Modernization and an improved quality of service to the Jamaican people has proceeded apace.

To give a sense of the distribution of workers across the public sector, Mr. Speaker, I have included in my presentation, data - which you will receive shortly - on the size of the public sector labour force and where the people are located. The Education sub-sector accounts for 35.728 per cent of the - 32 per cent, 35,728 persons; the Health subsector, 15 per cent, 16,633; National Security, including the Correctional Services but excluding the JDF, accounts for 14,737, 13 per cent; other Ministries and departments and agencies, 14 per cent, and the public bodies 31,155 or 27 per cent. This is the public sector we talk about. And, in each Ministry - each department, there is a Public Sector Transformation Team that has been working to ensure that the objectives of the reform are met.

From this data it is clear that the Ministries of Education, Health and National Security account for over 60 per cent of the labour force. These are the areas primarily responsible for the delivery of your services, of security, education and health care.

Therefore, I wish to take this opportunity to assure the public that Public Sector Transformation remains a critical part of the broader economic reform process currently underway and across the entire Government.

Last year when I spoke I advised the House of the efforts to improve the Human Resource Management and Development systems and practices of the sector. Much work has progressed since then. We established the Strategic Human Resource Management Division, (SHRM), and we continue to build-out with its structures being implemented. The focus now is also on deciding which of the transactional activities will be divested to the ministries, departments and agencies, which will better be able to carry out these activities, thereby allowing the Division to concentrate on policy development necessary to guide the ministries, departments and agencies.

The SHRM will move on during this financial year, and the activities to be divested to ministries, departments and agencies, are, pension administration and leave management.

One of the functions of SHRM, which is the Strategic Human Resource Division, is the review and approval of organizational staffing structures. And, as ministries, departments and agencies seek to reposition themselves to better contribute to the Growth Agenda, the request for organization reviews are increasing. With the realignment of HR management functions, we are pleased - and although some ministries, departments and agencies are not always happy with our decisions, but we are pleased to report marked improvement in the response time from the Ministry to these departments. We will continue to be responsive as we recognize and

accept our role as facilitators to these entities, in helping them to deliver their mandates.

Mr. Speaker, I say this because somewhere in Government there has to be some control. And, what we have found is that various ministries, departments and agencies would like to develop any kind of structures they wish, and we have to give an account to the wage bill, and we have to guide on the suitability of the structures.

Last year I also informed the country about the Government's plan to leverage the most modern technology to aid in the transformation of the way human resource management strategies take place in the public sector.

Today I can report that the procurement process for the Human Capital Management System - big change - is in an advanced stage. Bids for the supply of the software have been received and reviewed. Prospective vendors have been receiving clarification where necessary. It is projected to award the contract by September of this year, and the start of implementation is scheduled, which is the - as I said - the Human Capital Management System, is an HR system that we need for the entire public sector. We hope that by January of this year (sic) that will be in place for the entire public sector.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we have to try to build the capacity of the public sector. The process of Human Resource Management Reform is not only about changing the system and procedures, as these cannot stand alone. The people, especially those who carry out the direct functions of Human Resource Management, must themselves benefit from reorientation, a change in attitude, and adjustment to how they do their work.

A key function of the service delivery in the public sector is customer service. And, I have mandated that everyone involved in customer interaction must undergo customer service training once again, once again... (Applause) ...as we proceed to do the reform in the national economy. As such, with the help of the IDB, this financial year we will be embarking on a series of interventions to enhance the capacity of our workers. And, MIND, the Management Institute for National Development, will significantly be responsible for this effort, using the recently development Public Sector Learning Framework as the platform for training and development.

Scholarship for children in the public sector, this is a new feature that was introduced, and I say to the public sector unions when you come to the table they really come, as you all know Members of - trade unions leaders who are here, they come prepared. This is one of the new items they introduced; that they would like scholarships started for public workers. Last year we put in $10 Million in it to start. It's a new feature of it and we intend to continue it, because it has served well our public sector workers. (Applause)

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. DALLEY: Access to student loan by public sector workers. The moratorium period for groups, such as, nurses and pharmacists, who are licensed to practice in their profession in Jamaica, after completing their course of

study, has been extended by the Students' Loan Bureau and discussions are continuing for it to happen with other groups. (Applause)

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. DALLEY: Increased rate of staff loans to public sector workers. The Government has implemented as agreed. I'm talking about the agreements that we have honoured, stayed with it; you signed it so stay with it. Don't sign it and walk away from it. Honour it - we signed that the public sector workers in Government - we should have a standard loan rate of 3 per cent on loans. We agreed. Minister of Finance, I agreed, the Unions agreed. We're implementing it within the public sector. We signed that will give the Jamaica Constabulary Force an ambulance, a fully equipped ambulance, for the convalescent home in St. Elizabeth, where Members of the JCF who were shot, injured in the line of duty are recuperating and they couldn't get one, the Minister of Health, my friend and my brother, in the last order that he made presented one to me to present to the police. It's down in St. Elizabeth now. We promised it and we have delivered on it. (Applause)

Mr. PARCHMENT: Good place.

Mr. DALLEY: Discount facilities for public sector workers. The introduction of discounted goods and services by the private sector was implemented first by Mega Mart - I spoke about it last year - they led the way, Fontana Pharmacy afterwards, Tools Hardware and Supplies, Digicel and several companies under the umbrella of the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica and the JCC. They have all come on board and have offered facilities for public sector workers in this period of wage restraint and economic challenges; because we never say the challenges are not tough. It is tough, but there are greener pastures coming for the people and the economy of this country.

I'll now speak something about the Industrial relations climate.

(Inaudible comment by Opposition Member)

Mr. DALLEY: Greener pastures means economic. That green there is army green. (Chuckles)

Mr. Speaker, this Government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller, takes special interest in the value of a stable industrial relations climate, so despite economic challenges, we know the important benefits to be gained from having industrial harmony in the public sector and in the country. Some might not - some might be of the view that industrial relations practices in Jamaica are archaic, but it's the same unions which preceded political parties that have wrestled benefits from the oligarchy in this country and there is no way that an administration led by Portia Simpson Miller and a ministry led by Peter Phillips and myself would ignore workers' rights.

Mr. WARMINGTON: But *yuh* hiding from them.

Mr. DALLEY: And would never hide from them either. So we praise industrial relations harmony. The work that I do and the Minister of Labour does each day to keep industrial harmony in the country there is an

economic value for that. No investor wants to come to a country when you reach the airport you hear that immigration officers on strike, airport workers on strike and people marching in the street every day, because they can't settle anything with government. While we were negotiating a wage agreement there was turmoil in Greece, turmoil in Spain, turmoil in Portugal. We thank the public sector workers, leaders, their unions, the maturity for having been at the table and have helped to keep industrial calm, because the outturn of that is more investment, more growth, more jobs. More members joining your unions and more dues paid into your union.

There has been significant occasion, due to deliberate strategy on the part of the Government, to maintain ongoing honest, frank and genuine dialogue with unions and associations representing the public sector workers. That is why industrial peace is at an unprecedented high level. As I speak, Mr. Speaker, 96 per cent of public sector groups, 96, have signed the 2012-2015 Heads of Agreement; 96 per cent. (Applause)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Hear, hear!

Mr. DALLEY: *Neva* forced them. *Neva* hold any big stick. *Neva* said take it or leave it. Through negotiations and the work of the team at the Ministry of Finance and Planning.

I'll now say a word on public sector pension reform. Mr. Speaker, last year I spoke about the need as one of the economic planks for the public sector, the economic reform, reform the delivery of service, reform pension, reform procurement, because that's a big one, procurement; spend a lot of money. Pension reform, we completed the work of the Joint Select Committee. The White Paper was tabled, Cabinet had its deliberations and we are on track. The public sector pension reform will be effected 2016 through agreement with the workers. We didn't just pick out a date and say we want to have it effected 2016. We and the workers sat down and agreed that that's the date for it to be implemented coming out of the work of the Joint Select Committee. Some features of it will be:

- the retention of the defined benefit scheme;
- introduction of the 5 per cent contribution of all employees, towards their pension;
- the gradual increase of the normal retirement age from 60 to 65 years;
- maintaining the special provision for members of the security forces;

I repeat, there is a special provision for members of the security forces for their pension. The new pension reform will include maintaining that position.

- on retirement, the worker will still continue to be given the option to receive a lump sum payment as presently obtains; and
- very importantly a survivor's benefit to the spouse and dependents of all public servants, including teachers will now be a feature of this programme;
- the vesting period will remain for ten years.

Government MEMBER: What!

Mr. DALLEY: And, Mr. Speaker, I'm hearing a little sound here, but I gather that Germany has gone two-love. (Laughter) From the Parliament of Jamaica, I appeal to the people of Brazil to take their defeat in good spirit; in good spirit (Applause)

The new pension law, Mr. Speaker, is presently being drafted and the Government along with its stakeholders are committed to achieving all targets and to 7 continue the dialogue as we strive to complete the implementation of the new public sector pension reform regime by April 2016.

(Cross talk)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Why won't you get on with the people's business?

Mr. DALLEY: The new pension reform regime will maintain the vesting period of ten years and more importantly dependents of the teachers...

(The Speaker gavels)

...teachers who now get a pension, but your dependent don't have one the new regime your dependent - survivor will now benefit from this reform. (Applause)

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. DALLEY: Increase to Government pensioners - I say a word - in an effort to alleviate the economic challenges of pensioners, the Minister of Finance and Planning announced $500 Million provided in this year's budget to offer increases to Government pensioners.

(Cross talk)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Members, Members.

Mr. Dalley.

Mr. DALLEY: Yes, yes. Mr. Speaker, $500 Million is provided in this year's budget to give increase to our Government pensioners. A total of 34,000 pensioners are on the pension roll, but only about 27,000 are eligible for this benefit as some have come on outside of the period of the regime. There is one vexed issue of pensioner's life certificate, and just this morning I heard it on the news that a state in the United States talking about pay hundreds of millions of dollars to dead people. In the pension system in Jamaica, Government pensioners, you have to produce a life certificate I think it's every quarter but this has posed tremendously challenges for a lot of people, a lot of pensioners who every three months have to find this place someone to sign it up, you know, Mr. Speaker, what this problem is. People come to you in your constituency. We have had discussions with the RGD, Registrar General's Department and the Accountant General's Department with a view to changing this format to six months, every six months. So they are going to sign an MOU between both of them to set up a platform so that when there is a death it is registered. It is easy to access so that the Accountant General is not paying the pension to persons who are already dead, but it will greatly relieve the pensioner, because you'll have to produce this only twice for the year instead of four times for the year. That, we expect, to be of tremendous relief to our pensioners.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to say a few words about public procurement reform, but before I touch that there is one vexed issue

that I have to say something about eighty- four contractors who were denied registration. For over four years, eighty-four contractors have languished, waiting to have their companies re-registered as the law dictates. These contractors were denied registration by the NCC on the grounds that the OCG was investigating them and had referred their files to the Fraud Squad. The Minister of Transport, Works and Housing and myself have had several consultations along with the respective teams with relevant agencies involved to find a solution for this problem and finally after two years, the matter is resolved.

On July 2 last year the NCC informed me that sixty-five of the eighty-four contractors have been written to and were asked to come in and submit their applications for re-registration. The Fraud Squad has indicated that they have no further interest or they have nothing against them. Fifteen contractors files are still with the Fraud Squad and the NCC has requested….

(Cross talk)

Now five, I gather…

(Cross talk/Laughter)

And the remaining four - fifteen contractors files are still with the Fraud Squad and the remaining four are still with the OCG. Mr. Speaker, no regulatory or certifying agency can operate in this manner if businesses are to develop and thrive. Our local contractors play a very important role in executing Government projects while providing jobs for our people. That is one of the reasons that has led this Administration to begin the review of the Contract Registration Process within the context of the new public procurement regime and at the same time we will be separating the NCC from the OCG.

Last year, in my presentation to Parliament, I indicated that there were several initiatives being implemented to improve the public procurement system of the Government. The public procurement regime is a highly prioritized area of the Government. It accounts for approximately 30 per cent of GDP. Therefore, improving the transparency, integrity and efficiency of the public procurement process is at the forefront of the reform that we are carrying through.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, how we compensate our workers in the private sector or the public sector, is a critical part of the decision-making process of any organization, and oftentimes it determines the quality of the output from our workers.

As part of the Human Resource Management reform, and recognizing that the Sector is in need of a more robust and effective Compensation Strategy, a Compensation Review was conducted by the Government of Jamaica. This was actually a structural benchmark under the IMF Agreement and was met in March 2014.

The GOJ and indeed the country, recognizes that our Public Sector employees are deserving of better remuneration, and this Administration intends to continue the effort to improve the fortunes of our workers, as the resources allow. And while I cannot today announce an increase in salaries and wages to Public Sector employees, I say to the workers of the Government of Jamaica once again, we

appreciate your sacrifice and are committed to working with you and your unions to find ways of easing the burden as we approach the end of the 2012/2013 wage agreement, which ends in March next year.

Mr. Speaker, if you recall, the negotiations for the 2012/2015 agreement contract period began on Boxing Day 2012, when a lot of our friends and colleagues were enjoying Christmas, myself and my team from the Ministry of Finance and Planning and the union representatives were trying to find a way to negotiate an agreement.

The unions along with us, agreed to a wage restraint. The unions along with us agreed for the economic reform programme to proceed. The unions through their - the workers through their unions agreed that we should, we could and we did extend the contract period from two years to three years.

It is our intention this year however, as the contract period comes to a close next March, to begin our negotiations earlier than Boxing Day. In fact, I do not intend to spend Boxing Day negotiating this year. The framework for those discussions is now being developed and as an Administration, we will continue to take the workers representatives in our confidence as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, as we prepare for the 2015/2017 round of negotiations, we have a number of sensitive issues that we must address. These include the question of sustainability of some of the allowances payable in the Health Sector; on-call, overtime sessions which have been the subject of recent disagreements between the health professionals and the management of some regional health authorities. But we will never, as an administration, we could not do that with a Prime Minister like Portia Simpson Miller, issue any decree. We will sit with our workers and we will sit with their union representatives and we will try to find an amicable way to resolve these issues.

Already, my colleague, the Minister of Health; my colleague the Minister of Education; my colleague the Minister of National Security, which are the three big entities absorbing the public sector workers, have started to talk to the unions and their representatives about changing the format of how we operate.

Related to the issue of extra hours compensation and the availability of funds to cover these expenses in our health facilities, is the matter of personal deductions not being remitted by the government agencies on behalf of workers. In 2009, one of the sensible things that the former Minister of Finance did - sorry he's not here to commend him - the Ministry of Finance took the decision...

Mr. SAMUDA: I can go ahead and pass it on.

Mr. DALLEY: Yes pass it please; I know you will, I know you will.

...but he took about three very good decisions I must say during his period. This was one of the good ones he took. He took a decision at the Ministry of Finance that the Ministry would withhold all statutory deductions from the Ministries, Departments and Agencies - the NIS, the Housing Trust, the Education Tax, the PAYE from the

Ministries, and that they would pay it through the Ministry of Finance to the Accountant General Department to pay to the various entities from the Consolidated Fund.

In the past it was left up to the Ministries, Departments and Agencies to take out these deductions and pay it out to various persons. The Ministry now remits directly to the relevant authorities - tax authorities, the payments on behalf of the workers, through the Accountant General's Department. Personal deductions to financial institutions however, credit unions, commercial banks, loan companies, insurance companies, *et cetera*, continue to be taken by several government entities, from workers salary and not remitted on time to these institutions. In some areas, this has become a crisis.

Although the Ministry of Finance, two weeks ago, found some money to alleviate the most urgent ones - to deal with the most urgent ones, this is not something that can remain like this.

The Government will engage the workers in discussion on how to facilitate...

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. DALLEY: I'll tell you afterwards.

We will engage the workers and their representatives of how this facility can become more efficient and mutually beneficial to all parties. These matters will be included in our upcoming talks for the next period.

At the same time I know - we at the Ministry of Finance know, that in Health, for example, one of the major concerns of the workers, the Minister personally and his Permanent Secretary and the team, they've had discussions with the Ministry of Finance and they're trying to control that matter.

I'm going to say a word about the revision of Staff Oders. All of this is part of making government easy, making government more efficient, more effective and making the public sector workers more efficient in delivering on the growth agenda, because that's the refocus mandate that they have been given.

The Staff Orders for the public sector is the widest applicable set of rules used in Human Resource Management in the public sector. The last revision was done in 2004 and in recognition of the need to make this set of rules more current, to today's environment, the Orders is being reviewed - the Staff Orders is being reviewed. A draft set of new regulations is now with our stakeholders for their further review, because it is intended that the new Staff Orders for the public sector will be implemented this financial year.

We believe in consultation, there's no other method of governance that we know except through consultation. Therefore, the Public Sector Monitoring Committee, we don't issue decrees and we don't say take it or leave it, we believe in consulting with our people. (Applause) So we've given it to them; we've said to them there's the need to review it; you are operating it and it will be implemented this year.

A significant provision under the new Orders will address, I repeat, a significant provision under the new Staff Orders will be to address the leave administration in the public sector, leave administration in the

public sector, I have a lot of friends who are in the teaching profession, some of them are here. In fact, I have three Counsillors; two are teachers and I belong to this noble profession too, but we have to find a way around the table, around the table, sit down to hammer out the best management of the leave in the educational sector and in the public sector.

Mr. CHARLES: Are you going to reduce their leave or increase it?

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. DALLEY: We're almost there. We're almost there. The new Staff Orders are already being reviewed.

Mr. CHARLES: Yuh gwine tek wey the little leave too?

Mr. DALLEY: No.

Mr. CHARLES: Yuh tek wey the salary agreement.

(Inaudible comments/Laughter)

Mr. DALLEY: Be sensible.

Agreements Implemented. I'm going to turn now, Mr. Speaker, Honourable House, to agreements that we've implemented since we have come to office. Let me remind this Honourable House that when we took over in 2012 January, there was no agreement with our public sector workers. I don't know for some reason administration was unable to negotiate an agreement with our workers; the 10/12 agreement, there was none. (Germany 1, thank you.)

(Laughter/Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: But there was no agreement in place, and we quickly sat with our workers and negotiated an agreement for 2010/2012**.**

I mentioned that for many reasons, because we, this Administration believe strongly in the philosophy of taking our workers in our confidence. And we believes that whatever you want to achieve in terms of reform of the public sector workforce you can achieve them without dictating to them. You can sit at the table and have agreements and sign to them.

We've settled the health sector reclassification which was languishing for 14 years.

Mr. CHARLES: Say what?

Mr. DALLEY: Fourteen years. The first payment under the Health Sector Reclassification exercise for all workers in the health sector was made last year August, and next month the second phase will be done. We promise it and we've done it.

(Applause)

For many, many, years the Industrial Disputes Tribunal instructed that a relativity study be done for Fire Brigade and Correctional Services. The Ministry of Finance and Planning has implemented the results of the Fire Brigade relativity. We have just concluded with the Unions representing the Correctional Services - this component of this relativity study, and will be implemented in August.

We found it, Cabinet instructed us at the Ministry to clean up the system, and we've cleaned it up and we've implemented it.

The one-off payment to public sector workers was made on time - last August, and the next one-off payment of $25,000 will be made on time again this August, to all public

sector workers including Counsillors and Members of Parliament. (Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. DALLEY: The 7% retroactive payment to public sector workers, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report, and I am relieved - I'm sure my colleague here is more relieved than I am - that the final payment of the 7% to all public sector workers, which was made right here in this Parliament at midnight by the previous administration which we have honoured, the final payment was made in May, the 7% to all public sector workers including Councillors and Members of Parliament. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended sufficient to allow him to complete his presentation.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time be extended sufficiently for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Mr. DALLEY: Thank you.

The Members feel that the salary of MPs - the salary is so small that they were not sure if it was reflected in the last pay cheque, but it was done.

The teachers' reclassification arrears which we found - Minister of Education you know how difficult that is - the last payment to our teachers under this exercise was made in June last year.

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. DALLEY: Finished.

Education officers languished for many years, finally we took over. The Prime Minister instructed us, clean up the system! Clean up the system! We sat down with our educational officers, we finally had an agreement and the payment was made, new rates were introduced and we're sailing on peacefully. (Applause)

The West Indies Group of Teachers - WIGUT - University Group of Teachers, West Indies Group came and found it sitting there; clean it up, settle the deal; we're proceeding smoothly.

A quick look at government's procurement for the last financial year reveals that $50.55 Billion - $50.55 Billion of contracts were awarded, 2,537 service contracts, 339 contracts for Consultancy services of all kind, 105 contracts for security and 81 for janitorial services. There are also contracts that are not approved by the Cabinet, so this $50.55 Billion worth of contracts that the government awarded are just those over $40 Million that comes to Cabinet through the Infrastructure Committee. As a result of this, you cannot ignore the integrity of public procurement; therefore, our review is as follows:

There will be the electronic government procurement, the revision of the public procurement handbook has been done, and the stakeholders know. We have established a weekly public procurement page in the national newspapers, there is a new cadre of public procurement professionals within the public sector, that we are developing and training, it's hard to see, someone who is a

temporary worker, just working in a department for four, five months and be given this awesome responsibility and opportunity to manage hundreds of millions dollars without the proper training.

A new regime for insurance placement in Government will be developed. A public procurement policy office within the Ministry of Finance and Planning has been designated. The NCC will be separated from the OCG with its own office and its own staff. (Applause) The NCC will be renamed the Public Procurement Commission, and will be adding the - in fact, I apologize to the House; I was hoping to Table the Bill today. The Bill should have been tabled; the new Public Procurement Bill should have been tabled today.

The NCC, as I said will be renamed. They will also establish a public procurement appeals body where contractors can appeal to. If you feel you are wrong as a contractor, as someone doing service for Government you appeal to - you go to the Public Appeals Board don't come to the Minister...

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. DALLEY: You want to chair it?

A further revision of the threshold will be done. The revision of the emergency contracting period has already been done. How do you handle emergency in a ministry, a department or agency and most importantly, people feel that the Ministry of Finance, which is the centre of Government operations sometime it is a stumbling block but we up there at Bagdad have to understand - that we up there have to understand that we have to make sure that we watch the public purse; there has to be some place in Government where controls are done. But we have done something; we have removed the necessity of all contracts, to come to the Ministry of Finance and Planning for comments. And Ministers, you know what I am talking about you need the comments from the Ministry of Finance and sometime it comes late, it takes long to come, but we have now removed that, you don't have to send your contract now to the Ministry of Finance and Planning... (Power cut) However, the Permanent Secretary, in the ministry, in the respective ministry must attach a letter to the contract when it is being submitted to Cabinet for approval, contracts over $40 Million to say that the funds are in the budget that is the responsibility, decentralize it. So don't come to the ministry and say we are holding up your comments, because we have given you some opportunity to operate.

Most importantly again, a new contract registration system will be in place, in the new law, meaning, the contractor don't have to go every year to register at NCC, a brand new system and I want to commend the Master Builders Association...

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. DALLEY: ...two years, you will pay a registration fee each year, the Master Builders Association and all the other stakeholders are fully endorsed in the new public procurement regime, and the Bill, as I said, I apologize, will be tabled very soon. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, last year - I now turn to say a few words about the customs agents of

Jamaica because this is part of the re - the public sector - re transformation and modernization. Last year I stood here and I said Custom will be an executive agency, now they are an executive agency.

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. DALLEY: Yes, they are an executive agency. No, but it never happened, never happened at all.

As the second largest revenue collection entity - collection entity for the Government of Jamaica, you can't treat Customs in any or any way, as a result of which we have given them the authority that they need. Last year Customs collection was $135.52 Billion which is $14 Billion more than what was projected - what was collected the previous year. (Applause) As at June 18 last month Customs collected $27,896 Billion. Year to date, it is more than what they had projected to collect at the end of June. As a result of which they have to do the necessary transformation, modernization whatever you want to call it to bring it into the modern age.

Last year I announced something called ASYCUDA, some people were asking; what is that? But that is being implemented now. It is a Port Management System that will allow Customs to track every single cargo down there and be able to calculate the revenue due to the Country. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the staff and the team at Customs for the work that they have done. (Applause)

But the Minister of Finance has given strict instructions to Customs, you must facilitate doing business, you must - we want you to be firm, all custom officers, all leadership down at Customs Department, we want you to be firm, diligent and collect the revenues, but you must understand that business have to go on. So when you have to return a call to a consumer, importer, exporter make sure you are on time. Make sure you listen to their plea, but be firm as you collect the revenues for our people.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to move very quickly to another area of responsibility that I have, the gaming industry and this is one of the industries I know a lot of people are anxious to hear something about. And I will be on time.

I begin the review of the gaming industry with a summary of the recently held Gaming Industry Summit which I invited you to but you didn't come - you did not get to come. The inaugural conference expanded on the summit I had last year with all of our stakeholders and we were shocked to see who turned up, persons involved in betting, in gaming, in lotteries, in casino interests, financial sector and also, most of the big law firms in Jamaica turned up with their clients.

Coming out of the initial summit last year as stakeholders we agreed to a number of things. We agreed to Sunday racing and we reintroduce Sunday racing and we expanded it to OTBs and the stakeholders are happy. The restructuring of the betting level order enable the redistribution of revenue from the Consolidated Fund to breeders, to Caymanas Track Limited for persons and also to the Racing Commission, it came out of the summit and we implemented it. Telephone and text betting regulations were promulgated,

came out of the summit and we implemented it.

The goal of this year's summit was to further refine the strategy for the entire gaming industry in order to keep tab - in order to tap into the enormous economic potential available in this estimated Jamaica $95 Billion industry, the Jamaican part of it. The gaming industry has undergone significant growth for '13/14 fiscal year intake to the government was $4.583 Billion, an increase of 11 per cent over the previous year. The sum included monies to CHASE Fund, BGLC, JRC and to the Consolidated Fund. This is not the kind of revenue intake in the economy that any sensible administration can ignore, thus the required efforts are being deployed in order to guarantee the highest level of integrity, transparency and profitability within this industry.

The main policy objectives of the Government at time are to preserve the integrity of the industry, foster growth in the industry and to create more jobs in the industry for our people while protecting the randomness of all the games - note that word. The randomness of all the games, and at the same time ensuring that the regulators can correctly calculate the appropriate taxes due to Government. Also to ensure that investors in this industry, growing industry, are not threatened by the ever increasing incursion of illegal operators from whom no taxes can be collected. An example, of the potential of this gaming industry is an estimated US$400 Billion being spent globally on this FIFA World Cup. I spoke to one of the leading player here in the sports betting industry. In Jamaica alone, the daily turn-over alone is over 400 per cent since the World Cup has started.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, this is not the kind of industry that we can ignore. We intend to continue tapping into this industry what have we done? We have amended here in this House two months ago, the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act, which includes the expansion of sports betting and lottery industry through the licencing of new outlets, introduction of fees for activities undertaken by the Commission in the gaming machine industry, licencing of fees for certain persons operating in the Horse Racing. Betting Gaming and Lotteries Industry and also we have introduced the legislation amendment, caused us to introduce Telephone Betting Regulations. Other amendments include; the fixed penalty order imposition of monetary fines for breaches committed by licence and, also the amendment grandfathered from 150 to 225 gaming machines that were previously under the 2010 amendment. At the same time while all of these things are being done to protect, to improve, to promote the gaming industry sector as a major player for job creation and good jobs too, good jobs. The Proceeds of Crime Act must be monitored; because this is the - one of the easiest area internationally that money laundering can take place. As a result of that, some amendments were done to POCA here that includes and now cover people in the gaming industry sector.

The merger between the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission, Mr. Speaker, and

the Jamaica Racing Commission is being pursued in accordance with the Public Sector Transformation Master Rationalization Plan, the merger. Phase 1 is a partial merger of the finance human resource and enforcement functions.

Phase 2 is a merger of other operational functions and the introduction of the new legislation to effect the merger. The merger committee assisted by a consultant is in the final stage of defining the merger strategy, but the merger the first phase will begin next month to merge BGLC with the JRC and the final phase in October.

We have once again taken the unions in our confidence to discuss the merger with them because when you have these kinds of mergers it is possible to have jobs dislocation.

We are also looking forward to the completion of Hagley Park Road, which the previous Administration bought and that we will finish the renovations, and that the two new entities will be able to move forward, move over in those facilities.

A word on the Horse Racing Industry, Mr. Speaker, when this Administration took over operations of CTL it was mired in debt, losses, nepotism, incompetence, cronyism and corruption, CTL, when we took over. And I don't want anybody to challenge us because it is dangerous, it was a bad place, run bad.

As I speak, Mr. Speaker, the audited financial statements for CTL are available. CTL has continued on a course of financial and operational prudence. The debt has been reduced at Caymanas Track; there is vastly improved management of the plant; Sunday racing has been doubled; the income streams have been diversified; the facilities at the Track are being marketed for non-racing activities; the physical plant has been greatly improved. The relationship among the stakeholders has never been better and the reduction of operation losses of over 42% from $68.5 Million down to $39.6 Million, that is achievement in two years by that Board. (Applause) And I pay a special tribute to the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Chris Brown and his team. (Applause) I pay a special tribute to the Board of CTL; they have done a marvelous job. (Applause)

There is no doubt that the Track is in need of significant capital injection to continue the modernization, which the Government is unable to undertake. Therefore, the divestment of Caymanas Track Limited is proceeding apace. An enterprise team was charged with the mandate to facilitate the divestment of the entity.

The team, assisted by a Strategic Consultant continues to work towards the finalization of this transaction before the end of the year. The Minister of Finance and Planning, my colleague, has given strict instructions that we have to get it off the books.

There have been two expressions of interest to date; one from the Racing Divestment Committee, a local stakeholder group, and the other from Britnelle Development Group LLC (Maryland, USA).

The Government of Jamaica through the Divestment Committees - and the instructions to them given by the Minister of Finance and

Planning, is to have the track divested. But, we are not opposed to the relocation of the present track within a vicinity in Portmore, in Portmore. (Applause) We are not opposed to building a brand new track while this track is operating; creating more jobs while that construction is going on, a very beautiful place, and then closed that one and move operations to the other one. We are not opposed to it, so we send that signal now to our investors, once it remains in the vicinity over there, outside of where it presently is.

Mr. Speaker, CTL possesses tremendous potential to become a viable and profitable entertainment entity, provided the right vision and investments are in place. The company has recently entered into an agreement with the bookmakers who once were at war, who once were at war.

CTL I repeat, they have now entered into an agreement with the bookmakers that will see them acting as agents for the CTL. This engagement with the bookmakers represents a potential revenue inflow of $1.8 Billion to CTL. And we congratulate CTL and the bookmakers for carrying through with the discussion which started some years ago. (Applause)

There is something here on the integrated resort, which Members can glance through. I want to say something about Internet gaming.

A MEMBER: So why…. about breeding.

Mr. DALLEY: We're going to have a talk. We going to have a talk.

A MEMBER: No! No!

Mr. DALLEY: We'll have a talk about the breeding. No, the Member is correct. The breeding stock that is presently in Jamaica has deteriorated. And I say it now publicly. Minister Phillips and I are examining the possibility of injecting as coming out of the Summit. Out of the Summit we had just couple weeks ago, injecting new stock and to work with the breeders to inject new stock into the system. It is the only way that the racing will flourish, and we understand that.

As I close this section on the gaming industry, I would like to say a word about Internet Gaming.

We amended the BGLC Act to deal with telephone betting and so on and so forth and to give the CTL opportunity. Internet gaming is the future of gaming. This online gaming business is advancing and changing the model of gaming industry worldwide as many consumers turn to the internet to bet on sports gambling; slots machines, play cards, *et cetera, et cetera.* The Government is mindful of the potentials of eGaming and we are reviewing the possibilities for this platform.

A Forbes Magazine story says online Gaming is about US$ 20 Billion worldwide revenue and may be ready to go further. Also, there's another Report that says it will be about US$100 Billion by 2017, but the legal and regulatory framework must be in place for Internet Gaming. And that's the next thing now is Minister Phillips and myself and the team at the Ministry of Finance and Planning will be turning our attention to BGLC and the regulator to see how best to facilitate Internet Gaming.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude my presentation, I wish to reiterate that all

Jamaicans must recognize that securing the growth and development of this country is a collective responsibility. It is the time for us to unite around this goal.

Indeed, some great strides are being made with respect to economic reform and public sector modernization. I have highlighted several of the initiatives in my presentation; pension reform, the expected technological and legislative improvements at Customs, the improved gaming landscape being made possible through critical pieces of legislations and mergers, and importantly, the continued development of public sector workers to prepare them for work in the modern economy.

The current gains in economic reform and public sector modernization are being consolidated to position our country firmly in a modern economy characterized by growth; a dynamic, efficient public service delivery; increased productivity and structural reform. Achieving these five (5) objectives is the vision of this of this Administration led by Portia Simpson Miller. This Government was elected to help steer this beautiful Island into calmer 'seas' and advance the hope for a brighter future for our people. We are working tirelessly to effect these critical reforms, thus, 'sleeping' is never an option and that is why we are always.... 'Working, working, working'.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hear! Hear!

Mr. DALLEY: That's why our economic reform programme is on track; that's why growth has returned. (Applause) That's why the IMF Agreement is securely in place. (Applause) That's why the confidence of the Jamaican people has returned and is moving up. (Applause) All these have been accomplished; all these have been accomplished because this Administration has never fallen asleep or become complacent on the job. We are committed to staying the course.

I want to thank my colleague Minister of Finance and Planning, Dr. Peter Phillips as I do all my other Cabinet colleagues and Members of Parliament. I want to recognize in this Parliament, Minister Phillips in a very special way for his leadership shown in Jamaica's Economic Reform Programme. (Applause) Your clarity on the need for reform, your unflinching focus and capacity for work are exceptional, but there's just one problem, 'yu still won't eat the pork'. (Laughter)

A MEMBER: Him still won't what?

Mr. DALLEY: Eat the pork!

(Laughter)

A MEMBER: You working on that one?

Mr. DALLEY: I'm working on that one.

(Laughter)

As I recognize the Minister, I acknowledge and thank the team at the Ministry and its Agencies and Departments, my personal team, all my sector leaders, Trade Union leaders, all the workers in the Public Sector, thank you for your support.

(Applause)

I must associate these expressions to you, Mr. Speaker, and your Deputy for your continued wise leadership of this House. I give you some trouble some times as well as

my colleague's parliamentarians and staff of the House on both sides.

A MEMBER: (Inaudible)....

Warmington, Warmington.

Mr. DALLEY: I must thank my Constituents, the people of the great constituency of Northern Clarendon, (Applause) ....because without their support, confidence and prayers, I could not be here today.

Mr. Speaker, this is my 20th year in Parliament, (Applause) representing the people of Northern Clarendon and so, this is fitting for me not only to recognize this milestone, but to recognize, the hardworking, independent resourceful people of Northern Clarendon. I am humbled by their trust and confidence, their love, support and prayers and I pledge to continue my work to transform this beautiful part of Jamaica. I thank all my three Councillors; Councillor Dawson, Councilor Hales and my Councillor from the Republic of Crofts Hill, Councillor O'Connor, my executive members, PD Workers, and the wide cross-section of people of Northern Clarendon as I carry out my duties as Member of Parliament and as a member of the Cabinet of Jamaica.

Most of all, I must thank the Most Honourable Prime Minister, Portia Simpson Miller for the trust and confidence, placed in me to be a member of her Cabinet. Her leadership of the team has been exemplary. Her deep and abiding love for the people of Jamaica is all she knows. It is the tremendous love and goodwill that she enjoys from the Jamaican people that has been the linchpin in the success of the Economic Reform Programme. (Applause) The people of Jamaica trust her and we her Ministers will do everything to be worthy of that trust by turning around the economic fortunes of the people of the country for the people of Jamaica.

To my dear family, I could not do this without them.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hear! Hear!

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: I could not! I could not do what I am assigned to do if I did not enjoy their love and support. They see the stress regularly as I dedicate my life to the public service over all these years.

To all the people of Jamaica, I thank you. I invite every Jamaican to be a part of the mission to create a better Jamaica. We sometimes disagree on many things but let it be known, that there is no mountain too high, no burden too heavy, no barrier too strong, that we cannot overcome to become a prosperous Jamaica.

And finally, I must thank the great architect of the universe, Almighty God for his blessings and favours. May He continue to bless Jamaica, Land We Love.

(Applause)

(Standing Ovation by all Government Members) (Applause)

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Bartlett.

(Applause)

Mr. BARTLETT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is my 25th presentation (Applause) in this Honourable House, having

come here first in 1980 and had an interregnum and then 12 years on second trot. And I'd like to begin, sir, by thanking God and a great family....

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Pickersgill)

Mr. BARTLETT: (Laughter) That's a calculation for you. (Laughs) Perhaps as much as you have been on that side.

...to thank God and my family for the tremendous support that I have gotten from his divine guidance and indeed, from a wife who, for 40 years.

A MEMBER: Stuck with you.

(Laughter)

Mr. BARTLETT: ...have secured her place at a better place.

(Applause)

My son and my grandchildren and my extended family have all been very supportive and have all created that confluence of support that has given me the strength to persevere through the vicissitude of this very demanding and exacting avocation.

Mr. Speaker, to my Leader, Honourable Andrew Holness, and my colleagues, particularly the Leader, of course, for his confidence in placing me in a very sensitive and important portfolio area to shadow, that of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. One which indeed is very central to the functioning of governments and indeed very critical to governance as well.

My colleagues who have been supportive in so many ways and who have helped to guide me along the way and to give me support to enable me to go through again some of the difficult periods that we have had to go in the last few years.

To you my colleagues from the House. I want to say to you that your support indeed has been sterling, and I make the point about the level of conviviality and the depth of the friendship that we have been able to develop and secure on both sides of the House. A lot of times, Mr. Speaker, people outside wouldn't understand. They may hear us making comments here because of the nature of the adversarial democracy that we treasure and would never want to change, that we say sometimes some harsh things about not necessarily each other but the way each other operate, or indeed in the way that we carry out the responsibilities and duties of the State. But one thing that must be secured is that there is an abiding respect and relationship between both sides of this House for each and every Member in here. (Applause)

To you, Mr. Speaker, and I note now that I think there is a collusion of geographic interest, because when the substantive Speaker who hails from Manchester perhaps learnt that I was the next speaker, he brought the Deputy from St. James to make sure that I am as comfortable as possible in the presentation. But I want you to convey to the Speaker, Member Peart, my own high regard for his stewardship over the years. He has been a very erudite speaker and his judgment has certainly enured to the effective and smooth running of this great Chamber.

Dr. GUY: I will tell him you want to... (Inaudible comment) …again.

Mr. BARTLETT: That was before your time.

Dr. GUY: It still is.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to the people of East Central St. James for the collaboration and familial relationship we have forged and fostered over the last 12 years, as their Member of Parliament and the four years before, when I was the Opposition representative.

We over the period have built a strong team of very capable and efficient workers on the ground, and, Mr. Speaker, we have managed to deliver on a number of critical areas, but perhaps for the benefit of this presentation I want to focus on one key area, and it's an area that Members on both sides have talked and mentioned in very strong and feeling ways, about their involvement and participation in the educational development of their constituency.

Indeed, the whole matter of building the human capital of our country is something that all of us should be very deeply committed to, and certainly the constituency, and indeed a feature of my own stewardship in the 30-odd years that I have been in public life, has really revolved around this critical area. And so we began, Mr. Speaker, by growing the academic leadership in the constituency, and it has given me great pride that the basis of this has been the establishment of the East Central Education Council, which is currently chaired by the principal of the John Rollins Success Primary School, and this Council, Mr. Speaker, through partnership with the private sector, CDF and Food For the Poor, has ensured the implementation and success of programmes such as breakfast programmes for the Early Childhood Institutions, school supplies and equipment for all the schools, all 14 schools at the primary level and two at the high school level, and particularly to drive a programme for Grade 4 and Grade 6. The Grade 4 programme, Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of because we went and we ensured that there was adequacy of instructional materials for the Grade 4 to secure numeracy and literacy up to 100 per cent. We haven't quite achieved that, but I am proud to see how the success has been indicated and the outcomes are showing better and better performance.

In terms of Grade 6, Mr. Speaker, we ensured that all five workbooks were provided for the students in Grade 6, and equally, that every child had his own desk so that he could work with it, and we bought exercise books to give them as supplement because we insisted that those workbooks must stay in the school, because it's every three years that we buy them. So every child must have access. That's the functional word. Every child must have access to all five of the workbooks that are required.

And it has worked, Mr. Speaker, and we have developed a whole programme of reward and encouragement. So each year we have a scholarship awards function and we establish the 80s Club and the 90s Club, that's the Elite Club, and so every child is there looking forward to have a 80 average, and more, to become part of the Elite 80s and 90s Club and to get their scholarship award and to get their special recognition once a year. (Applause by

Opposition Members) This year on the 13th, next Sunday, we will take them to the Convention Centre and it is my pleasure to announce 103 students from the constituency this year had averages of 80 and over.

(Applause by Opposition Members)

Mr. Speaker, the scholarship programme has not been confined to the Secondary, because we are satisfied that we must create a replacement generation for those who are the purveyors of knowledge in the community, and we must give them the wherewithal to stay within the constituency and continue to teach. So we have given scholarships to teachers as well, and when we discovered that there was a problem - of course, we know there is a problem with the sciences and mathematics in particular, last year we introduced a special scholarship for teachers of mathematics, and that when they get their scholarships to the University they must come back and teach. I am proud to let you know that today we have four principals of the schools within the constituency who are all proud graduates of the East Central Education Programme. (Applause) Rhodes scholar.

Every single university in Jamaica has scholars from East Central St. James. Every teachers college has students from East Central St. James. We have a total now of 187 students enrolled in high schools and 50 students in universities and colleges.

But much of this success, Mr. Speaker, we are seeing is the result of years of investment. In East Central we have long known that investing in early childhood education and primary education is the surest way to give children a fair start in life, and we have put our resources to work for us there. Indeed, education will continue to be a major focus. Mr. Speaker, in fact, I have something that really breaks my heart a little bit, because one of the big emphasis we have is on children of lesser economic means, and we have a children's home, SOS Village in our constituency and we partnered with the Rose Hall Development to give a scholarship to a particular child, motherless, fatherless and who showed academic brilliance, and we are proud to tell you that that child graduated last year from the Northern Caribbean University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Bright girl. Bright, bright, bright. (Applause) Bright.

Mr. BARTLETT: And, Mr. Speaker, she sent me this lovely card, and this is her, SOS Children's Home. First child to have a degree from the SOS Children's Home. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Thanks to her. Bright girl.

(Applause)

Mr. BARTLETT: And you'll permit me to read this letter, because it tells you how...

Mr. BUCHANAN: Bright girl.

Mr. BARTLETT: ...we can touch the lives...

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. BARTLETT: ...of people.

"Dear Mr. Bartlett, I would like to extend sincere gratitude for the financial support you have given me upon matriculation in the

Nursing Programme at Northern Caribbean University. I am very elated that you are interested in assisting me to develop intellectually and professionally.

I have now completed my studies at NCU and I have recently received my nursing license for practising. While at NCU I was able to maintain a GPA above 3 and that's good, the Honour Roll, and was able to achieve cum laude in my final year. I also participated in sports, western clubs, outreach programmes and other school related activities as warranted. Your contribution was not solely a charitable contribution, but was also an opportunity to empower my brothers and sisters to excel and make their dreams realities. My dream came through because you took the time out to help me realize my potential, ability and passion to succeed. I feel more than thrilled to know I have not wasted such opportunity.

My SOS family is grateful for the degree of support extended to me and is very proud of what I have made of it. I will always work diligently to achieve the highest at all times, and render my support to my community as I see it.

I know you will continue to reach out to young people who are striving for greatness in helping them achieve their dreams. I must also commend you for taking part in our football camp - which is something else - which open doors of opportunities for educational development.

Again, I thank you for supporting one of the most valuable assets of my development which will benefit the health and wellbeing of our community.

Yours faithfully

Shani Golding. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, that is why I am in politics for so long. Because we have no pecuniary rewards that we can talk about, but we have utils of satisfaction that have...

(Cross talk by Mr. L. Buchanan)

...accrued to us overtime, that have made us -

(Heckling)

And this is a very serious point. That has made us richer for the experience, and I intend to continue this as long as He lendeth me breath.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to, in the process make a point about Minister Thwaites, because in addition to the support that we have had from Ministers of the past, I think Minister Thwaites has shown a particular interest in some of what we are doing, and on Thursday of this week he is coming down for us to look at a cluster of little primary schools that are within, what I would say, are contiguous and that there is need for us to look at rationalizing the resources to ensure we are able to more efficiently deliver on the educational needs of our children, and so we are looking at Adelphi to create a Centre of Excellence, and so to use the small schools that are around, as early childhood centres, feeder centres to feed into a Centre of Excellence there and by so doing better utilize the scarce resources that we have and optimize the value for the educational development of our children. (Applause)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Is a good thing the Speaker taught you at school.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, it is with some disappointment that I speak, really about my inability it seems, to solve some of the nagging infrastructure problems that we are having, and I am coming to that, Mr. Speaker, because water and roads have been the bane of my life and the life of the constituency.

And I know that we do have issues. I know that we do have issues, Minister, in terms of the whole resource to enable the fullest development of our water resources and distribution that we need to have. But I think that we need to make emphasis in areas where water supply is available but distribution is the problem. And that has been the problem, Minister. And I want to say to you that the communities of Somerton and Canaan and Dumfries and Paisley and Orange and Barrett Town and Spot Valley - you see how many - and Irwin and Over River and Hurlock and Goodwill, Adelphi, Content, Boylston, Spring Mount, Camrose, Kenshot, Sunderland, Hampton, Oakland, all of those areas are areas, Mr. Speaker, that can benefit from a distribution programme that make$ sense. One of the problems that you have now is that we have some small systems that work on and off. At the moment half of these communities are without water.

Today I got a call again from where my Honourable Minister's family is from - in-law, that is, no water for three weeks simply because a pump, Mr. Speaker, has been removed and that pump cannot be replaced in three to four weeks. I say, Minister, that I know we can do better. And certainly I would want to urge you to take a closer look at the whole distribution management system and to ensure that we don't blame drought for human failings. We recognize that the drought is a problem and water availability in some areas is a problem but where water is available, Mr. Speaker, we should ensure that potable water is provided for our citizens. (Applause)

The JEEP has provided some relief in some of the areas in all fairness with some of the roads that we have and so as the CDF, Mr. Speaker. But the critical arterial roadways within the constituency are in deplorable conditions. And I am urging the Minister, and I don't see the Minister of State here, but I am urging the Minister to really ensure that when the MDIP comes on stream, and for all the good reasons I would love it to come on stream urgently, I would want them to consider Somerton Road.

And you know one of the reasons I am concerned so much about Somerton, Mr. Speaker, Somerton is the birth place of some of the finest citizens in this country, some of whom are very, very central to my friends on that side and, of course, our country. The former Prime Minister, one former Prime Minister emanates from there. You know a former Speaker of the House emanates from there and one of the most outstanding musical icons of our country emanates from there. You know, some of our cultural scientists and production gurus, Lennie Little-White, for example, they hail from there, a number of outstanding people, and the road, Mr. Speaker, I am embarrassed to say that the former

Speaker who is now a little up in time has a difficulty negotiating to get home when she goes even to the doctor coming through Somerton Road. So I really appeal to you let us deal with it.

The Salters Hill, the sign to Lottery and Amity Hall, Virgin Valley and, of course, Mr. Speaker, the spine of the constituency which is the main arterial roadway from Westgate through Adelphi to Salt Marsh which in fact could become the alternate route to link to the north coast with the south side of Montego Bay and the island. And indeed I would want to encourage you to take a look, Minister, at that configuration and to see if in doing so we wouldn't be opening up a critical area of St. James for development both commercial as well as for dormitory communities.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the portfolio matters. Mr. Speaker, Jamaica has a history of strong global diplomatic involvement characterized by leadership in key areas. In human rights, for example, Jamaica figured prominently in the antiapartheid struggle in South Africa and the successful sponsorship of the UN Motion for the Declaration of 1968 as the International Human Rights Year. Jamaica has been a strong voice in protecting small states and gave leadership in the call for democracy and freedom across the globe as well as the redefining of the world economic order while building relationships between the countries of the south.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, our presence in the world is much larger than we are and we truly have a punch greater than our weight in diplomacy, culture and sports. Notwithstanding that, Mr. Speaker, we are a vulnerable state. Jamaica has particular vulnerabilities due to its size, geography and history. Mr. Speaker, we are vulnerable to economic shocks. Our economy is still heavily reliant on export commodity such as sugar and bauxite. And a fall in those prices, as we have seen in recent years, has spelt almost disaster for our foreign exchange flows. We also have a great reliance on tourism which is particularly responsive to economic shocks.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we are vulnerable to climate change. The scientists anticipate an average sea level rise of five millimeter over the next century and with that, Mr. Speaker, an increase in the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events such as hurricanes and changing patterns of rainfall, some of which we spoke about earlier on. Ironically, climate change exacts the greatest toll on those least capable of managing its effects, making islands like Jamaica more vulnerable to natural disaster and less able to recover from their aftermaths.

Third, global international economic shocks. Again, Mr. Speaker, a large portion of our foreign exchange is earned, as I said from the service sector which also vulnerable to global economic shocks. And so when the Great Recession, for example, came a couple years ago; it virtually devastated us and, indeed, it played havoc to our tourism industry in particular, and I think it was for the strength of the partnership that we have in that industry that we were able to survive and to maintain our position even of growth during that difficult time.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the geographical occurrences that we are vulnerable to the change in economic environment which, for example, we could speak in terms also of the significant shift that is taking place in terms of relationships and the advent of globalization and multilateralism. Indeed, multilateralism one and now multilateralism two, which is redefining the whole relationship between island states and states and reconfiguring relationships in terms of bilateral regionalism as well as multilateralism.

So, Mr. Speaker, all those are responses that we have to make in order for us to keep in tune with driving the cause of building more services and investments and increasing our emphasis on being able to manage complex trading agreements.

Mr. Speaker, the general impact of globalization is that it challenges our ability to secure the economic well-being of our people on our own. This, Mr. Speaker, prompts an interdependent approach to mitigate the fact of these vulnerabilities and forces us in the process to forge meaningful and sustainable development partnerships with other global entities. Jamaica's participation therefore in global trade and diplomatic agreements and protocols must be carefully determined to provide the highest return and not merely for public relation value or the political congruences they foster.

Mr. Speaker, our foreign policy and approach therefore to global trade agreements must be firmly rooted in protecting our national interest. Mr. Speaker, the traditional focus of Jamaica's foreign policy has been to maximize aid and development assistance and to sustain preferential trading arrangements. However, over the years the international environment has shifted significantly. Generally, aid and development assistance is declining and, Mr. Speaker, what little aid exists now is overwhelmingly being diverted to the least developing countries. In the context therefore of globalization, the priorities in our foreign policy approach must therefore be to secure export markets and attract investors into our country. In essence then, Mr. Speaker, growth-related objectives must be at the centre of our foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, I took special note of the Statement from our Prime Minister at last week's CARICOM Heads of Government Conference in Antigua at which she encouraged her fellow Heads to make the region's voice be heard in relation to issues of small island development states, the SIDS. Jamaica's position, she said, views focused attention and global support for SIDS as being vital for building resilience, eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development.

I have also taken note, Mr. Speaker, of the fact that CARICOM is now preparing to participate in the discussions on the sustainability and unique vulnerabilities of SIDS at the third international meeting on SIDS to be held in Samoa September 1 - 4 this year. Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Prime Minister and the advisers recognize the importance of these developments and that she ensures that when Jamaica attends this

Conference we do so as a nation fully informed and totally committed to the radical changes that could emerge from these discussions.

Small Island Development States, Mr. Speaker, have a number of things in common; they are low-lying coastal countries sharing similar sustainable development challenges, including small but growing population, limited resources, remoteness, susceptibility to natural disaster, vulnerability to external expensive public administration and infrastructure due to their small size and little or no opportunity to create economies of scale.

This year, Mr. Speaker, 2014 is International Year for Small Island Development States during which we are celebrating their contribution to the world while we are making efforts to turn around our economy and reduce the burden of debt.

Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister prepares or her Minister of Foreign Affairs prepares to meet with fellow SID leaders later this year, I caution the Government that if we allow this opportunity to descend - I want to make this point - into a carbon copy of our previous efforts to promote commodity trading over which we have little control about the primary stage in order to get preferential treatment, we would be wasting a tremendous opportunity to turn around the economies of these small island states.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended to allow him to complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time for speaking be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. BARTLETT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To my colleagues I am much obliged.

Mr. Speaker, the critical point here is that we have an opportunity, I believe, to look at the SIDS in relation to where they are located. The Caribbean, for example, Mr. Speaker, is the most tourism dependent region on earth. One in every six jobs in the region is generated by it. Our cruise market is the largest in the world, 50% to 60% of all the cruise ships of the world comes into our Caribbean waters. The largest industry we have outside of tourism is the fishing industry in the region. And, Mr. Speaker, there is the opportunity for us to look to the ocean for renewable energy, ocean wave energy, OTEC, geothermal. We can also remember, and bear in mind, that for the region 60% of the divers for leisure activities come to the Caribbean. The fact is therefore, Mr. Speaker, that our emphasis must be on how do we partner to exploit the resources of the ocean.

In other words, our major statement at the SIDS Conference in Samoa must be driven by the call for partnership to exploit the resources of our ocean that we are in.

One of the concerns that we have, Mr. Speaker, is that we haven't spent a lot of time thinking about the fact that we are not just

Island States, but most of us operating as archipelagos. And, the archipelagic value of these small islands we have not taken into consideration in terms of our planning. The truth is that we plan without the ocean in mind.

And, so, I think that the SIDS have an opportunity in Samoa, to partner with their Mediterranean brethren based on the various protocols and agreements that have come out of the conferences that they have had, the *MSI* and the *Barbados Paper*, to come together and to seriously think about how do we make the SIDS more self sufficient, rather than continuously seeking to be defined, based on their vulnerabilities only.

Mr. Speaker, right here in Kingston we have the Headquarters of the International Seabed Authority. This year we will be observing its Twentieth Anniversary, July 14 to 15, with its Annual Session to held, I think, at the Authority's Head Office in downtown Kingston. At that meeting the Body will elect nearly half its Executive Council, and begin discussion on a Mining Code.

I wish at this point, Mr. Speaker, to pay tribute to the Most Honourable Edward Seaga, for his vision in the eighties, which led to Jamaica becoming the Headquarters of this important Agency of the future.

(Applause)

And, I think, Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* comments from Mr. Anthony Hylton)

Mr. BARTLETT: Pardon?

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: I am sorry.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Go back go sleep! Go back to sleep!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I hear a mumble, not audible enough for a response - and, which I think, Mr. Speaker, is finally ready - the International Seabed Authority - to fulfill that vision.

I want to remind the Government, Mr. Speaker, that at this meeting in Kingston, ISA will be discussing the Mining Code, which refers to the whole of the comprehensive set of rules, regulations and procedures issued by the Authority, to regulate, protecting exploration and exploitation of marine minerals in the international seabed area, defined, of course, as the seabed and subsoil beyond the limit of national jurisdictions.

These regulations, Mr. Speaker, include the forms necessary to apply for exploration rights, as well as standard terms for exploration contracts. I think this is the beginning of a new era for ISA, in which it will have to play a very significant role in the growth and development of the SID States. And, I am sure that they will be very present in Samoa, and will definitely be very responsive as one of the partners that will look at how we can make these SIDS more self-reliant and less dependent, on the basis of their vulnerability.

Because of their status as islands and their limited resources, we must begin to look beyond the terrestrial, Mr. Speaker, and focus heavily on the resources available to us from the proximity of the ocean. Some people call it the "blue economy" and make the sharp point that there can be no green economy without the blue, and quite correctly.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to Strategic Foreign Policy Boost for Investment and Growth. The previous Jamaica Labour Party Administration, Mr. Speaker, recognized the need for a key shift in our foreign policy direction, and subsequently commissioned the review of both the Aid-for-Trade Policy, and the Foreign Trade Policy in 2011.

The Aid-for-Trade Policy was completed, but the Foreign Trade Policy is still in incubation. We urge the rapid completion of this policy, Mr. Speaker. And, I must pause to mention that there is collaboration between the Opposition and the Government in this. We have had at least one meeting, looking at the preliminary outline of the Policy.

But, Mr. Speaker, we do recognize that this Policy formulation has been since 2011, and this is now 2014, so, we urge that we complete this in short order. In fact, we are hoping that by the end of this year we will have a Policy.

Mr. Speaker, I think it will...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. BARTLETT: Well, I think that this is where it ends. Seven love, we can't take any more. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, we urge the rapid completion of this policy, as it will set the parameters within which our foreign trade can contribute to the achievements of Jamaica's developmental objectives.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize the need to remain relevant and focused in this current globalization context, and set the objectives for the new policy, to increase economic prosperity through engagement in bilateral, regional and international trade. We also recognize that it is timely to review all trade agreements and regional and bilateral partnerships that Jamaica is a party to, at this time, with the view of devising the optimal arrangements for our situation.

I make that point, Mr. Speaker, against the background of the significant shift that is taking place even in terms of our emphasis for growth, and the new areas that are now occupying our minds, in terms of driving that growth ambition. And, we are no longer locked into the commodity streams, we are no longer locked into industrialization, as it were, we are now into the service stream, but the service stream with a difference, where technology and science is going to play a greater and greater part; connectivity and the fast movement of information and people are going to be central. So, the whole business of a knowledge, industrial base and a logistics base as the basis of our new growth thrust are very important to be considered, and therefore, our policies for our diplomatic and trade relations must be reflecting this new move.

In other words, we must make sure that in all of this we are relevant, and that we are developing arrangements that are going to advance our direction, in terms of growth and development.

Mr. Speaker, in this context, I would like to speak briefly about CARICOM. Mr. Speaker, the emergence of geo-political and geo-economic clusters as key blocs of influence and impact on the global community has changed the way countries are doing

business, and challenges the old order of regionalism based on geographical and political congruences only. Nations and civil society, NGOs and the private sector have become critical partners in creating new convergences that will revolutionize economic and growth possibilities.

The need for new economic space, Mr. Speaker, to be carved, based on shared resources and common marketing strategies rather than political or idealogical considerations, is forcing alignment, Mr. Speaker, based on economic logic as well as political logic.

Mr. Speaker, the Caribbean and Jamaica can no longer spend scarce resources without realizing a positive return on investment. Jamaica needs to count its costs, in terms of this CARICOM experiment, and decide whether it is the best fit for our situation or whether another construct, indeed, a new architecture, may instead be the way forward.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica's negative trade balances in CARICOM over the period 2014 to 2012, (sic) grew by an alarming 54 *per cent* year on year. And, this of course, aggressive growth in the trade deficit, Mr. Speaker, was largely driven by the import of petroleum products from Trinidad and Tobago, while imports of rice, non-alcoholic beverages, breakfast cereal and frozen fish, also contributed to the trade imbalance.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, other exports to the region which are mainly non-crude petroleum oil, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, animal feed, juices and food preparation, grew by an average of 6.8 per cent annually. We see the difference. Last year alone, Mr. Speaker, our export to CARICOM declined by Sixty-seven point Four Million US Dollars (US$67.4M).

Mr. Speaker, in total, the regional trade balance for 2013 was negative Eight Hundred and Eighty-one Million US Dollars (US$881M). What is clear, then, Mr. Speaker is that Jamaica has not benefitted greatly from its membership in CARICOM.

Mr. Speaker, maybe now it is time for Jamaica to look at a new arrangement, perhaps with the countries of the Northern Caribbean and Central America, for example, Dom Rep, Haiti, Cuba, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, the Cayman Islands, the Turks and Caicos, perhaps we might even go beyond to Costa Rica, Panama, Columbia and Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, these are all countries within the Caribbean Sea, but whose collective GDP is well in excess of Five Hundred Billion US Dollars (US$500B) with a market size of over Three Hundred Million. This provides the great opportunity, Mr. Speaker, for an expanded economic space which will allow for partnerships that will drive our own production and rather not be based on similar productive activities driving competitiveness among us, but putting us in a position where neither of us is in a position of advantage. And, I believe that this new thinking, Mr. Speaker, on the basis more of convergence, is what is going to drive the new way forward.

I think we could consider, indeed, expanding the Caribbean Community then, even, to include the countries of the Northern Caribbean, and to recalibrate the *Treaty of*

Chaguaramas to transit Caribbean integration to Caribbean convergence.

A regional academic, Sir Shridath Ramphal once said that the region suffers from a twin deficit, a leadership deficit and a governance deficit, and I agree. Over the years Caribbean Leaders have used sovereignty against each other, and "an empowered civil society doesn't exist". As a region we meet and meet and discuss, but it is clear we are achieving very little of substance.

The St. Lucian Prime Minister, Kenny Anthony himself said only a few days ago, coming out of this very meeting in Antigua, that he is tired of attending CARICOM meetings where the same things are said over and over and over and nothing is done.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. BARTLETT: So, CARICOM, Mr. Speaker, is suffering from what I term, transformation dilemma, which can only be resolved, I think, by a new architecture for economic convergence.

The concept of a new convergence can be defined as a new economic space, where there is partnership between public and private sector. It is the forging of the right partnership towards productive efficiency, with the aim to achieve the goal of production integration, competitiveness and distribution across the economic space.

The convergence strategy, Mr. Speaker, must be supported by a political will to change the way leadership and governance is structured, and to give more space to the private sector and civil society.

I hear the Prime Minister mentioning that - on a comment that came out of the meeting in Antigua, that now private sector is being invited to participate. This is indeed a very positive development, because the actors on the stage of governance have been expanding. And, the truth is that the State is less and less a key player and more and more is a partnership developing between multilateral groups and NGOs and the private sector.

And, this augurs well, because, Mr. Speaker, what it does is to create the buy-in to policies which enable execution and implementation to happen, and reduce that incident of the transformation dilemma of which I speak.

Mr. Speaker, my suggestion for a new architecture indeed, Mr. Speaker, are not solutions onto themselves, but I believe are invitation to dialogue, to begin the process of finding new ways to make Jamaica and the Caribbean region exploit its human and geophysical resources both land and marine, to provide wealth and equity to make us live in a better place.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to trade agreements. Jamaica has been, Mr. Speaker, a party to several trade agreements, which have had varying impacts on our economic growth and development over the years.

Within North America, where more than 60% of our trade activities occur, we've had the Caribbean Basin Initiative; CARIBCAN and a host of other nonreciprocal agreements in particular goods and with the US and Canada at the centre.

Jamaica, through CARICOM, Mr. Speaker, is party to several other trade agreements, such as the CARIFORUM-EU, the EU Economic Partnership Agreement and many others. In addition, there are several conventions and multilateral agreements which are connected with these and other UN treaties, including the GATT and WTO. All of these, Mr. Speaker, bring rights and obligations which have to be met to create the outcomes the country desires.

Each of these agreements, Mr. Speaker, are at various stages of implementation, and in the case of CARIBCAN, that agreement is being replaced by a successor agreement, the Caribbean Trade and Development Agreement.

Of the few agreements, Mr. Speaker, which are currently fully activated - and I want you to take note of this - the CBI, CARIBCAN and the EPA stand out, but not without issues.

In the case of the EPA, Mr. Speaker, Jamaica and other CARIFORUM countries are not receiving the financial and technical support which was anticipated for implementation in 2008 when the agreement was signed. They're experiencing debilitating financial and human constraints, and to compound their already weak financial position, the European Union's proposed differentiation policy, which is to put us into different groups, developing, developed and so on, and by so doing determine whether we're eligible for grants and aid and support. Mr. Speaker, the European Union will further in fact reduce financial assistance to us.

Jamaica and other CARIFORUM countries will have to strain under the weight of the EPA implementation, which will only further delay the process by way of regulatory and policy changes necessary to full operationality.

The result is that in August last year, Mr. Speaker, 2013, Jamaica and several other CARIFORUM countries had not yet ratified the agreement... and I asked the Minister on that side, have we ratified the agreement to date - the EPA? ...although the implementation process of regulatory and legislative changes have begun in all of the CARIFORUM states.

As a matter of fact, I was looking through the list of all the states that have ratified, and the only three states, Mr. Speaker, in the CARIFORUM group that have ratified and Jamaica is not part of them.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, an update on the EPA to this Honourable House would be timely, because we can't sign... You know, Mr. Speaker, this is one of the difficulties we have, we negotiate agreements and then we put ourselves in a position where we've signed off on them and we cannot deliver on the requirements of those agreements, and that's the transformation dilemma that we're talking about.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Anthony Hylton)

Mr. BARTLETT: Your dilemma, because you have it and it is your problem in terms of getting the support from the EU to deal with the transformation work that must be done.

The Canadian Agreement on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, is in deadlock as CARICOM and Canada have failed to reach agreement after more than five years of negotiations. Mr. Speaker, these negotiations have been ongoing since November 2009 and should have been concluded from 2011. In October 2013, both sides agreed...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Anthony Hylton)

Mr. BARTLETT: Just listen you will soon find out.

...both sides agreed at the Prime Ministerial level, that the negotiations would continue until the end of June this year - that is a couple days ago.

Mr. Speaker, we are now more than a week into July, but there has been no word from the Minister or the Prime Minister, who Chairs the Prime Ministerial subcommittee on trade negotiations for CARICOM, as to what the future of these negotiations are.

This means, Mr. Speaker, that as of June 30, 2014, there is no firm agreement on the future market access of Jamaican goods and services into Canada, that's what it means.

Mr. Speaker, the relationship between Canada and the Caribbean runs long and deep. Canada is home to a significant number of the Caribbean Diaspora; it is a major source of tourists to the region; and Canada private sector investment in the region in a variety of industries, including banking, tourism and mining, is huge, with direct investment in excess of US$75 Billion, and trade in services of roughly US$3 Billion annually.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, Jamaica's relationship with Canada also remains extremely good, as Jamaica forms the largest percentage - and very few of us recall that, but Jamaica forms the largest percentage of the Afro-Canadian population. Over 60% of Afro-Canadians are of Jamaican origin and heritage, but we should not push our luck. The Canadians have now diverted their attention to the Trans-Pacific Partnership...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Anthony Hylton)

Mr. BARTLETT: Just bear this in mind, because if there are no value to a relationship then say it to the country, say to the manufacturers, say it to the service sector, say it to all of us that there's no value in concluding a relationship - a trade agreement with Canada; let's say that! But don't continue to drag out this to a process where you're frustrating even the people...

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: You are frustrating the Canadians.

Mr. BARTLETT: ...who are anxious to deal with us and to provide the basis of a new agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the problem has been that we need to focus more on the service side of the agreement, and we've not been dealing with it in this way. We're looking more on the commodity side, at the same time we're looking, Mr. Speaker, more in terms of what suits others in the Caribbean more than what suits Jamaica. And there's a moment when we need to look at what is good for our country, because the nature of our foreign policy must

be to advance our strategic interest, our strategic interest. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, it is essential then that the Prime Minister or the Minister make a statement to this Parliament and urgently bring us up to date on what is the future of these negotiations. Minister we need to know what truly is the plan.

Mr. Speaker, our trade arrangements, I think - and we turn now to trade facilitation - our trade arrangements will be forever hanging in limbo without implementation, if we do not take steps to improve trade facilitation. In his presentation the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs announced the conclusion of negotiations on trade facilitation agreement of the WTO at the recent Bali meetings, and indicated that the final agreement contained provisions for faster and more efficient procedures through effective cooperation between customs and other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues. It also had provisions for technical assistance and capacity building in this area.

The State Minister, Mr. Speaker, also said that trade facilitation is a key component in improving Jamaica's national trading environment and international competitiveness, and I agree, fully agree. But he made the real point that the implementation of the Agreement will be closely linked to the extent and timing of commitments on the one hand, and the country's legal, technical and physical capability to implement on the other. So the issue of implementation is critical.

Mr. Speaker, the State Minister said that there would be a meeting in Kingston to identify the needs of Jamaica to accede upon the agreements being entered into force and that the WTO would be advised by the end of July. And I'm holding him to that and will be watching to see what indeed will be communicated at the end of July.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica needs urgently - but you know, Mr. Speaker, the truth is that we shouldn't wait on the WTO enforcement timing to drive the process because of how critical and important it is to us. The truth is that the Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance, who spoke earlier on, spoke very extensively of the critical importance of the Customs and the modernization as an important part of the trade facilitation process. And I believe that it goes beyond any agreement that we have with a multilateral body or indeed with the WTO. Jamaica needs urgently to make the process of importing and exporting simpler, to make it more efficient and customer oriented, all key elements, Mr. Speaker, to increasing economic activity and enhancing the growth agenda.

We need to also make our customs and immigration E-compliant. This, Mr. Speaker will enable inter connectivity with a wide range of agencies - I heard that, that you started it - I make note of the comment that the Minister made that it has started. But the fact is, Mr. Speaker that we need to make our immigration and Customs Department being able to communicate with the range of agencies and organizations, including the

Ministry of Finance, the Statistics Institute, the Bank of Jamaica, Bureau of Standards and a range of key stakeholders including Terminal Operators, Cargo Carriers and more.

Mr. Speaker, it's very important in this because what it does is to create a seamless flow and allow for movement of our resources and indeed, the collection, which the Minister is very interested in, of our revenues on a timely and efficient basis.

Mr. Speaker, we need to take note while we are dealing with the whole key issue of trade facilitation on the negative factors that are affecting our growth ambitions as we have them.

The issue of crime and violence, Mr. Speaker, we have to arrest and deal with, because it affects the whole matter of trade facilitation.

Our macro economics instability has to indeed be brought under full control and indeed, Mr. Speaker, inure to the confidence that investors must have in the stability of our macro system.

Our business environment - and the Minister spoke about that - has to be improved and the bureaucracy; our tax system - some work has been done on that, Mr. Speaker, but much more work needs to be done.

Factors and transaction costs, which are critical to enable investors to choose Jamaica above other places; our labour productivity - and the Minister of Labour and also the Minister without portfolio made reference to that. Because, Mr. Speaker, it is of great concern that more than 70% of our working population are without certification or training at all. This cannot augur well for productivity which is critical, if we're going to be able, for example, to benefit from any argument about a logistics hub in Jamaica.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, not last but most importantly, is the issue of corruption. We have to deal with those issues and to elevate our position of positiveness in the Corruption Index from the World Economic Forum.

So, Mr. Speaker, while we recognize these as factors, we must manage and mitigate or even eliminate them. And while we do that we must recognize that there are some other downside risks which we must not ignore, and one such, of course, is the uncertainty of the global economy. We have to make sure that our planning takes that into account because we have no control in a lot of instances where that is concerned. The impact of fiscal consolidation which we have control over; delays in aids flows, which sometimes we have control over; delays in the implementation of reforms and projects which we have control over; and of course, Mr. Speaker, the impact of national hazards which we have no control over.

These are critical downside risks that we have to be able to manage, anticipate and be able to deal with in order to make our would-be investors feel comfortable about coming to us and feel satisfied that when they come and they make their investment, it will be safe and secure and that they will get the return on their investment.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the Jamaican Diaspora. Mr. Speaker, successive

Governments of Jamaica since the early 1990s have committed themselves to strengthen linkages with the Jamaican Diaspora and encourages participation in national development. Part of the mandate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade's role is consistently protect and promote Jamaica's interest internationally, including those of our nationals overseas. Our Diaspora extends to almost every metropolitan centre of the world, but most notable those in Europe and North America.

Increasingly over the years, we have sought to develop a structured approach to increasing the relationship with the Diaspora. In fact, all Governments in recent times, Mr. Speaker, have remained committed to deepening the harmonious relationship which has always existed by establishing a framework for heightened and more beneficial relationship. This is effected through partnerships, Mr. Speaker, at the private sector level between individuals and organizations and within the Government sector through which we can tap into all potential areas of partnership that exist.

Over the years our focus has been on:

1) participating in the development of a Diaspora bond;
2) enhancing consular service for Jamaican nationals in the Caribbean region;
3) enhancing opportunities for the engagement of Jamaican workers overseas; and
4) completing the Diaspora policy, which includes creating a governance framework for the Diaspora.

These have been the deliverables that our Minister has indicated to us and, indeed, enunciated at the last Biennial Conference,

Mr. Speaker, I'm not certain how many of us recall that up to the staging of the most recent Jamaica Diaspora Conference in Montego Bay, we were still speaking about the development of the Diaspora bond, as well as opportunities for venture capital and partnership with micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. I believe that with the current demand for our bonds - Minister has just come back from his road tour, has recently reported in the press and with the international money market it seem genuflecting at the alto of Jamaica's Government bonds, there couldn't be a better time for us to call on the Diaspora to follow the example of the market and give their support for the proposed bonds.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we haven't heard a word from our Minister or Minister of State on this matter. Indeed, we were told that the Jamaican Diaspora were unwilling to accept a low yielding investment bond issued by the Government of Jamaica.

(*Sotto voce* comment by Government Member)

Mr. BARTLETT: Well, this is a report from the Gleaner Editorial Forum. So you need to check to see whether you are properly quoted.

Mr. Speaker, the World Bank estimates that the Jamaican Diaspora has some $5.4

Billion in savings. So the $800 Million which we acquired recently on the international bonds market is less than 10 per cent of the savings that the Diaspora has overseas. Is the Minister saying that the Jamaican Diaspora is unwilling to show that kind of faith in our economy, even after the confidence expressed in the Government and the Ministry of Finance by the IMF Managing Director in Kingston recently, followed by the tremendous support that the international market has recently shown for our bonds? Mr. Speaker, something is not right here and we believe that it's either that the Government has abandoned the idea of the bonds or perhaps we have not been making the necessary initiatives that we should to get our Diaspora to be interested.

Mr. Speaker, I think we need to know, because this represents a very valuable and vital area from which investment flows can come into our country. We have not heard either, Mr. Speaker, about the enhancing consular services for Jamaican nationals in the Caribbean region or completing the long awaited Diaspora policy, which includes creating a governance framework for the Diaspora. At this rate, Mr. Speaker, it seems we won't hear anything from them again until perhaps next biennial meeting. As the conference approaches, perhaps the Minister will come out and speak again about those very objectives with the hope that the Diaspora will go for it. At that time, Mr. Speaker, you probably will expect the files will be dusted off and we'll pass on the public relations gimmick as usual and to give the impression that we're making progress in partnering with the Diaspora for social and economic development.

I should point out, however, that the only priority the Diaspora Committee, indeed, has shown, Mr. Speaker, since the last conference was the announcement by the Minister of Labour and Social Security in his debate recently that employment on the overseas work programme exceeds 13,000 in the 2013/14 period up from 11,400 in 2012/13. But personally, Mr. Speaker, I don't see the link between the Diaspora in North America and the Farm Work and Hotel programme, because unless these workers run off, it is expected that they will return home and resume their lives in Jamaica.

I would like, however, Mr. Speaker, to suggest the following to the Minister, and I hope that the Minister of State will relay these suggestions to his boss that we need to broaden the Diaspora engagement in governance if they are to take us seriously about a genuine partnership for prosperity. And there a few things, Mr. Speaker, that I believe we need to understand. Firstly, we can take our example from the Jewish Diaspora, which gave us the word "Diaspora" in fact, and it refers to the Jews who left the region of the Kingdom of Judah and Roman Judea as well as those who later immigrated from the wider Eresea, Israel. Throughout much of Jewish history, Mr. Speaker, most Jews live in the Diaspora. Today, the world's Jewish population is mainly concentrated in two countries: the United States [of America] and Israel.

We can boast about our Diaspora too, Mr. Speaker, because we believe that at least as many Jamaicans as the population here at home live in the combined Jamaican Diaspora in North America and Europe as well as to a lesser extent our Caribbean islands. Like the Jewish nation, we do not allow Jamaicans living outside of Jamaica to vote in our elections and the Opposition believes that we should maintain that position. However, we need to find a way to allow Jamaicans in the Diaspora to play a more meaningful role in our governance. I do not believe that the suggestion of a seat in the Senate is necessarily sustainable, but I believe that the Diaspora can fill key diplomatic roles aboard as ambassadors-at-large or honorary consuls on a voluntary basis. This is a whole new area of paradiplomacy which we can embrace to enable a broader connectivity at levels which our diplomats cannot achieve because of their lack of contact or access to certain corridors of power within the United States, Canada, Europe and even Eastern and Northern Caribbean.

Mr. Speaker, the Member speaks about knowing about paradiplomacy that, Mr. Speaker is simple basic understanding of how [the West's] failure has transformed itself over the years. That paradiplomacy now is requiring more actors in diplomacy to deal with issues which traditional diplomacy cannot deal with and I believe that you have a 101 there for a few minutes. This, Mr. Speaker, will not only reduce the cost of providing an efficient and effective consular service aboard, but would certainly open new doors to opportunities that our diplomatic staff would not normally be able to access.

Mr. Speaker, historically governments have designated special diplomatic envoys for specific assignments as ambassadors-at-large overseas. In this sense I'm not speaking about an ambassador with special duties who may be sent to more than government, but an authorized representative of the Jamaican Government given special diplomatic duty in the Diaspora or a honorary consul who can assist our diplomatic staff within the Diaspora to help open doors of opportunity for investors and our people living in these countries who can in turn contribute immensely to the development of our nation.

Mr. Speaker, now when you go, for example, in our large metropolitan partners you find that we have some consular officers in some of the large cities: we have in Los Angeles, we have in Chicago, I think we have also in Philadelphia and so on, but we have a real opportunity to expand these to far more cities, because these are people who are anxious to do something for Jamaica at no cost to Jamaica, but they have the connectivity and they have the relationship that can open doors and access the kind of relationship that we, even our ambassadors, are unable so to do.

So, Mr. Speaker, in concluding then, Jamaica's foreign policy needs to be directly linked to our growth agenda. We must re-examine the role of CARICOM and investigate the possibilities available to us for stronger and more beneficial partnerships. We must also as a matter of urgency complete and

implement the new trade policy as well as the various agreements we are party to. Importantly, Mr. Speaker, we must do whatever we can to bring the negotiations with Canada to completion while still maintaining the longstanding relationship we have with one of our most trusted traditional partners.

We have support, Mr. Speaker, for our ambitions in the vast Diaspora which we have. But, Mr. Speaker, we must engage them in a more meaningful way. We also have much work to do here at home in trade facilitation and the ease of doing business as we seek to make the transition into a strong growth economy. If we do this, Mr. Speaker, we can overcome the transformation dilemma and be recognized as a partner of equity and integrity among the nations of the world.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. House Leader.

(Cross talk)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Sectoral Debate 2014/2015 has now come to an end and the many hours of thoughtful and insightful presentations from Members of both sides of this Honourable House will serve us well going forward. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, although this is not unique to this year's debate, the common thread that runs through this year's presentations appears to be stronger; this augurs well for the continuing development of our nation.

The common thread, Mr. Speaker, is the recognition that strong and decisive actions must be continued if the economy is to be positioned on a path of sustainable development and the attainment of meaningful economic growth. This recognition assumes great significance given the traditionally competitive and partisan nature of our democratic process, and the high expectations of our people. The less fortunate and vulnerable, Mr. Speaker, bear the brunt of the necessary adjustment process. However, once empowered, these persons, through their hard work, enterprise and investment, will enable our country to grow its way out of the syndrome of unsustainable debt, adjustment fatigue and stunted growth.

Mr. Speaker, for a number of years, these debates have been criticized for their lack of structure and length. I wish to acknowledge that for the next year we intend to do some reform. For one, we have to conclude our Budget Debate prior to the end of the financial year March 31. All of that debate will have to be completed so that the Estimates are approved so that money can be spent come the 1st of April. Further, we will have to modify the operations of the Standing Finance Committee in order to achieve this. In the same breath, the sectoral debates will have to be more structured and time-sensitive.

In that regard, Mr. Speaker, I have, today, written to my colleague, Leader of Opposition Business, expressing these intentions, with a view to engaging a process of reform and I wish to assure this House that we'll keep them - all Members apprised and that those reforms will be implemented prior to the start of the new financial year.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, all Jamaica is seized with the implementation and outcome of our IMF-approved economic programme. This is understandable and as the Most Honourable Prime Minister and our Minister of Finance have done, I too acknowledge the understanding and sacrificial patience which our people have shown in regard to the tough decisions that their Government has had to take.

I would be remiss in not recognizing the strong endorsement of the head of the International Monetary Fund, Madam Christine Lagarde, during her recent visit to our country. She observed that despite the deep-rooted and challenging circumstances facing our country, the Government of Jamaica under the enlightened leadership of our Prime Minister (Applause) and that with strong and decisive policy implementation of our Minister of Finance (Applause) we have achieved economic stability, maintained social harmony, and started the positioning of our country on the path of sustainable development and growth.

These achievements and objectives are possible only with the support of our people.

Mr. Speaker, as legislators and as representatives of our people, we must do our part and continue to act in the national interest by embracing the process of transformation and the earnest search for solutions to our various maladies. We must invest our trust and abiding faith in our people who patiently and correctly look to us for guidance on a more secured path to growth and prosperity. The strength, resilience and faithfulness of our people demand nothing less.

(Applause)

For our nation to grow, those of us in leadership at all levels must be less concerned with the safety of our jobs and position in society, and to step up to the plate in a more fulsome manner. We must be prepared within the regulations and guidelines to think outside the box in our search for solutions. Where our laws, regulations and past applications are found to be inadequate, we must be bold enough to reform them for the greater good. Indeed, we now stand on a strong foundation of democracy because those who have walked this way before us had the strength of conviction to make a difference for the people's good.

Mr. Speaker, I am patently aware that this route least travelled is not easy, not always safe, not always popular but if pursued with focus and purpose we will all succeed.

Mr. Speaker, we have no choice but to carry that burden in representing our people and working for this nation.

I will address just a few of some of the issues that came out of the debates and I am going to confine them to the ministry that I have the honour to lead.

Mr. Speaker, the - Jamaica's global information and communication technology ranking has been followed for much debate. I wish to set the record straight on this most important matter. These rankings tell the world the nature of our social and economic progress, the readiness of our society to use

ICTs, actual usage of ICTs, and the impact that ICTs generate in the economy. These rankings can therefore exert a powerful influence on decisions that generate foreign direct investment. And I have been at pains not to engage in a tit for tat because I did not want to remind the Member that when we left office in 2007 we were at 45 and by the time we got back we were at 75, but I will not say anything about it.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. PAULWELL: I will not say anything about it. Reports such as the Global Information Technology Report from the World Economic Forum and measuring the information society from the international Telecommunications union indicate that our rankings are below that of some of our competitors, and our major trading partners and we view that quite seriously. However, we strongly believe Mr. Speaker, that in some instances the data used to inform the ratings have been inadequate and I have said so from 2009 when we started to plummet; and also did not take into consideration the significant prepaid and wireless characteristics of our markets especially in the way we access data. We have a strange situation in Jamaica where the vast majority of our people are on prepaid systems. And also because of the competition that we have achieved in wireless telecommunications, most people now don't bother with a wired system, they are into the wireless world.

Mr. Speaker, these reports focused, for example, on fixed broadband and failed to recognize the pervasive use of mobile smartphones that utilize wireless services, and I really want to commend the Minister of Finance for removing the duties, import duties on smartphones because that is where our people are now accessing their data. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of this reality, I personally met with the Secretary General of the ITU in Geneva recently where this was one of the issues we discussed. It is clear that prior to this, the data collection for the generation of these rankings did not take into account the peculiarities that I have just mentioned. It is now agreed that the data gathering will be carried out independently by the Office of Utilities Regulation in collaboration with other stakeholders, all of those who are in the business. Sometimes those persons who are in the business providing services they tend not to want to reveal all that they are doing, and we are trying now to encourage them because the ranking is very important to how people view our country. And I really want to call on all the stakeholders to be cognizant of this.

To aid in this regard, the recently established ICT Advisory Councils well as E-Gov of Jamaica Limited has been tasked with analyzing the instruments used by the various organizations such as the ITU and identifying the data that is being provided and by whom in order to ensure that the data sources are authentic from here on.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many exciting developments taking place in the ICT sector

and I want to commend my Minister of State for his excellent presentation. (Applause) He enumerated the various many projects that we are implementing to ensure that ICT is not only a basis on which all aspects of our economy can progress, but also as an industry in itself as part of the joined-up efforts with the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce.

However, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a brief word and for what for me is perhaps the most exciting thing that is happening in the Ministry in terms of ICT, and that is our Tablets in Schools Project.

Mr. Speaker, in order for the successful rollout for the Tablets in Schools Pilot Project during the coming academic year, a number or proprietary activities are now being undertaken, schools and parents have been sensitized in the use and care of the tablets, a Tablet in Schools Policy Manual has been developed and the teachers have been trained in basic ICT skills. In addition, at the end of this month, we will be distributing firstly to the teachers 1,200 teachers, 1,200 tablets at the end of this month. (Applause) The thirty-eight (38) schools were selected by the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Speaker, a number of customized training programmes have been designed for the teachers, on how to utilize tablets in teaching and suitable educational applications to be used on the tablets have also been identified; all 38 institutions - this is very important, will be equipped with free Wi-fi facilities, all of them. So those persons who live within the precincts of these institutions can actually go with their own device and have free access to Wi-fi as well.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, contracts totalling some 800 million have awarded to four service providers for the tablets as well as the range of services including accessories and device management solutions. Importantly also, Mr. Speaker, services such as tracking and content control were also procured. We are now negotiating with publishers for the preloading of the tablets with available material approved by the Ministry of Education. The pilot project is for one year and as I mentioned, will be implemented in 38 institutions, the initial phase will benefit 24,000 students in six pre-primary schools, 13 primary schools, 5 All Age schools and 12 high schools along with one teachers college and one special education institution. Next year, is when we seek to rollout across the entire island to benefit over 600,000 students.

Mr. Speaker, this is ground-breaking and it has the potential to transform our education system. No longer will the inability to purchase books be a barrier to quality education. We are using technology to break down the barriers that lead to poverty, and in that regard I am urging Jamaicans to view these investments as a national asset.

Mr. Speaker, this is a big risk we are taking. We know that things can go wrong but we are determined to enable our youngsters to have this access, and I know that there will be temptation especially on the path of those adults who see the youngsters now with an expensive device, don't think about it, you are not going to get away with it. If you steal a

tablet it will be of no use to you and we will get you because we will be able to track you wherever you are.

We are going to be implementing a major public education campaign to try and communicate this and other messages. But I want to urge the full support of not only the Parliament, but the entire country in this effort to modernize how we treat with information and knowledge, and how we enable our people to have access to technology.

Mr. Speaker, I move quickly to energy, and I want to communicate to this House that the Government of Jamaica and the Jamaica Public Service Company have signed, only yesterday an amendment to the JPSCo-license. This will allow the Cabinet of Jamaica to manage the procurement process through the Electricity Sector Enterprise Team. (Applause) It will also grant the JPSCo a right of first refusal in relation to the replacement of any of its existing generation facilities. The amendments and related matters are pertinent to the critical and urgent issue of the procurement of the new base-load generation capacity, it removes constraints that we all acknowledged on the ability of ESET to proceed with its mandate.

Mr. Speaker, in 2011 the previous Administration had amended the JPSCo license to confer the management and administration of the procurement of new generation capacity on the OUR. We do not believe that this is a role for the regulator. The role of the OUR as the overall regulator prescribed electricity services as outlined in the OUR Act will be maintained. We are not changing that, what we are doing is to remove procurement from the OUR and it will now reside entirely in the hands of the Cabinet and in this instance the Cabinet has asked ESET to proceed to procure the project. (Applause)

As has been announced earlier, I have already written to Energy World International to indicate that I have formally revoked the license to construct the 381 megawatt power plant. Consistent with the provision of the license the revocation takes effect on the 21st of this month. However, the Government regards the new based-load generation plant as a large scale major project, and as a result all steps are being taken to give momentum to efforts to make this a reality and to allow for Jamaicans to benefit from cheaper electricity rates.

In this regard, Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet was advised by ESET that consultancy services are being engaged to complete within two (2) months the following work. Firstly, a least cost generation plan, a power plant site option and thirdly, the business model and projected financial long-term plan for JPS.

I think it's very important for us to acknowledge that going forward, we have to realize that as the owner, of the grid, we have to have some regard now to the viability of the JPSCo and this is one aspect of the work that is to be undertaken by the ESET in this two-month period. And, of course, we will keep the Parliament and the country updated on all aspects of the work going forward in relation to this very important matter.

Mr. Speaker, even as we move posthaste with the process of acquiring the mega-

generation plant, we must not lose sight of developments and achievements with regard to conservation measures and the efforts to tap into non-traditional sources of energy.

New projects for renewable energy supply are set to be implemented within the next 12 to 15 months. And I must dispel any notion that renewables will result in higher electricity rates to the consumer. Renewable energy enhances the energy security of Jamaica and reduces the heavy reliance the country has had on fossil fuels.

In fact, by the middle of 2015, Jamaica will be among the top countries in the region in terms of its use of renewables when, in addition to the 40 megawatts of wind that we now have generated, plus approximately 20 megawatts of hydro-power, existing hydropower, there will also be 78 additional megawatts of renewable energy to be linked to the national grid. Further, I have previously reported that I have signed 166 licences with a combined capacity of over 2.6 megawatts of net billing. Mr. Speaker, in total, these additional 80.6 megawatts generated from renewable sources will avoid the importation of over 1,000,000 barrels of oil annually and save Jamaica US$108 Million. That's what we have done; that's what we've achieved. And I think when we focus on just one aspect of the energy derived and debate, we fail to see what we are accomplishing in this very important area of renewable energy.

The three (3) companies that will generate the 78 megawatts are Blue Mountain Renewables.... (Applause) ....and they are going to be doing 34 megawatts of capacity from Wind Power.

Mr. PARCHMENT: Lovely!

Mr. PAULWELL: Then there's the Wigton Windfarm that will do 24 megawatts; and then there's WRB Enterprise to supply 20 megawatts of solar, over 100 acres of land will be utilized to put up the largest solar facility in the English-speaking Caribbean of 20 megawatts. That's a tremendous achievement. (Applause) And I'm advised by the OUR....

Mr. SAMUDA: Where will that be?

Mr. PAULWELL: Clarendon.

...that the recommendation for the licenses will be with me next week and I intend to sign them as I normally try to do. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, I wish to update this Honourable House that discussions are well advanced - and I just want to turn now to the mining side, mining and we have some further developments on that "Clinker Deal with Venezuela"....that discussions are well advanced for the expansion of the arrangement that exists between Caribbean Cement Company Limited and the Government of Venezuela under the PetroCaribé Trade Compensation Mechanism. This expansion requires that Carib Cement will supply Venezuela with an additional 240,000 tonnes of clinker valued at approximately US$20 Million. (Applause) The applicable Jamaican dollar equivalent will be paid directly to Carib Cement by the PetroCaribé Development Fund and will be applied toward partial debt repayment consistent with the Government's existing

debt repayment obligations under the financing arrangements of the PetroCaribé Energy Accord Initiative.

Mr. Speaker, the initial "Clinker Deal" required that Carib Cement exported approximately 100,000 tonnes of clinker to Venezuela, and that was valued at US$8.5 Million. Therefore, the total package that we're seeking now, which will go over 18-months, will be valued at close to US$30 Million. The programme is designed to support Venezuela's objective to build two million houses over a seven-year period to alleviate their severe housing deficiency while boosting employment in the construction sector.

It should be noted, Mr. Speaker, that this trade compensation mechanism with Venezuela can serve as a catalyst to expanded the trade relations between our two countries. So apart from cement, that country's economy has real and potential demand for a wide range of products that our manufacturers and producers can satisfy.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Ministries of Industry, Investment and Commerce; Foreign affairs, Finance and Planning and my own will be working closely with our private sector to facilitate further opportunities under the trade compensation mechanism. I don't think we should hesitate to exploit these to the fullest.

Mr. Speaker, briefly now on the developments of the bauxite/alumina industry. As you are aware, the bauxite/alumina sector has been critical to the development of our nation over the years, and it remains an important part of the Government's growth and employment agenda. Traditionally, the sector has contributed 5% to 6% of GDP and has been a leading source of foreign direct investment.

As a nation with this valuable natural resource, we must re-examine how we reposition this sector in the context of today's global marketplace. We must maximize what we currently have as we seek new ways to exploit this critical resource over the next 50 years. This, therefore, is a top priority of this Government going forward.

Mr. Speaker, as is well known and acknowledged, the global financial situation decreases in the world market price of alumina in 2008 and 2009 adversely affected the local bauxite alumina industry. This resulted in the contraction of the production capacity and of the output.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, we are also witnessing a change in the global bauxite alumina market. For one, the ban in Indonesia has created a shortage of supply on the world market, and has made Jamaica a more attractive prospect internationally.

Secondly, there is an emerging delinking of the price between bauxite and aluminum. This has been confirmed by authoritative industry sources such as the London-based Commodities Research Unit International Limited, Platts Metals Week and others. Previously, the price of bauxite was directly related to the price of aluminum. This emerging delinking would mean a reassessment of our policy as it relates to the

industry. The increase in the price of bauxite has created greater value in our existing bauxite reserves. We, therefore, have to be strategic with how we treat with those reserves going forward.

Mr. Speaker, we are at a very important juncture in the sector. In the repositioning of the sector, there are many credible queries about our reserves and we now have to make hard nose business decisions in the best interest of our country. In that regard, we will not allow any company to hold us at ransom and deny potential investors.... (Applause) ...and deny potential investors the opportunity to invest, to generate employment and to enable the industry to play its proper role in growing the Jamaican economy. The market is speaking and as growth in the global economy gathers momentum, the enlightened investors will reap their just rewards if appropriate preparation and forward-thinking is applied. We must act boldly but always after careful evaluation.

It is in this context, Mr. Speaker, that I am constrained to announce that the Government has placed UC RUSAL on notice formally by letter dated July 1, 2014, that it is my intention to revoke the Special Mining Leases in respect of the Alpart and Kirkvine refineries in the event that *bona fide* mining operations do not commence within six (6) months. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this Honourable House will recall that the Alpart and Kirkvine refineries have both been non-operational since 2009. The bauxite reserves associated with both plants amount to some 200 million tonnes of our ore idling in the ground while the plants flounder in uncertainty and the livelihood of thousands continue to be in peril. This situation will not be allowed to continue.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we have extended to UC RUSAL for an additional two (2) years relief from the Bauxite Levy for WINDALCO's Ewarton Plant for the period October 1, 2013 to September 1, 2015. This is on the clear and unequivocal basis that a coal-fired generating plant will be constructed to supply cheaper energy to the refinery.

Mr. SAMUDA: Who is going to close the debate?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker… It is being closed now.

(Laughter)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Chuck)

Mr. PAULWELL: I have, I have already announced that there are discussions with the major Chinese aluminum producer, Xinfa, to export bauxite in exchange for the establishment of a Greenfield, two million tonnes *per annum* alumina refinery. This could result in foreign direct investment inflows of about $2 Billion to $3 Billion.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we move to close, this industry has been a main-stay of the Jamaican economy for decades, From 1974 to 2013, the sector produced some 400 million tones of bauxite from which the country earned $3.72 Billion in levy and taxes; collected $222 Million in royalties…

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The speaker's time...

Mr. CHUCK: Close the debate.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The Minister's time for speaking has expired.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Minister's time be extended sufficiently to allow him to finish his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Minister's time for speaking be extended sufficient for him to complete his presentation?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Minister.

Mr. PAULWELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is therefore imperative that we seek to develop consensus as to how we move forward. I am aware of a number of sentiments echoed from various quarters as to what is possible for the future. Some of the commentary, though well meaning, suffer from a paucity of information, others are visionary and I really want to commend the Gleaner in particular, for their reflection on the sector. And as a result of some of the comments we have received, I am committing that in the third quarter of this fiscal year, the Ministry will be leading a national dialogue on the future of the bauxite/alumina industry. It will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders in the sector to bring their information, their experience and their perspective to the fore as we chart the way forward.

So, Mr. Speaker, I thought I would address those specific matters as they were some of the issues that came out in the debates. I know the bauxite sector; at least two Members raised it and, of course, the energy issue and the issue related to ICT were issues that I could not neglect to respond to today.

A MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, in extraordinary times, leaders need extraordinary vision, courage and conviction. (Applause) This is not only needed in our Parliamentary and governance affairs but at every level of our society. It is tempting to take the path of least resistance. That path is almost guaranteed to be safe and trouble-free. If you do nothing you are not likely to make mistakes or face major obstacles, or reap significant rewards. Equally, it is hardly likely to break new grounds or to move mountains.

Today, our nation demands courage, fortitude and a willingness to push the envelope in the search for answers. As political leaders, this is our lot. I dare say it is our responsibility, our mandate. The simple fact is that business as usual will not cut it.

I end by inviting my colleagues as we close this Debate in this Honourable House and to our leaders at all levels of our society to join together seeing more of our common interests and what are the things that unite us and less of those that divides us. We must develop the capacity in the national interest to be critical and vigilant when necessary, but equally, to be supportive and patriotic despite the side we sit on.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank you for your patience. I wish to thank Members for the

spirit in which we did these debates, and as we pledge to reform them next year, I urge that the Parliament continues in its robust way in the way we debate issues.

May God continue to bless Jamaica, Land We Love.

Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Motion be carried.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Motion be approved.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Motion has been approved. (Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. House Leader.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended for us to do any further business today. I therefore, move for the adjournment of the Parliament until next Tuesday, July 15, at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House do adjourn until next Tuesday, July 15, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at approximately 5:47 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015

TUESDAY, July 15, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:30 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security

HON. ROGER HAROLD CLIFFORD CLARKE, CD, (PNP), Westmoreland, Central, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM McNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern

MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern

MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central

MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. RUDYARD CONRAD SPENCER, (JLP), Clarendon, South Eastern

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

DR. ANDREW O'BRIEN WHEATLEY, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Central

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Dr. Dayton Campbell

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Before we get down to today's business, let us welcome a group of young ladies from Miss Team Jamaica who are visiting with us today with their chaperone. (Applause) I hope they find today's sitting interesting.

House Leader.

(HON ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Parliament is well aware of the passing of former Governor-General Sir Howard Cooke. A decision has been taken, Mr. Speaker, to appropriately recognize the tremendous contribution of Sir Howard by a special sitting of our Parliament.

(Inaudible comments)

(The Speaker gavels)

(MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. NATALIE GAYE NEITA-HEADLEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Sports and Deputy Leader of the House, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Parliament will sit next Wednesday, the 23rd of July at 10:00 a.m. And it should be noted that it will be a sitting of the Senate, to which the Members of this House will be invited.

Sir Howard, having served last in the capacity as President of the Senate, and so it would be done next Wednesday the 23rd at 10:00 a.m. And in the meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, we send out our condolences to Lady Cooke, other members of the family and of course, we want to say a special word to our Clerk of the Houses, Mrs. Heather Cooke, as a daughter-in-law to Sir Howard. And we're looking forward to a day of great tribute next Wednesday.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

(MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker, entered and took his seat.)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Mr. PAULWELL: We have two Statements, the Minister of Finance will commence followed by the Minister of National Security.

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

(Applause)

(DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to bring to the attention of the House two recent events that are of tremendous importance to the country; first, the results of the Fourth Review under the Extended Fund Facility arrangement with the International Monetary Fund. And second, the issuance of a US$800 Million bond by Jamaica in the International Capital Market.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today, or to be laid today in this Honourable House, is an adjusted Letter of Intent and Supplementary Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies that was sent to the International Monetary Fund in June 2014, prior to the consideration by the IMF Board of the country's Fourth Review under the programme. The document which we have committed to lay as we have laid all the previous Letters of Intent and updates of the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies, this document provides an update on performance related to the quantitative targets and structural benchmark through March 2014 and those to be attained for the fiscal year 2014/2015. It also outlines the specific policies that will be pursued to meet the programme objectives in the near term.

With respect to the Fourth Review under the IMF programme, Members of this House should be aware that on June 20th 2014, the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund concluded the Article IV Consultation and the Fourth Review under the Extended Fund Facility with Jamaica. The completion of that review allowed for the disbursement of a further $49.95 Million SDRs or Special Drawing Rights, or approximately US$70.9 Million, bringing the total disbursements under the arrangement to $268.59 Million Special Drawing Rights or about US$414 Million.

What is notable also, Mr. Speaker is the Fund's decision to provide the resources under this drawdown and possibly those that will flow from the September Review as direct budgetary support, which will ease the fiscal pressures as well as provide foreign exchange support to Jamaica.

Following the IMF Board discussion of the Review, the Acting Chairman indicated that Jamaica's programme implementation had been commendable, and noted that with the upfront fiscal adjustment and steadfast implementation of a wide-ranging structural reform agenda, initial dividends from the

reorientation of policies were emerging. He also concurred that the Government's economic strategy aims to boost growth and employment, place public debt on a sustainable path, restore competitiveness and strengthen the social safety net.

These views were reiterated by the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Madam Christine Lagarde on her recent visit to Jamaica. She also encouraged us to continue on the current path because it was her view that its full implementation would bring tremendous benefits to Jamaica and its people.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that this economic reform programme is challenging, but in spite of the difficulties we've successfully completed four reviews under the Extended Fund Facility and we've seen the real economy begin to respond positively. There has been a return to growth, employment has increased... (Applause) ...unemployment has declined; inflation is below the targeted range...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

(HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and commerce, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...and the current account deficit of the balance of payments has narrowed and there has been an increase in the Net International Reserves.

(Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

(DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the Fifth Review Mission under this programme is scheduled for August 2014. During that period the Mission will assess performance for the quarter ending June 30, 2014 and the outlook going forward.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that we are confident that all the quantitative targets...

(Applause)

MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...and structural benchmarks for the June quarter have been successfully met.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, these positive developments in our economy have caught the attention of not only the International Monetary Fund and our development partners, but also the wider international community, as during my recent meetings with investors in the United States and across Europe, there was consistently positive feedback on, and recognition of Jamaica's progress in fiscal consolidation and rebalancing the economy.

Commendation must be given to all those who made sacrifices. (Applause) It is not the Government's accomplishment it is the accomplishment of the people of Jamaica including the public sector workers, the financial institutions and other bondholders, the pensioners and the general population. (Applause)

This is just the beginning, Mr. Speaker; our progress must not only be sustained but amplified. And this will depend on the continued support of the Government in its widest sense, the private sector and the international community. The priority must now be on growth and job creation and the prospects look good. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

(MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I'm aware of both committed investments and those nearing finalization of over US$3 Billion across a range of sectors including Agriculture, Tourism, ICT, BPO Energy and Port Operations. (Applause) These investments relate to new projects and will be undertaken primarily by foreign investors over the next 12 to 18 months.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: That's good.

(HON LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: But there are also numerous local investors who are stepping up to the plate also, Mr. Speaker, and I urge them to continue to have confidence in the programme... (Applause) ...and I urge those not yet convinced to step up and let's see Jamaica grow some more. (Applause)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear! Hear, hear!

(MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I will now address the other event of significance, Mr. Speaker. On July 1, 2014, the Government of Jamaica launched and priced a US$800 Million bond in the International Capital Markets. The bond which will mature in 2025 was issued at par at an interest rate of 7.625% and will be repaid in equal installments in 2023, 2024 and 2025. The proceeds of this bond were received on July 9 this month, July 9, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, this bond issuance represents Jamaica's largest transaction and the lowest interest rate at which Jamaica has been able to raise funds in the International Capital Markets. (Applause) By way of background, the Administration took a decision to approach the International Capital Markets to raise an amount of US$500 Million to finance the budget based on the overwhelming interest in the possibility of Jamaica's re-entry into the Capital Markets, which was demonstrated on the non-deal road show held in major financial centres of the USA and Europe during the period June 9 to June 20 2014.

The decision was also driven by the prevailing momentum and the appetite in the

International Capital Markets for emerging market credit generally. Request for proposals were addressed to nine finance houses and positive responses were submitted by six banks. Evaluations of the proposals resulted in City Group Global Markets and BMP Paribas Securities Corporation being mandated to execute the transaction.

(MR. RICHARD ANTONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

The transaction was announced with an initial size of US$500 Million and was upsized to US$800 Million based on overwhelming investor demand. (Applause) The transaction, which marked Jamaica's re-entry into the International Capital Markets was announced, launched and priced within three hours, Jamaica's fastest execution ever and, as was mentioned previously, was at the lowest interest rates to date.

(Applause)

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took her seat.)

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Dr. PHILLIPS: The lead managers reported that the issue was more than four times oversubscribed with a final order book consisting of over US$3.8 Billion from over two hundred different accounts, primarily institutional investors in the U.S. and Europe. The proceeds of the issue will allow the country to meet its external financing needs for the 2014/15 fiscal year, inclusive of the refinancing of an upcoming bond maturity due in October of this year of euro 150 Million or approximately US$204 Million; it will also allow us to prefund maturities falling due next year and reduce the country's vulnerability to market volatility and shocks over the next fiscal year.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, a few themes have reverberated in our recent discussions with the International Monetary Fund and our other development partners as well as with players in the International Capital Market:

- the recognition of the difficult choices that Jamaica and the administration has faced, and commendation for the progress that Jamaica has made under the Economic Reform Programme to date;
- everyone emphasized the absolute necessity, if Jamaica is to prosper for us to continue the path of fiscal consolidation (Applause);
- everyone also recognized the importance of maintaining the social safety net for the protection of the poorest and the most vulnerable in the society; and
- finally, Mr. Speaker, there was a recognition that the only way that these reforms can be sustained is for the entire country to combine its efforts to achieve higher levels of growth over the medium term and to

do our best to ensure that we achieve rates of growth above that which is programmed.

(MR. KEITH ANTHONY WALFORD, (PNP), St. Ann, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

The Economic Reform Programme is challenging and has required significant sacrifices from our people. I would, therefore, like to thank all elements of the Jamaican population: the pensioners, the bondholders, the general citizenry for the support that they have given to the programme. It has not been an easy road and we have not completed the journey even though the most difficult parts of the journey arguably, have been concluded. Our obligation is to ensure that these sacrifices that have been made have not been made in vain and we must continue to implement the programme faithfully. (Applause) If we do so we will be laying a foundation which will guarantee that Jamaica will be the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business as we get into the further years of the 21st century.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has spoken on two issues: a Report of the Fourth Review under the International Monetary Fund Programme and a Report on the Funds raised on the International Capital Markets.

I would just want to say in respect of the first section of his presentation, Mr. Speaker, I note carefully the Minister's comment on the need for higher levels of concentration on investment and economic growth. And while I take note the figure of US$3 Billion that he has mentioned on several occasions, and which I believe relate largely to a number of mega projects that are in the pipeline, I want to just point out to the Minister that there continues to be quite a bit of concern in the business community and in existing businesses, because that is where the significant expansion has to come from. Not necessarily going to come from new incremental investment, but from existing businesses being able to expand and the truth is that businesses in many areas of our economy are hurting. Businesses are hurting. I met on my way here on my way to the House today with a manufacturer...

Government MEMBER: Yuh just making that up now.

Mr. SHAW: ...with a manufacturer who sought to explain to me, and for my purposes it's really a reinforcement of a concern that I have constantly expressed in this House, of the deleterious impact of the continuing devaluation of the Jamaican dollar is having on his business. And it is an issue which I think continues to be alive and well, because in the recent visit of the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, she made it a point to stress that the devaluation of the Jamaican dollar is not yet over and pointedly suggested that we can expect to see more devaluation of the Jamaican dollar. And I think that the Minister might wish to comment on the comments of the Managing Director of

the IMF, especially in relation to the decision a few days ago of the Bank of Jamaica to intervene in the foreign exchange market. As far as I am concerned I am in agreement with the latter view, but I think that because this whole business of the exchange rate is such an issue that generates so much concern and is part of the atmosphere of lack of confidence in the investment community that -

Dr. DAVIES: Really?

Mr. SHAW: Yes. Yes, really.

(Cross talk)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Where you get that from?

Mr. SHAW: It is an issue, Mr. Speaker, of confidence and I, therefore, believe that the Minister ought to seek to bring some clarity because I think there needs to be a reconciliation between the position taken by the Managing Director of the IMF and the position being taken by the Bank of Jamaica. It's important that mixed signals are not being sent, but that there is certainty of some degree of stability and predictability going forward. That is the simple point that I want to make and I think that it would be important for the Minister to comment on it.

There is no question that because of our high levels of import dependency, Mr. Speaker that import dependency includes the dependency of the productive sector on imported raw materials, on imported capital goods in order for them to produce for export. And so while we have celebrated the reduction of imports and its positive impact on the Current Account, there is no question that a part of that scenario of reduced imports is also reduction in the importation of raw materials because, Mr. Speaker the truth of it is that we really have not seen any incremental benefit in the export of goods and services from Jamaica as result of devaluation. As a matter of fact, it is questionable in our circumstances and within the context of the framework of our production processes, it is questionable, Mr. Speaker, just how the impact and the effect of devaluation as a strategy has been having a positive impact on export. It has just not.

(MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

The truth is, Jamaica continues to be largely an import substitution economy and because we are an import substitution economy it means that - and because we are highly import dependent for our raw materials then the greatest victim for a policy of devaluation is the fact that manufacturers continue to have to drive up prices to the local consumers, the biggest losers in this business of devaluation in this country are the poor who are getting poorer.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. SHAW: It is the workers, the workers of this country with whom we have a Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement on wage freeze.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. SHAW: And I bet, Mr. Speaker, that in that agreement with the workers of this country there was no line item in there that suggested that inflation that is driven from devaluation, that there will be some compensation for the workers. None!

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. SHAW: And so workers, poor people alike, are the main ones that are bearing the brunt of this devaluation, which I believe it has to come to an end and the country has to settle down to produce within an atmosphere of stability.

Now, Mr. Speaker, briefly on the question of the US$800 Million that has been raised by the Government on the International Capital Markets. I take note of the Minister's observations that the first $500 Million is consistent with what was announced in the budget and a portion of which will be retiring an instrument, a euro instrument, in October of this year.

My concern is that I have expressed outside of this House and I'm taking the opportunity of expressing the concern today, Mr. Speaker, the Minister went to the market for US$500 Million why did he take US$300 Million more? Simply because it was available? I don't think that's a good enough response. In fact, in January of 2011 when I went to the market for US$400 Million it was oversubscribed not as well as it's oversubscribed now, but it was oversubscribed to the tune of US$2.2 Billion of orders booked. And I remember being asked whether we should take more of what was booked and I said, no, we have gone to the market for US$400 Million that's what we will take. Not a dime more.

Now, what we have done is to take US$300 Million more than we needed. And the Minister has said in his Statement, Mr. Speaker that the reason why he has done that is to prepare for other obligations in the next fiscal year. Now as I understand it, the other obligation in the next fiscal year is June of next year where some US$400 Million become payable. My question is, why the sort of gladness and the hurry to grab US$300 Million more eleven months before it is needed. Look at what's going to happen now, because this appears to be a question of confidence. If things are going so well, the Managing Director has come to Jamaica and has given her blessings to you - she even sought to endorse the Government which in itself is another matter which was highly inappropriate for her to do.

(Cross talk)

Highly inappropriate for her to do.

(Cross talk)

(MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. KENNETH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central, entered and took his seat.)

But issue, let's stick to the issue, Mr. Speaker....

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, if the Minister, is...

(Heckling by Members)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, if the Minister is so confident in his programme, why take US$300M more this year than you needed in the international capital market? Let me say, Mr. Speaker, let me say what consequence of that is. He has raised it at 7.65 per cent which is a very good rate because the last time when I went in at that time it was the lowest at 7.95 which is very good. (Applause) But, Mr. Speaker, taking US$300 Million 11 months before it is required, what is the consequence of it? The Minister will receive an interest rate of about three per cent with that money on deposit, about three per cent that leaves a differential of 4.6 per cent interest that will now have to be paid by the taxpayers of this country, for 11 months. By my nominal calculation, Mr. Speaker, that will mean, that will mean an additional J$1.4 Billion that will have to be paid for $300 Million that we don't need for 11 months while we are paying money on the existing instrument that itself will become due next June.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I ask the question, $1.4 Billion we can find to hold that money in a special account when the nurses down at the KPH and other areas in the health services, money is owed, money is owed by the Ministry of Health, money has been deducted to be paid over on behalf of the nurses and this has not been done. The JPS, the Jamaica Public Service Managing Director is on the television quarrelling with the Government to pay its Bill. The fire department, the fire department is in serious trouble, we cannot find any money for them but we are going to find $1.4 Billion to pay additional interest rate to hold some money in the banks, it is fiscally irresponsible on the part of the Minister of Finance. (Applause)

And so, Mr. Speaker, I end simply by saying, I end this way, Mr. Speaker, my recommendation to the Minister of Finance, is that that US$300 Million should be used now to retire expensive existing debt instruments to be used now. (Applause) And if he is so confident in the programme going forward you can easily raise the $300 Million next year when you need it.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. McKenzie)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. SAMUDA: I am just going to ask you two questions.

Minister it is customary is it not that in order to show any evidence of revaluation or a strengthening of the currency, we - it is associated with an inflow of capital on the open market, inflow. That reflects confidence because those inflows usually are used to acquire raw materials to purchase capital goods and to expand business or to start new business. Against the expression of extreme confidence, how do you then reconciled that, with the need for the Bank of Jamaica to enter the market at the level they did. Should it not be, in light of this renewed confidence, be the reverse? That's number one.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Government Members)

Mr. SAMUDA: I am just talking about the signs - the signals.

I have two questions, the next one is, Minister, when we await information on which to make a valued judgement, we have to wait for the Bank of Jamaica's Quarterly Report or your speech to Parliament. Why is it not possible for the Government and its agencies to ensure that information is done on a timely basis so that we have a clear direction without having to rely on the utterances of the Bank of Jamaica Governor, which is usually late, in terms of the actual performance. We can't be looking at - because there is nowhere on the website., there is no where unless you go and sit down with the Governor of the Bank or you go and sit down with the financial secretary or with the PIOJ, there is no where you can get current data except when you come to the House or when the Governor speaks in his quarterly press conference. Minister, for us to plan properly and to get the participation that you need, I recommend to you and I ask you to comment on it, the need to bring data to this Honourable House or to the public, on a more timely basis.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the House is definitely the place where legitimately information can be sought, as has been done. But I think it would also benefit from an effort which I invite all to join to build a consensus rather than to deepen division about the important task that need to take the country forward.

Let me take first the question of concern in the business community that was raised. No doubt that there are many who will be concerned and I would, and I would make the point, two points, Mr. Speaker, first of all, we have to accept that the programme of economic reform aimed at reversing a long-term phenomenon of low growth and high debt which has long duration. It's not an instantaneous solution. The results will not bear fruit immediately over night to the degree that we all want, that is first point. So it doesn't make a lot of sense to say, that I have not seen the results in nine months or one year, that have made all problems go away that is not possible, Mr. Speaker. If you are even planting corn, a new field of corn, it is going to take you sometime, it is going to take you six months and so to do, so that the first - much less if you are putting up a hotel a factory or some such thing, point one.

Point two; there is no doubt that the reform will have a differential impact across different sectors. Perhaps the sector that will be most negatively affected are those in manufacturing particularly, with high import dependence producing entirely for the domestic market which is contracting. It is contracting because as we know the budgets are tighter, real wages for a lot of the workforce are lower, and so effective demand is less. So the signal of the programme is, in fact, saying to many of these businesses you have to re-orient your productive activity it is just factual, we can't disguise it, we can assist - we are looking at things like trying to assist some of the manufacturers to get involve in export through the PetroCaribé facility and see if they can be export activity that they can get paid in Jamaican dollars from the PetroCaribé

Development Fund. JAMPRO and the Ministry of Investment and others are trying to build on the effort to assist some of those. And most importantly, we have to make them more competitive by dealing with the energy issue that is before us. But there is hardship there; I will be the first to admit it. But to say that there is no improved earnings is false. In tourism, for example, we are seeing an amazing level of growth. (Applause) We are seeing a reduction in the level of discounting that is a service that is being exported in all practical terms, and that is a concrete benefit from some of these adjustments.

Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing, what we are seeing in the expansion of interest in BPO operations, what we are seeing in expansion in BPO operations represent also. There is....

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Dr. PHILLIPS: What we are seeing now more is that private investors are for the first time at last; private investors are building out their own facilities, not relying on the State to get into it.

Mr. HOLNESS: Where are they?

Dr. PHILLIPS: New Kingston.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, but it is a private investor providing it on their own and there are other investors. But down in Montego Bay, you know some of these people are your own adherence and you should know and that is why they going to leave you.

(Heckling by Members)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Some of the - US$70 Million in call center space is being invested in Montego Bay right now expanding the BPO operations. (Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, those represent real gains. What has been happening in the Agro Parks with the import substitution where sorghum is growing - where sorghum is growing, where people are producing maize and replacing a lot of the imports. What it seems is that there are some people who no matter what good is happening in Jamaica are determined that they want a bad story to put alongside it. (Applause)

And, Mr. Speaker, I continue to live in anticipation and hope that one day, one day before too long, this Parliament will reflect the maturity that patriotic commitment demands of it. (Applause)

But let me come now secondly, Mr. Speaker....

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Let me come now, Mr. Speaker, to the question of the....

Mr. SAMUDA: They don't build a room.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Let me come now, Mr. Speaker, to the question of the Bank of Jamaica's intervention...

(Heckling)

…and the dollar.

(The Speaker gavels)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the Bank of Jamaica's intervention last week attracted a lot of attention, public commentary. It is not the first time in recent months that the Bank of Jamaica has intervened and the policy remains the same. As the Governor has stated on more than one occasions, the Bank of Jamaica will intervene when the markets become disorderly, when speculative pressures build up. And what I should say now is with the

$800 Million, it has the capacity to intervene more effectively and punish speculators and those who want to push confidence down the drain. (Applause)

Mr. SAMUDA: Why is there speculation?

Dr. PHILLIPS: I will explain.

Mr. SAMUDA: No, doubt!

Dr. PHILLIPS: Let me explain.

Mr. SAMUDA: Doubt, that is why there is speculation! When you get doubt, you get speculation. So don't come and tell us that everything is now good.

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, there are - the heart of the matter as I have said on more than one occasion has to do with the fact that we have run, we have run....

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, we have never said that we have solved all problems, we will, but we have not solved them yet.

(Laughter)

Mr. SAMUDA: If you are going to have to defend it, it is contrary to what you are saying. The two things not compatible.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, no, no, no, from time to time....I mean, Mr. Speaker, we would have to keep a class and it would take more time than we have for this evening.

(Laughter)

Dr. DAVIES: But don't let everybody in the class.

Mr. SAMUDA: I want you to be the first student.

Dr. PHILLIPS: But, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is what you have is a market where there are relatively few suppliers in relative terms and also demand is also bunched. So you can have a situation where people - when you have a movement that is heading in one direction - people - and you have seasonal variations in demand, people can hold on to their supply in the hope that they can bid the price up and continually make more on the speculation.

Now, the long-term solution is to have many more suppliers when you go on a much larger inflow, but that, as I said, will take time and that is where you are going to go. But we cannot continue to run a deficit of 13% on the balance of payments' current account and then expect that you are going to just borrow money or beg money or get money from some source to allow you to defend a rate, which is why the rate has had to move. But, when you have wide swings or sharp movements not justified by market conditions, as has happened many times over the past year, and has happened last week, the Bank of Jamaica will intervene to bring about stability in the marketplace.

Mr. SAMUDA: Talk about success.

Dr. DAVIES: Okay, so you agree with him?

Mr. SAMUDA: Yes, but talk about success.

Dr. PHILLIPS: The fact of the matter is....

Mr. SAMUDA: You can't pat yourself and you don't reach there yet.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, we have not said we have reached there yet. Everywhere along the line we have said we have a far way to go,

much more remains to be done. We need to get more people involved in the productive effort. We need to get a lot of local enterprises.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I said it today.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Yes!

Dr. PHILLIPS: What we are hoping for, Mr. Speaker, is for everyone to come on board. We are prepared to make adjustments where we have to, but what is important is that we don't have unreasonable expectations nor should we unreasonable try to talk down the achievements thus far. (Applause) Such as we have them, we must recognize them. Such as there are challenges going forward, we need to recognize them also.

As far as the BOJ's and the Ministry of Finance information is concerned, we publish the data monthly. And in fact with some greater frequency in terms of some of the data. It's on the websites of the Ministry of Finance and of the BOJ, and we give the quarterly briefings by the Governor of the Bank of Jamaica, the Director General of the PIOJ, and data is available. I think that the frequency here of the publications are in fact among the best in developing countries emerging markets.

Now the question was raised by the Opposition spokesman, as to why did we go in the market for more?

(MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine Eastern, entered and took her seat.)

It was a judgement call that had to be made. It was judgement call that we consulted about, not only among the stakeholders in Jamaica in the public sector, but with our International partners.

Quite simply put, the prognosis especially given, tapering in the United States and the likelihood that the interest rate are likely to rise as the Federal Reserve changes its stance in the market, calls of judgement will have to be made as to how much do we go for now. It also meant that we were in the position to withstand the upward pressure on rates domestically, should we have to enter the market, shall we say, on an emergency basis later on down to finance next years' payments and it does open up the possibilities for liability management that you are talking about and which we are pursuing, but there are lots of calculations that have to go in to that. For example, what is the level of discount because the… Such is confidence that Government of Jamaica Bonds are trading, In fact, above par. So you might end up with a pay-out now if you were to pay off the debt early where you are paying out more to buy back those Bonds now than if you waited until maturity and just paid out at par. But what this does is lock-in what is likely to be the lowest interest rate for some time. You can always be wrong, but the Federal Reserve has indicated that they are going to be ending tapering this fall and that the prognosis is that rates are going to rise.

All the advice from the International Financial Institutions and from the International Capital Market and the judgement of the Ministry of Finance was that go now.

In fact, there were those who urged us to go for more than the $800 Million, but that was what we could reasonably afford at this point in time. (Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, we believe that the programme remains a difficult one; it involves walking a tight rope. We don't guarantee that every decision is a perfect decision, but we certainly believe that the decisions taken in relation to the Bond issue and the decisions taken in relation to the implementation of the programme have been the right ones. (Applause)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I said monthly. We do it monthly on the websites of both the Ministry of Finance and the BOJ.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Security will now make a Statement.

The SPEAKER: Minister Bunting.

(Applause)

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, since the announcement of the retirement of Mr. Owen Ellington from the post of Commissioner of Police just over two weeks ago, there has been considerable speculation about the reasons for his departure and the consequences for the JCF and the country. Today, I intend to address both his departure and related matters.

Many in the media and elsewhere have voiced their expectations of disclosure, as well as information they would like me to address later during Question Time. So let me start by reminding Members of this Honourable House and those watching, that it is an international norm for certain information related to national security to be classified, particularly when it concerns:

1. plans, weapons or operations;
2. the capabilities of systems;
3. foreign government information or diplomatic communication;
4. intelligence activities.

In addition to these constraints, let us be mindful of an individual's reputation and right to privacy. As lawmakers, it is our duty to ensure that the shield of parliamentary privilege is used fairly and responsibly. (Applause)

These are the facts. I was formally notified by way of letter on Monday morning June 30, 2014, of the request by the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Owen Ellington to retire from his post on completion of vacation leave due to him, and that he would proceed on leave on Tuesday July 1, 2014. I advised the Prime Minister and later that day the Cabinet of this development. The public was also advised by way of a press release from the Ministry of National Security that afternoon.

Commissioner Ellington indicated in his letter that his decision to retire was based on the need to separate himself from the leadership and management of the Force prior to the commencement of the upcoming Commission of Enquiry into the conduct of the operations of the Security Forces in Western Kingston and other areas during the limited State of Emergency in 2010.

In addition, he expressed his belief that this would allow the Independent Commission of Investigations, INDECOM, to conduct its

investigation into allegations of police-involved killings in the Clarendon Division, some of which occurred during his tenure as Commissioner, without any perception of influence or interference on his part.

I have heard some comments suggesting that these two reasons proffered by me were not credible. Let me emphasize that these were Mr. Ellington's stated reasons, not mine.

Based on my discussions with him over time, I was not surprised when he advised me of his decision to retire. The job of Commissioner in a country with one of the highest crime rates in the world is extremely tough and demanding. Many of the causal factors for violent crime are outside the control of law enforcement, yet law enforcement is often held entirely responsible for getting it under control.

Let me here, Mr. Speaker, again thank Mr. Ellington for his 34 years of service to the JCF, (Applause) and in particular, for his leadership through a very turbulent period.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the West Kingston Operation, one of the stated reasons in his letter. This has attracted a good deal of reporting and conjecture. Matters raised in the Public Defender's Report prompted the Government of Jamaica to establish a Commission of Enquiry to ascertain, among other things, the fact surrounding allegations of human rights violations by the security forces.

The Public Defender's Report also triggered reviews by some international partners of their support to the security forces. These reviews have not resulted in any action that would compromise the general operational effectiveness of the security forces but support to a few specific units has been suspended. It is our hope that once the upcoming Commissioner of Enquiry has concluded its work, that the findings and recommendations are acted upon as appropriate that any residual concerns regarding the West Kingston operations will be put to rest.

Let me now turn to the immediate future.

The Police Service Commission, the PSC, has appointed Mr. Glenmore Hinds as Acting Commissioner since July 1, 2014. The Chairman of the PSC has outlined to me the targeted timeline for the appointment of the next Commissioner of Police as follows: First, the PSC will advertise publicly for the position starting this week.

Second, during the month of August, applications will be received, reviewed and shortlisted. Interviews of shortlisted applicants will commence, and, finally, it is anticipated that the next Commissioner will be appointed during the month of September.

In the interim let me assure the public that the national security environment is stable. Every category of serious and violent crime is down, year to date, an average by double digit percentages.

(Applause)

Murder is down 11 per cent, shooting down six per cent, rape down 17 per cent and aggravated assault down 26 per cent. There is a similar trend in the category of acquisitory crimes, such as robberies. That is also down by 11 per cent. Another important statistic is

the fact that police fatal shootings are also down year and year by a dramatic 46 per cent. (Applause)

Since the establishment of MOCA we see that criminals and their corrupt facilitators can no longer operate with impunity. The new laws we have passed to deal with organized crime are having an impact. Already the police have arrested and charged approximately 600 persons in just 15 months that the Law Reform (Fraudulent Transactions) (Special Provisions) Act has been in effect. All 20 or so cases that have already been disposed of in the courts have resulted in convictions.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, we anticipate similar success with the recently passed anti gang legislation.

The Unite for Change Initiative continues to gain momentum. It is about harnessing the commitment and passion of a broad partnership of stakeholders which is necessary to successfully tackle the multiple causal factors of violence. Just last week, Mr. Speaker, we had a major event in Montego Bay which brought together about 600 participants from 38 different communities and stakeholder groups across St. James, Hanover and Trelawny. We are building the broad-based partnerships between the police, citizens, civic organizations and faith-based organizations that will provide the foundation for sustained success against violence.

Mr. Speaker, with this positive momentum and notwithstanding the commentary that has arisen from the announcement of the former Commissioner's retirement, I remain fully focused on the task of making our country safe and peaceful.

(Applause)

We have a committed and professional police force that has made the gains I outlined despite an environment of scarce resources, entirely through determination, ingenuity and personal sacrifice. I call on the men and women of the JCF to stay focused and professional, and I ask all citizens of goodwill, including my colleague parliamentarians, to give these brave men and women your wholehearted support.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, if there was ever a non-statement, based on expectations, this in fact is a non-statement.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Davies)

Mr. D. SMITH: The Minister chose to hide under classified national security matters.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Government Members)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, our country, Jamaica, deserves…

(Heckling)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. D. SMITH: …the people of this country, Mr. Speaker, deserves some respect from their Government, and a public servant of well over three decades seemingly, was forced to demit office within hours. Without any notice to his…

Mr. PICKERSGILL: But the same thing happened to you, we heard yours on the radio.

(Laughter/Applause)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker…

Mr. CHARLES: You find something to laugh about.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker….

(The Speaker gavels)

Perhaps the Member needs to reflect and see where I am now.

MEMBERS: Where? Where?

(Cross talk)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I don't want to digress with small talk. I want to speak to the issue of seemingly a lack of respect to the Jamaican people. Because as I said, this public servant who served this country well, under very difficult circumstances, the Jamaican people do not believe in entirety what was said to them. They believe it's what is called a half-truth. Half-truth. So, Minister, we are expecting more than this. The people will not believe, the Opposition does not believe this and Jamaican people will not believe this, and stop hiding under this national security classification, because we are not asking you for sensitive information. All the country is demanding is for the full story, why the Commissioner was forced out of office within a few hours.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons given, one of the reasons given by the Ministry of National Security, was that the Commissioner said - and accepted by the Minister, obviously - that he left or he is leaving office because he did not want to compromise the investigation into the Tivoli massacre, as I call it.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, there are two arms of our security forces that were involved in the massacre of Tivoli.

A MEMBER: Massacre?

(Heckling)

Mr. D. SMITH: You can make all the noise you want to make I am not withdrawing anything so mek unuh noise and let me continue with what I am saying.

And if the Minister accepted one of the reasons, then, Minister, the JDF was involved.

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes, the Chief of Staff now Permanent Secretary.

Mr. D. SMITH: A lot more involved than the JCF, and the Chief of Staff then is the right-hand man as Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security.

Mr. McKENZIE: He must go too.

Mr. D. SMITH: So, as we Jamaicans would say, "it don't pencil out." Something is wrong. Something is wrong. So we are expecting, Minister, a lot more information for the Jamaican people. They do not accept and they do not believe, so this is a waste of time.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: You know of another reason?

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the Minister spoke to…

(Heckling)

Mr. McKENZIE: You can't talk for nobody, you can't speak for nobody. So you shut your mouth. You can't speak for nobody cause you a idiot.

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. D. SMITH: You can't speak for nobody.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Atkinson)

Mr. McKENZIE: Mikey mouse like you.

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie, your outburst, sir, needs to be controlled.

Mr. McKENZIE: Well control him, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie, I am speaking to you.

Mr. McKENZIE: Control the Attorney General.

(Heckling)

The SPEAKER: I am speaking to you.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the Minister gave some statistics in regards to decline in major crimes primarily, and decline 46 per cent I think he said in police homicide. We are happy about this. The Opposition is very happy about this. We are happy that the environment is getting a little safer but we have seen this before, it's not new. There is at least one individual in this House at this time, who has seen that, and what happens after becomes a crisis. So whereas we appreciate it, whereas we appreciate it and are happy about it, we are not yet ready to go to your party for celebration. Let's have some more time to see what happens down the road. You can get a commitment from the Opposition that we don't intend to rock the boat.

MEMBERS: To what? What?

Mr. D. SMITH: We do not intend to rock the boat. We do not intend to make the security environment problematic or any worst than it is now. You can get that assurance.

(Heckling)

Mr. Speaker, the Minister informed the House about commencement of proceedings to appoint a new Commissioner.

There have been comments in the media and in the wider public domain that this exercise should go international.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Which exercise?

Mr. D. SMITH: Ask the person you were talking to. Ask him.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. DAVIES: Stop tracing.

Mr. D. SMITH: I want to put the Opposition's position on the table. The Opposition will not, I repeat - will not support the employment of an individual from overseas for Commissioner of Police. I want to put this on record.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. D. SMITH: We appreciate, Mr. Speaker, from time to time that we do need assistance, in particular from our overseas partners. It has happened before, I hope it is happening now, and I would like it to be happening in the future. But in terms of a foreigner being employed to be in charge of the Jamaica Constabulary Force, that individual - if it should happen - will not get the support of the Opposition Jamaica Labour Party.

Dr. DAVIES: I was thinking of Desmond!

(Laughter)

Mr. McKENZIE: Me and you, too! Me and you could run Jamaica! (Laughter)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, our main reason or reasons for arriving at that position is based on our experience with foreigners at

very senior positions in the Jamaica Constabulary Force. The level of acceptance by the wider rank and file of the Jamaica Constabulary Force, they are adapting to the culture, the local culture of the Jamaica Constabulary Force. Five persons came here some years ago, in consultation with the then Minister and myself, and we agreed. Most served well, but some unfortunate comments were made at the time of departure, meaning, there was a lot of hypocrisy that was involved during the period of service.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like in closing to say, Minister that this is unacceptable, and I think you should decide to be a little bit more frank with the Jamaican people. And nobody is asking you to divulge classified security information.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker... (Inaudible)

Government MEMBERS: Can't hear yu! Talk loud, man!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Them lock off me mike!

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Bunting)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Yu just lose a case in Court today! Yu nuh lawyer, so shut your mout'! (Laughter)

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. CHARLES: Leave him alone! Leave him alone!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, the fifth paragraph of the Minister's Statement says:

> "Commissioner Ellington indicated in his letter that his decision to retire was based on the need to separate himself from the leadership and management of the Force prior to the commencement of the upcoming Commission of Enquiry into the conduct of the operations of the Security Forces in Western Kingston and other areas during the limited State of Emergency in 2010."

Mr. Saunders was the Head of the JDF at the time, and now he is in a more sensitive position, he is now the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security...

Mr. CHARLES: What!

Mr. WARMINGTON: ...that has a lot of oversight of all of this.

If the Commissioner deems it a - takes the decision, as a matter of principle, can I ask the Minister whether or not his Permanent Secretary will show such principle and such decency of resigning also?

(Cross talk)

Mr. McKENZIE: Why was he appointed in the first place? Ask why he was appointed in the first place!

A Government MEMBER: What about Desmond?

Dr. WHEATLEY: What about him?

(Cross talk)

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, I…

Mr. HENRY: I have a question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HOLNESS: Mr. Speaker. Minister, thank you for...

Mr. HENRY: I have three questions.

Mr. HOLNESS: Quickly. Minister, it is not clear to me - and I am certain the nation would want to know - the Commissioner's early retirement comes as a surprise, and there is the lingering concern that there may be a hand of the Government involved.

Mr. McKENZIE: Yeah, man. Some a dem inna... (Inaudible)

Mr. HOLNESS: Minister, was he asked to retire?

Mr. CHARLES: Gwaan, man, we have more! Answer dat! (Laughter)

Mr. HENRY: Minister, in looking at your Statement, let me start off at the point in which you say:

> "...it is an international norm for certain information related to national security to be classified, particularly when it concerns:
>
> 1) plans, weapons or operations;
> 2) the capabilities of systems;
> 3) foreign government information or diplomatic communication; or
> 4) intelligence activities."

Is that meant to be a caution to the questions I would want to ask? Or, it does beg the question; did any of this have an impact on the Commissioner going? That's question 1.

Question 2. Against the background of your report of us being at the highest crime rates in the world - it's a demanding job, one of, right, one of, yes, but then you go on to speak laudably of the performance and decline, therefore, the Commissioner, in your own words, was performing exemplarily. In that context, would you have accepted his resignation which you said is only implied in his figure? Would you have accepted it or prevailed on him in the interest of the public, to stay on? Unless there is anything to impact from my earlier question, which restricts me going further if I have any information.

And then you go on, Mr. Minister, to speak in turn of the West Kingston operation, but you do not speak of the second aspect of the Commissioner's resignation, of Clarendon and INDECOM, in any detail. All of this begs my question that in the interest of the public, in the declining crime rate, as per your Report, that I must have great concerns that we are swapping or letting someone go, whom we could have given time to perform, unless there were other reasons not contained in this, and therefore leaves the question open and the concern of the public. Because despite some of what you are saying and I emphasize Clarendon, because that's part of the reason you and I have had discussions on this matter, I had requested two Ministers to come - including yourself - to Clarendon. I have great concerns that I am getting the totality of everything here, and I come back to the caution. Because you cautioned me before and then you leave me stripped of the ability to go any further. If you can explain why or what this caution is about, I would be very grateful.

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, the Opposition Spokesman, as well as the Member from South West St. Catherine, raised what they see as an apparent inconsistency, and they compared the

Commissioner's reason that he stated, or as one of the reasons for his resignation, and said that the same would apply to the then Chief of Defense Staff. And I am not sure the logic that they are asking me to explain consistency.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Principle and decency.

Mr. BUNTING: Since I did not ask him to retire or to resign for that reason, that was his stated reason, so I can't be asked to explain why he took that reason, why one person, person (a) retired early for that reason, and why another person didn't choose to retire. You would have to speak with them.

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, it's your Permanent Secretary!

Mr. BUNTING: No, no, no. Quite frankly, there is no logic to it.

A MEMBER: You are a brilliant man!

Mr. BUNTING: The second matter related to classified information. And you know, it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, because we are here speaking today about the West Kingston Operation. And perhaps if their Administration had handled classified information better, the events would not have unfolded as they had during that time.

(Government Members applaud)

Mr. McKENZIE: Rubbish! Rubbish! Rubbish!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. BUNTING: And, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day it will - the burden falls to me, or the judgement is mine, in terms of the information as I deem it appropriate to share, given the sensitivity of the post.

I note the Opposition Spokesman said that the Opposition will not support the appointment of a Commissioner from overseas, he first said, and then he later I think, further clarified it and said a foreigner. This, of course, is the remit of the Police Service Commission. And I am not sure - since this Administration gave no such indication, I am not sure why he would say that.

Mr. D. SMITH: Before it's considered.

Mr. BUNTING: However, let me say that the position of a Commissioner of Police in a country like ours where there is only one police force, and which it really acts as a major intelligence as well as law-enforcement agency, it would, to my mind, be some extraordinary circumstance why you would look to put a foreigner in such a sensitive position when their first loyalty would not be to your country. (Applause)

There have been - it has been tried in other countries in the region, and I would say that the results were mixed. The suggestion would imply that there are no suitable candidates - no suitable Jamaicans as candidates, and I don't accept that. So, I am not going to go any further down that road because it is a bit of a straw man that's set up and then you are tilting at it.

The Leader of the Opposition asked a question, was the Commissioner asked to retire? No. This was - he came to his own decision, he discussed it with me, and we agreed that it was the best decision, all things taken into consideration.

And the Member from Central Clarendon asked if I would have prevailed upon him to remain. I said I - as I have said previously, that this was not a decision that he came to suddenly. We had been discussing the timing of his retirement for some time, because he had long ago indicated that he thought five years was a long time in the position that he was in, and that he was still young enough to do a number of other things.

In terms of the specifics of this date, that was only communicated to me a couple days informally, before I received the formal letter on Monday morning.

With regard to the Clarendon conspiracy, this matter is *sub judice* so I specifically, there are a number of persons before the Courts, charged and I don't think it's appropriate for us to get into the details of discussing that. So I hope you will accept that it wouldn't be appropriate.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Whether or not.

Mr. BUNTING: As you said, whether or not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SAMUDA: Mr. Speaker, might I ask, Minister, from where you sit, could you give some indication as to when the enquiry will commence since it forms the basis of urgency for his resignation, when is it anticipated that it would have given rise to this precipitate action?

Mr. McKENZIE: Bad information. You passed bad information...

(Laughter)

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, the Member from North Central St. Andrew I think well knows that I am not responsible to Parliament for that portfolio, it is the Minister of Justice who is organizing the administration of it, and I wasn't briefed on this question so I didn't have a chance to consult him before.

Mr. SAMUDA: Were you, Minister, of the view that this was something that was imminent? Sorry, in reading his reason for leaving, would it have occurred to you that because you had an idea that it was coming very soon that it could justify his decision?

Mr. BUNTING: Well the Commissioners have been appointed, administrative arrangements are being put in place, counsel is being retained, so I expect that it is well underway, the preparation for the commencement is well underway. If you ask me to give you a particular month, I am not in a position to do that. I would have to refer you to my colleague Minister of Justice.

Mr. SAMUDA: Would you not feel that the basis for naming it as the reason, specific reason that a reason has to have some foundation, and therefore did it not occur to you as the person to whom he report, it did not occur to ask, well why would you take this action now rather than give it some time so that when you are more certain that it will commence? Wouldn't that have been a reasonable thing to enquire of him?

Mr. BUNTING: The outgoing Commissioner gave his reasons and I am not going to be here second guessing and I didn't ask him then, I didn't get into those sorts of details.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Warmington)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- Report of the Regulations Committee of the House of Representatives on its Deliberations on the Deposit Insurance (Joint, Trust and Nominee Accounts) Regulations, 2014, The Office of Utilities Regulations (Amendment of First Schedule to the Act) Order, 2014 and the Foreign Nationals and Commonwealth Citizens (Employment) (Work Permit Fees) (Amendment) Regulations, 2014
- Auditor General's Department Performance Audit Report of the Management of Department of Correctional Services' (DCS) Rehabilitation activities and Reintegration of Offenders into Society
- Ministry of Health's Publication entitled: Draft National Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy
- **Certified Appropriation Account**

Police Department	2010/2011
Ministry of Education	2010/2011
Ministry of Education	2011/2012
Ministry of Water & Housing	2011/2012
Government Chemist Dept.	2012/2013

- The Provisional Collection of Tax (Income Tax) Order, 2014 Under The Provisional Collection of Tax Act

Letter to Madam Christine Lagarde, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund and Updated Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

The SPEAKER: Mr. Arscott.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled: The Disaster Risk Management Act 2014.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled: The Tax Collection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014 and a Bill shortly entitled: The Tax Penalties Harmonization Act, 2014.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move the Provisional Collection of Tax Act as follows:

Whereas by virtue of subsection (1) of section 3 of the Provisional Collection of Tax Act, hereinafter referred to as "the Act" the Minister may, by order, provide for the variation, renewal or imposition of any tax;

And Whereas under the above provision the Minister made the Provisional Collection of Tax (Income Tax) Order, 2014, which was published on Wednesday, April 30, 2014 in the Jamaica

Gazette Supplement, Proclamation, Rules and Regulations as Legal Notice 134;

And Whereas subsection (4) of section 3 of the Act provides that every order made under subsection (1) of that section shall cease to have effect unless it is confirmed, with or without modification, by resolution of the House of Representatives within the next 30 days on which the House sits after the date of publication of the Order in the Gazette;

And Whereas it is desirable that the Provisional Collection of Tax (Income Tax) Order, 2014 be confirmed:

Now, therefore, be it resolved by this Honourable House of Representatives as follows:

a) This Resolution may be cited as the Provisional Collection of Tax (Income Tax) (Confirmation) Resolution, 2014;
b) The Provisional Collection of Tax (Income Tax) Order, 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 15th day of July 2014, is hereby confirmed.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I have two questions, two and three to answer, but before me the Minister of National Security will answer questions 11, 6 and 4 in that order.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith.

Mr. BUNTING: I just want to seek permission, Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 17(6). I now seek your consent and that of the Member from St. Andrew North Western to reply today to his Question at Number 11 on the Order of Business 14 days earlier than the appointed date.

The SPEAKER: You have my consent. Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I concur with your consent on the basis that the Minister will give some genuine answers to the question.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Bunting.

Mr. BUNTING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the time being as it is I move for the suspension of Standing Orders to allow us to take Questions and Answers after the time normally allotted.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow for Questions and Answers to Questions to go beyond the allotted time.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, I hear the frustration from the Opposition Spokesman. But this Honourable House will appreciate that many matters dealt with by a Minister of National Security are in their nature secret. In such cases it would be irresponsible to disclose this information publicly. Even questions on such matters are prohibited by Standing Order 16 (l)(g)(ii) which states "A question shall not be asked seeking information about matters which are in their nature secret".

Mr. SHAW: You are not going to answer the question.

Mr. BUNTING: Therefore, Mr. Speaker, as we proceed with questions and follow-up questions there will be limits on what I will disclose.

Question 1

Will the Minister indicate whether our international partners have made any requests regarding measures to be taken to deal with alleged breaches of human rights during 2010 West Kingston incursion by the security forces or in relation to killings allegedly by the police in the parish of Clarendon?

Answer

Any and all allegations of breaches of human rights are of great concern to the Government of Jamaica, and our legal accountability processes are addressing both cases cited in the question. A Commission of Enquiry has been established regarding the events culminating in the operation by the security forces in West Kingston, and the allegations regarding police involved killings in Clarendon are being investigated/prosecuted by INDECOM and the ODPP. Our international partners share the concerns of the Government of Jamaica. As a matter of policy, the Government of Jamaica does not disclose, on an item-by-item basis, the content of communications with our international partners on matters of defence and national security.

Mr. WARMINGTON: You are saying yes then.

Mr. BUNTING:

Question 2

If the answer to the above is in the affirmative, have those requests included the requirement for the removal of the Police Commissioner?

Answer

As a matter of policy, the Government of Jamaica does not disclose, on an item-by-item basis, the content of communications with our international partners on matters of defence and national security.

Question 3

Will the Minister confirm what restrictions have been imposed by certain of our international partners on the sale and use of military equipment and material to Jamaica until steps have been taken to remedy alleged human rights breaches?

Answer

For obvious reasons, as a matter of policy the Government does not disclose the acquisition of military equipment and material. The Jamaica Defence Force continues to enjoy the support of our major international partners, including the supply of the equipment.

Question 4

Will the Minister advise this Honourable House if the provisions of the Leahy Act have been invoked by the United States Government in relation to certain occurrences in Jamaica, including, but not limited to alleged police killings?

Answer

The United States manages its assistance in accordance with their laws and policies governing U.S. foreign assistance. Any specific questions related to their management of such assistance should be directed to the US Embassy.

Mr. WARMINGTON: ...answer to the House. That's out of order.

Mr. BUNTING:

Question 5

Will the Minister state what steps are being taken by his Ministry and the Government to restore Jamaica's good standing under the terms of the Leahy Act of the United States of America?

Answer

The specific reference to the "Leahy Act" is addressed by the answer to Question 4. Otherwise this question acknowledges the huge damage done to Jamaica's standing in the international community by the mishandling of the request for the extradition of Christopher 'Dudus' Coke, and the subsequent requirement for a major police and military operation to attempt to execute the arrest warrant on Christopher Coke.

This Administration has taken a number of steps to repair the resultant damage to the country's reputation. (Applause) Including, Mr. Speaker:

1) from as far back as 2010 I stated in this Honourable House that:
"The People's National Party categorically repudiates and disassociates itself from all and any alliance, dependency or common cause with organized crime and the gang culture, which are together responsible for the vast majority of our murders."

(Applause) (Heckling)

I used today and every appropriate opportunity to reaffirm that unequivocal and resolute position of this Administration. (Applause)

2) We have established a Commission of Enquiry into the events culminating in the May 2010 operations by the security forces.
3) We give strong support to INDECOM to independently investigate every allegation of abuse of citizens by the security forces.

(Heckling)

Mr. Speaker:

4) We have passed a number of pieces of legislation to improve our capacity to fight transnational organized crime such as the Law Reform Fraudulent Transaction (Special Provisions) Act, commonly referred to as the Anti Lottery Scam Act; the Criminal Justice Suppression of Criminal Organizations Act 2014, commonly referred to as the Anti Gang Legislation; and the Amendments to POCA over the last two years.
5) We maintained, we maintained very strong law enforcement cooperation with all our major international partners, the United States, the UK and Canada.

One example of this strong cooperation was cited by then US Ambassador Bridgewater just last September, when she stated that the Jamaican Government has given:

"unprecedented support to her country in the fight against the multimillion dollar lottery scam. In an interview with Journalist Ambassador Bridgewater, said the US Homeland Security Office, the Postal Inspection Service and other law enforcement team members have been getting unprecedented levels of cooperation from the Government of Jamaica through the Ministry of National Security and Ancillary Agencies."

She went on to state:

"Our momentum is as strong as it ever has been."

(Applause)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

(*Sotto voce* remarks)

Mr. BUNTING: Has anybody ever seen such arrogance?

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the Minister continued on the trend that he started when he read his Statement to the House...

Mr. WARMINGTON: You refused to answer to the questions.

Mr. D. SMITH: ...and it went on to speak to not disclosing content of communication - that's a phrase.

Minister, notwithstanding the fact that I was a Minister for only seven months...

(Laughter)

Dr. DAVIES: For seven months?

A MEMBER: That's a long time. Which Ministry?

Mr. D. SMITH: National Security Minister for seven months.

Dr. DAVIES: Seven months?

Mr. D. SMITH: Yes.

I understand the protocol that obtains in that Ministry, because prior to that for many, many, years I dealt with the portfolio on behalf of the Opposition.

Dr. DAVIES: And now you're back.

Mr. D. SMITH: And I'm back...

Dr. DAVIES: Yes.

Mr. D. SMITH: ...and you better think about that also.

Dr. DAVIES: I'm more than 23 years.

Mr. D. SMITH: I could be back where you are.

(Cross talks/Laughter)

Mr. D. SMITH: So I can see through this as sleight of hand, you know, you're just not answering the question. I don't ask you for the detailed content of communication between yourself and your international partners, what I've been asking about is your interpretation of...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Oh dear.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Bunting)

Mr. D. SMITH: …you just not answering the questions, Minister and you need to do better than that. Right.

You also, in question 2 here, you mentioned about restrictions and then you went on to say that you're not disclosing acquisition of military equipment and material. Nobody not asking you how many

bullets you order, how many firearms were ordered, that's not the question, right.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, but look at the second question.

Mr. D. SMITH: That's not the question.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Look at the second question.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I'm dealing with the Minister of National Security.

(Inaudible comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: You're dealing with the Parliament.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Warmington)

Mr. D. SMITH: So, Minister, we're very, very, disappointed with what you have on this, it's worth nothing. And then when you get to question - the other Question 4, I think, and you introduce your riding horse, which is Dudus...

Dr. PHILLIPS: What the horse name?

Mr. D. SMITH: Dudus.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Dudus.

Mr. D. SMITH: ...Minister, during that period which you tried to emphasize, we have the former Minister of Foreign Affairs here, who confirmed that the then Secretary of State paid two visits to Jamaica; excellent working relations during the particular period with Jamaica. So you're misleading the House about a breakdown of relationship, right, excellent working relationship with our partners in the United States.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. SMITH: So, Minister, if you're not prepared to answer any of the questions, the Parliament and the people will judge for themselves. As I said earlier on when you're dealing with your Statement, right, this is one big cover-up. It leads people to come to the conclusion that the Commissioner was asked to leave. And I arrived at that conclusion based on what was telegraphed to the country many months before by an organization allied with the People's National Party...

Dr. PHILLIPS: Which one that?

Mr. D. SMITH: ...which demanded - nobody don't even remember the name of the association...

Mr. HOLNESS: The PNPYO.

Mr. D. SMITH: The PNPYO.

...that demanded the removal of the Commissioner. And what is clear to us is you're just now carrying out the dictates of that organization.

(Cross talks)

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, I think we could now move to Question Number 4.

Mr. D. SMITH: I don't know on what basis you arrived at that?

Mr. BUNTING: You have question?

(Inaudible comments)

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker, I believe I have a duty to expand on the issue in our Spokesman on National Security and Leader of Opposition Business on this side of the House, on the issue raised by the Minister of National Security in the presentation. I was then the Minister of Foreign Affairs and I am specifically referring to the fact that the Minister said:

> *"The huge damage done to Jamaica standing in the international community by the mishandling of request for the extradition of Christopher 'Dudus' Coke,*

and the subsequent requirement of a major military and police operation to attempt to execute the arrest warrant on Christopher Coke..."

And in reference to his administration saying:

"*...This Administration has taken a number of steps to repair the resultant damage to the country's reputation..."*

MEMBERS: Yes, yes!

Dr. BAUGH:

"...including, of course, speaking to INDECOM, which was an initiative of this Administration in government."

(Heckling)

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker, it's very important, very important for us to acknowledge - and the Minister should be aware, and I want to ask him, is he not aware of the visit of the Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton on two occasions?

One occasion she came to the Norman Manley Airport in Kingston and had a meeting with the then Prime Minister at the Airport. On another occasion she came to Montego Bay; spend several days at a meeting of the Regional Security Initiative for the Caribbean and she deliberately decided to come to Jamaica to have that meeting.

Following that meeting, there was a Press Conference where she and I participated together and she was deliberately asked questions as to whether there was any impairment of the relationship between the United States and Jamaica. And she deliberately gave every assurance to the international community...

Mr. McKENZIE: To the world!

Dr. BAUGH: ...as well as Jamaica...

Mr. McKENZIE: To the world!

Dr. BAUGH: ...that Jamaica and the United States enjoyed excellent relations and that there was no impairment. Well my words, because I have to paraphrase. But she gave every assurance. As a matter of fact, her visit was later followed by the Deputy Assistant - the Assistant Secretary of State. I can't remember - his name escapes me right now.

Mr. CHARLES: Honourable woman.

Dr. BAUGH: But he came afterwards, had a meeting with the Prime Minister, had a luncheon with me and the Government and also gave every assurance that there was no impairment of the relationship between the United States and Jamaica.

So the minister should give us the assurance that he's aware of those happenings in the wake of the incursions in Tivoli Gardens, and that there was nothing wrong with the relation. It was a difficult period, exceedingly difficult, but we made sure to manage the relationship, not only between Jamaica and the United States, but also Jamaica and the United Kingdom and Canada and other countries that had a clear interest in the question as to whether we would cooperate or not with the extradition treaty, which we did. And so the outcome was good for Jamaica, in that we did cooperate and we maintained good relationships with all these important trading partners.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Holness.

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, earlier during your Statement in response to questions regarding the reason given by former Commissioner Ellington for his early retirement, you stated that you could not argue for the Permanent Secretary in not taking a similar position, as the position taken by former Commissioner Ellington. And it's a logical answer. So my question to you is, does the Commissioner of Police, seeing the necessity to step aside to allow for a transparent and un-interfered operation of the Commission, doesn't the same obligation apply to the now Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security?

Mr. BUNTING: The question was asked already.

Mr. HOLNESS: No different question.

Mr. BUNTING: The question was asked.

Mr. HOLNESS: Different question.

Dr. DAVIES: Warmie, isn't that the question you asked?

Mr. BUNTING: This question really is not for me to answer, but again I don't see the comparison. The Permanent Secretary has no responsibility in the Ministry of National Security, has no responsibility for anything to do with the Commission of Enquiry, it is the Ministry of Justice that is doing that. Secondly, he...

Mr. HOLNESS: Minister, the Commissioner...

Mr. BUNTING: Allow me to finish.

(Cross talks)

Mr. HOLNESS: Because Minister, neither does the Commissioner of Police.

MEMBERS: That's right.

Mr. BUNTING: No, but if you had allow me to finish I was going to go on...

Mr. HOLNESS: Okay.

Mr. BUNTING: ...and say, unlike the Commissioner of Police, he was not still serving in the position that he held as Chief of Defence Staff at that time.

(*Sotto voce* remarks)

Mr. BUNTING: But in any event the question to me would only arise if I said that in my judgement I didn't believe that the Commissioner could continue because of these reasons. It has not been my stated reasons.

Mr. McKENZIE: Why didn't you appoint the last Permanent Secretary?

(Cross talk)

Mr. BUNTING: You know, the Public Service Commission appoints Permanent Secretaries, right, the Public Service Commission.

(Cross talks)

Mr. BUNTING: Anyway, Mr. Speaker...

(Cross talks)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. BUNTING: Mr. Speaker, I think the Member from West Kingston will get adequate opportunity to answer and raise, ask whatever question during the Commission of Enquiry. (Applause) And I look forward; I look forward to his contribution at that Enquiry.

Mr. Speaker, you know I have lot of respect for the Member from St. Catherine and I would - he mentioned a number of visits from Diplomatic State Department personnel

including the Secretary of State. But I happen to know that there were other visits from Assistant or Under Secretaries during that let us say interregnum between the request for extradition coming to Jamaica and the nine months later when the arrest warrant was issued. I would not stand here and ask him what was discussed with either the Secretary of State or any of the other diplomatic persons during that time.

(Cross talk)

So I am going to leave that alone. Needless to say, the State Department is concerned with diplomacy; national security is usual dealt with primarily by other areas. So we have somewhat different considerations although they may overlap in some cases.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Hear, hear!

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker, you know what the Minister just said has implications as to whether we are genuine and truthful in what we said to the House a while ago - what I said to the House awhile ago by implying that other Assistant Secretaries of State; they were two Secretaries of State, one a lady and one subsequently a gentleman. One was a Deputy Assistant and other one was the Assistant Secretary of State who came on a different occasion to the Secretary of State. They all right throughout the whole process of the extradition, with all the difficulties that we had we maintained excellent relationships with the local embassy as well as with the State Department, which I visited myself. And we have always had excellent communication. There was never any difficulty with communication. We had excellent communication and Hilary Clinton came here - sorry, the Secretary [of State] Hilary Clinton, came here particularly to give the reassurance of the relationship that existed between the Government of Jamaica and the Government of the United States of America. So I don't see why there should be doubts, because she made a public statement. This statement was made to the international media and the local media. So I don't understand the doubts you are raising about other visits that can have certain implications. As far as I am concerned it is without a doubt a fact that Jamaica and United States throughout that difficult period enjoyed good bi-lateral relationships and still do as a consequence. (Applause)

Mr. BUNTING: You know, Mr. Speaker, I'm not quite sure; on the one hand the Member speaks to the excellent relationships and on the other hand he refers to the difficult period and the Member from North West St. Andrew refers to repairing the damage done or to restoring Jamaica's good standing. What destroyed the good standing? What damaged the good standing if none of this happened? I mean this really, Mr. Speaker - perhaps the Members don't recall the time.

(Cross talk)

Perhaps the Prime Minister, then Prime Minister Golding retired for no reason at all , but, you know, I am not sure there is anything that is going to be achieved by continuing this discussion. So I'm going to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we now move to Question Number 4, and I would ask one of the orderlies to circulate this for me.

Mr. Speaker -

Question 1:

How many bullet making/loading machines are known to be in Jamaica?"

Answer:

There are four (4) bullet making/loading machines which are known to exist in Jamaica. This includes one machine which was shipped to the island but which was confiscated and is in the custody of the JCF.

Mr. D. SMITH: Minister?

Mr. BUNTING: I gave it to the orderly. (Cross talk)

Question 2:

Where are these machines located?

Answer:

Three machines are currently located at the Firearm Licensing Authority's (FLA), their Head Office at 91 Old Hope Road. The other machine is in the custody of the JCF.

Further, the Ministry has conducted a review of the Firearms Act as a part of the Ministry's policy to ensure greater small arms control within Jamaica. It has been noted that the Firearms Act does not explicitly make provisions for the importation and possession of equipment such as loaders even though this may be affected by other pieces of legislation such as the Customs act.

Additionally, the policy also advances the recommendation that the Act should be amended to address the importation, possession and use of certain categories of security restricted equipment, which would include loaders.

Having noted the impact that the possession of bullet loading machines may have if not properly regulated, a policy position was taken that the FLA should sequestrate all bullet loading machines known to exist in the island. Such an activity would also serve to tangibly demonstrate Jamaica's commitment to our international obligations such as those under the Arms Trade Treaty which require the State to implement strategies to regulate access to weapons and weapons making equipment.

Question 3:

Has it been established how many of these machines are operational and, if so, where are they are located?

Answer:

Two of the three machines located at the FLA appeared to be operational based on the best available technical observation. The machine held by the JCF is subject to ongoing investigation and hence the release of information to same may prejudice such investigations.

Question 4:

Did all of these machines enter Jamaica legally?

Answer:

Research has revealed that at least two of the machines were imported into the island on or before the year 1972 in or before the year 1972; records for which have been archived and would require further in depth search to unearth the complete history of their administrative handling. The indications so far are that

none of these machines were imported in breach of any section of the Firearms Act.

Question 5:

If the answer to Question 4 is in the affirmative, by whose authority were they allowed to enter Jamaica?

Answer:

The Response to Question No. 4 refers.

Question 6:

If the answer to Question 4 is not in the affirmative, has any action been taken against the owners for illegal entry?

Answer:

The answer to Question No.4 was in the affirmative. Therefore a response would not be warranted.

Question 7:

How many shooting ranges are operating in Jamaica, at this time, and where are they located?

Answer:

There are currently thirteen FLA approved shooting ranges, which are listed below:

1) Woodleigh Shooting Range in Clarendon
2) Portland Artillery Club in Portland
3) Jamaica Skeet Club in St. Catherine
4) A & A Sporting Complex in St Catherine
5) Jamaica Rifle Association in Kingston and St. Andrew
6) KB Tactical Training Centre in St. Andrew
7) Huddersfield Firing Range, St. Mary
8) Negril Gun Club in Westmoreland
9) Spot Valley Sporting Complex in St. James
10) Dreamek Shooting Range in St. James
11) Friendly Irons Indoor Range -St. James
12) Manchester Rifle and Pistol Club near Mandeville
13) Exmil Shooting Range in St. Ann and I see a note that they are currently not operating. They are on suspension.

Question 8:

How do these shooting ranges acquire ammunition?

Answer:

Shooting ranges acquire ammunition from local FLA approved firearm and ammunition dealers. Shooting ranges, which are dually registered as licensed firearm dealers may obtain relevant import permits/licenses to directly import ammunition for their own consumption and/or resale to other certified ranges authorized to purchase same.

Question 9:

What are the rules governing the distribution and use of ammunition in these shooting ranges?

Answer:

Of the thirteen ranges mentioned above, six ranges are authorized to sell and distribute ammunition. These are Negril Gun Club, Woodleigh Shooting Range, Mandeville Rifle and Pistol Club, KB Tactical Training Centre, Friendly Irons Indoor Range and Exmil Shooting Range. Ammunition sold to persons on these

ranges are logged in a register and expended under supervision by Range Operator. Amunition which has been sold but was not utilized by range users after a shoot is completed are tagged and stored by the Range Operator. These will only be given to the purchaser if he/she returns to the range for shooting practice. No one is allowed to leave the range with ammunition purchased there.

Question 10:

Who audits these shooting ranges and how often are they audited?

Answer:

Shooting ranges are audited annually by the Audit and Complaints Branch of the FLA. Ranges which are authorized to sell ammunition are audited annually by the FLA. Range Operators may also apply to be audited. When applications are submitted by the Range Operators to the FLA for additional ammunition, after they have expended the stipulated amount, the FLA will also conduct an audit before rendering a decision on the application for additional ammunition for sale and distribution on the range.

Question 11:

What are the results of the most recent audit of these shooting ranges?

Answer:

The most recent audit revealed that the ranges are in compliance with the operating standards of the FLA.

Question 12:

What are the sanctions, if any, if there are discrepancies found by an audit?

Answer:

In the event that a range is operating contrary to the standards of the Authority, recommendations are made for changes to be implemented.

Failing compliance, the range may face a revocation of their status as an FLA approved range.

Question 13:

Is the Minister aware of bullet making/reloading machines owned or operated by persons other than the operators of the shooting ranges?

Answer:

No.

Question 14:

If the answer to Question 13 is in the affirmative, can the Minister provide the House with details of such machines and their owners/operators?

Answer:

The answer to Question No. 13 was in the affirmative. Therefore a response would not be warranted.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, Minister, any of these machines - bullet making/loading machines were any of them taken from the JRA premises? And if so, when?

Mr. BUNTING: I'm sorry, Mr. Smith it was drawn to my attention that I said the answer to the question was in the affirmative and the answer was actually in the negative not in the affirmative, so I apologize for that. Could you repeat for me?

Mr. D. SMITH: Yeah, the question was

any of these four bullet making machines were they taken from JRA premises on Mountain View Avenue?

Mr. BUNTING: Yes, that is my understanding.

Mr. D. SMITH: Why it was necessary to remove them from that location?

Mr. BUNTING: I think in light of the allegations that had been made this was deemed to be prudential.

Mr. D. SMITH: When did it come to the attention of the Government and by extension the FLA that machines were, in fact, at JRA premises?

Mr. BUNTING: My information is that members of the JRA, including senior officers of the police and military, over decades have been aware that these machines were at the JRA. So if you ask me at what point it came to the knowledge of persons, I cannot say. However, I know since it came to - it certainly was there during your time as Minister, but since it came recently to my attention and certain allegations of, I think, teenagers doing some summer job or part-time job around cleaning the spent shells for reuse or for sale that is when my attention was really brought to it. I am not a member of any of these gun clubs so I am not too familiar with the operations at the various ranges.

Mr. D. SMITH: Is the Minister satisfied that these machines were in use, were reloading bullets or they were not in use? I mean what is the understanding that the Minister has received from the JCF?

Mr. BUNTING: My understanding is that they had been used over time, I am not sure up to how recent but the last - in recent times my impression is that they have not been used for reloading purposes but they have been used for some trimming of the casings for the spent shells. And I cannot really speak to the purpose of that because I am not really familiar with the process. But in terms of adjusting the gauge or the size of the round, especially in sports shooting it makes a difference in terms of the type pistol or the rifle that it can be used in.

Mr. D. SMITH: Minister, my understanding of your answer is that all four machines entered the island illegally that is my understanding. Would you like to correct that? And, just one - there is a case against an individual, I believe, who turned up at the wharf to clear one of these machines. Now if all four entered illegally, who is held culpable for the other three which would have entered the island over a period of time?

Mr. BUNTING: I did not say that all four entered illegally, again, I don't want to speak to - this case is before the court which is being prosecuted now; but you will recall that the most recent machine, it was not involving just the machine, there were components, in fact, I believe the media referred and the police referred at one point to warheads which some misinterpreted as some sort of missile or something like that, but they were apparently that is a component that is used in the reloading process.

The lead it is a component, the lead that is used in the reloading process. Some of these components would be - may have been imported in breach of the Firearms Act and I

want you to also recall that, I think the Firearms Act came into being in the 1970s, so to the extent that machines were imported prior to that time, you know, they would not have been affected by anything that was brought in by the Firearms Act. And further that review of the Firearms Act does not seem to suggest that simple possession of the reloading machine is an offence. It is the components that go into the making of the ammunition and perhaps the importation of the machine maybe in violation of the current Customs Act. But, as I said, I really, this matter is now *sub judice* so I don't want to go any further in terms of that recent one.

Mr. D. SMITH: Minister, I am not very concern about the individual who was picked up at the wharf or picked up somewhere in your parish, I think, Manchester. But the question is: Are you satisfied as Minister that these three other machines were never operating in terms of making ammunition in any illegal way and were not responsible for any distribution of any form of ammunition over the period that they were outside the control of the FLA or the JCF?

Mr. BUNTING: Of course, I can't speak to that definitively. But the police have investigated and the FLA have done their own investigations and no information that has come to me suggest that there is any evidence of - that these machines were used to manufacturer illegal ammunition or ammunition that found its way into the hands of criminals.

Mr. SMITH: Now that the State is in control of these machines is there any indication for now releasing them back to the - from whence they came? Well, I am talking about the three not the fourth - now that it seemingly satisfies the Minister that there is good management at the premises and they are audited regularly by the FLA, *et cetera, et cetera* is there any consideration to releasing these now back into the possession of the FLA so that they can continue doing what they have been doing in the past with them?

Mr. BUNTING: No, I don't believe that it is being considered now. I think what we are looking at is an amendment to the Firearms Act to provide for the regulation of these specific machines and these types of machines, because it may very well be that ranges - other ranges may make a request for the importation. My understanding is that in other jurisdictions such as in the United States, it is quite commonplace for ranges to have reloading machines because apparently it is more economical rather than buying new rounds all the time. So, we are not saying that they could not have been returned to the JRA or indeed that other ranges may not be permitted to have them. What we are saying is that we are putting in place a regime to regulate the importation and the use and to provide for things like audit and inspection as we go forward.

Mr. Speaker, I would now move on to Question No. 6 on the question Order Paper.

Question 1:

Will the Minister outline what obtains regarding the storage and handling of bodies that are the subject of forensic

examination pursuant to investigations by the police?

Answer:

The Ministry of National Security together with the Jamaica Constabulary Force, after a rigorous tender process, awarded contracts to 14 private funeral homes across the country, these funeral homes are required to provide storage, transportation and in some cases post-mortem facilities as part of their contract.

When requested by the police, Mr. Speaker, these funeral homes collect and store bodies up to the point when the post-mortem examination is completed. They are remunerated at a contracted rate for mileage in the case of transportation and for storage per body per day. The contracted funeral homes are for St Catherine Sunset in Ewarton, Roberts in Linstead, Empathy in Portmore, Spanish Town Funeral Home and Morgan's in Spanish Town. In St. Elizabeth Bents Funeral Home at two locations, in Trelawny, Patmore Funeral Home, Manchester, Lyns Funeral Home, Westmoreland, Doyley's, Clarendon, Witter & Sons, and Johnson Funeral Homes, Kingston & St. Andrew House of Tranquility, St. Ann, St. Mary and Portland - St. Michael's Funeral Home, a process is far advanced to identify contractors in St. Thomas and St. James.

Question 2:

Will the Minister indicate whether he is satisfied with what's currently obtained as per his response to Question 1?

Answer:

The arrangements in place are adequate for the transportation and storage of bodies in forensic cases. The bodies are taken from the homes or scenes of crimes directly to the contracted funeral homes by the contractors who are called by the police in each instance to collect the bodies. Victims of homicides or fatal shootings are transported to the contracted funeral homes in body bags that are sealed by the police or INDECOM respectively. The seals are broken at the start of the autopsy in the presence of the police and/or INDECOM and the post-mortem examinations are carried out by a forensic pathologist at one of the three main facilities used namely, Kingston Public Hospital Morgue, Spanish Town Funeral Home and House of Tranquility Funeral Home.

The use of the Spanish Town Hospital Morgue for post-mortem was discontinued in June of this year because the air conditioning was not functioning and there are issues with flooding due to the plumbing. On completion of the post-mortem, the bodies are released to family members or subjected to a pauper's burial. The Ministry is satisfied with these arrangements.

Question 3:

The Member has asked, can the Minister state whether complaints regarding the quality and the reliability of forensic evidence in relation to bodies handled and stored by the public have been lodged

with this Ministry.

Answer:

The Ministry has received no such complaint, I am advised.

Question 4:

The Member has asked if the answer to Question 3 is in the affirmative, will the Minister advise of the response?

Answer:

It is not applicable.

Question 5:

Will the Minister say what is the intention of the government regarding construction of a national public morgue?

Answer:

A national public morgue has been designed for location near the KPH and all regulatory approval have been obtained awaiting funding.

And I am going to make an edit to the next two sentences.

However, the scope of this project has had to be reviewed as a single morgue may not be the most efficient approach given that such services are required all across Jamaica. This therefore means that the scope of the project would be at a higher cost if we were looking at multiple locations. Given current priorities, the present arrangements will continue in the short term.

Mr. D. SMITH: Minister, perhaps you would like to give us some sort of a time frame as to when the situation will be finalized. Because what obtains now is really giving Jamaica a bad name overseas. I am just reading a recent article from the Associated Press, which has put us in a very bad light based on the homicide rate in this country and it is on that basis that I am asking the question. Approximately how soon do you see us rectifying the situation whether one in the corporate area or three across the island that is the question?

Mr. BUNTING: Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it would be helpful if the Member would guide me to what the specific concerns were in the article. I am not familiar with the article he is referring to.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. D. Smith)

Mr. BUNTING: Well it is hard to respond not understanding.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, my information, is that the idea was first made public prior to 2000, so it has been on the agenda at least from the 90s.

The current estimates as at the original version, the original design would today cost a minimum of 800 million, if we were to instead of using one location we were to scale that back and use two or maybe three locations then each one would be, you know, a smaller amount but in aggregate it would still be more than a $1 Billion.

So given the fiscal constraints that we are under in the immediate IMF Programme, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that for maybe 15 years it has been on the agenda, many years budgeted for when we came to Standing Finance Committee in this House, but, for one reason or the other it has not been able to go forward; I think we have made the best alternative arrangements we can in the financial circumstances.

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have a number of questions for the Minister and some concerns.

Minister, the City of Kingston, the capital City of Kingston is probably one of the only cities in the world that is without a public morgue, and this has been so since 1974.

The present location that you referred to, Minister, the contract for the construction of that morgue was signed in 19, I think 1993, '94 somewhere about there, for an estimated cost of, I think, about $30 - $40 Million. The name of the contractor is a known person, but that fell through, Minister.

Minister, I am concerned because I am seeing the listing of locations used by the Government as public morgues. What would be inviting for this Honourable House to find out is what it has cost the Government of Jamaica since 1974 to be paying private funeral homes to undertake the responsibility of the State. And this is why, Minister, you have this dysfunction in the undertaking business because there is no real regulation.

I'd like the Minister to respond to a Statement made by the Police as it relates to deaths. The police put out a Statement last week advising the public that they need to collect bodies within 48 hours, regardless of the fact that an autopsy has been performed, Minister. And, perhaps it is because there is no national morgue, there is no State-run facility, we are finding ourselves in this difficulty, Minister.

I agree that we need to have more than one, but I believe that the Capital City, based on the load, it is important, Minister, that this is done. And, in your response, could you say whether or not there is any consideration in looking into the question of regulating the operations of Funeral Homes and licensing undertakers, Minister, if that is a part of your purview.

Mr. BUNTING: Well, it is not currently, and I'm not sure whether the Ministry of National Security would be the appropriate Ministry to regulate that, I would think it more likely the Ministry of Health. But, I take the point that that Funeral Home Industry cannot be allowed to just continue, you know, in an unregulated way indefinitely. It has potential risks to health, it has potential risks to national security, persons can use unscrupulous operators to dispose of bodies, *et cetera*.

Mr. McKENZIE: They are doing it now!

Mr. BUNTING: So, that point I take fully and in fact, my Permanent Secretary is now in contact with his colleague at the Ministry of Health to see if we can commence a process of putting in place some sort of regulation.

In terms of the amount of money that the Government has spent with private funeral homes since 1974, you will appreciate that I would not be able to give you that figure. But, again, the principle is that we perhaps, I would guess have long passed the capital cost of establishing it, even, not just at the beginning, but even in more recent times. And it is one of these things - my late father used to have a

saying, he would say, "it is expensive to be poor". Because you can't afford the upfront cost, you have to essentially buy it retail instead of wholesale and you pay more on a per unit basis. So, so soon as our financial position improve, then I expect that we will look into that, making a capital expenditure.

Mr. McKENZIE: Could you - I don't know if I'm putting you on the spot now to respond to that Statement that was made by the Police. Because, when an autopsy is required, it means that the body finds itself in the position of the State if an autopsy is required.

Mr. BUNTING: Not all autopsies.

Mr. McKENZIE: Not in all circumstances, but I think the case that the police is making reference to....

Mr. BUNTING: Only if is a suspicious death.

Mr. McKENZIE: Right. And they are now asking, advising the public whether an autopsy is performed or not, to come and take charge of the body while it is in the care and keep of the State. Probably, you might not be aware of it, Minister, but if you could find out and at some point in time, you know, just respond to it, because there are real concerns about it from the public about that statement that was made by the Police.

Mr. BUNTING: I'm not sure what specific statement that you are referring to, but what I do know, is that there are a number of cases where persons die in suspicious circumstances or are the victim of murders and after the autopsies are complete and the families are contacted to come and collect the bodies, they don't. And, for whatever reason, whether financial reasons or otherwise, the costs of storage keep accumulating.

And this would - by the way, doesn't only apply to the police-related cases, but even in private cases where persons die of natural causes and families are unable to come up with the cost of the package, sometimes the funeral home gets left with a body that they eventually have to dispose of in a pauper's grave.

So, I will enquire into the details of that specific circumstance, but I suspect, that it may be a more general appeal for family members to come and collect some of these bodies that there the forensic people are no longer interested in and they are at the Funeral Home racking up storage charges.

Mr. McKENZIE: The point is, Minister, whether autopsy or no autopsy, that is the disturbing part of it, that is the disturbing part of it, autopsy or no autopsy.

Mr. BUNTING: I'll look into this specifically.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, in relation to Question 2, the Member is overseas and he has asked me to delay responding until his return, so we'll take Question 3 now.

Mr. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice....

Mr. PAULWELL: No, Question 3.

Mr. HENRY: All I'm giving is notice, so get rid of me.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Henry, no.

Mr. PAULWELL: Just afterwards, I'm

going to answer Question 3.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining answer the following questions standing in my name?

Mr. PAULWELL:

Question 1:

Will the Minister confirm the existence of an Aggregate Spectrum Cap Policy of 2013 and advise the House of its purpose?

Answer:

The existence of an Aggregate Spectrum Cap Policy of 2013 is confirmed. Internationally, spectrum caps have been found to be an effective tool in fostering a multi-carrier cellular industry resulting in more effective competition and stimulating innovation in the provision and choice of service and the efficient utilization of spectrum by operators.

The policy was therefore, introduced to, among other things, stimulate competition by ensuring that spectrum, in particular low-band spectrum, would be available for acquisition by new entrants and existing operators in the Jamaican telecommunications market in order to expand their networks.

Question 2:

Will the Minister indicate whether the content of the Aggregate Spectrum Cap Policy of 2013 has been made publicly and available, and if so, where is the information available?

Answer:

The Aggregate Spectrum Cap Policy of 2013 has been made publicly available on the websites of the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and the Spectrum Management Authority.

Question 3:

Will the Minister advise to the specific limitations on spectrum imposed on telecommunications providers by the Aggregate Spectrum Cap Policy of 2013?

Answer:

The specific limitations on spectrum imposed on telecommunications providers by the Aggregate Spectrum Cap Policy of 2013 is that access spectrum may not be acquired above the level of 80 megahertz.

The bands to be included in the calculation of the Cap are the 700, 850, 900, 1800 and 1900 megahertz bands.

Question 4:

Can the Minister indicate whether there have been any changes in Aggregate Spectrum Cap Policy of 2013?

Answer:

There has been one change to the Aggregate Spectrum Cap Policy of 2013.

Question 5:

If the answer to Part 3 is in the affirmative, will the Minister state exactly what changes were made and when said changes were made?

Answer:

The change made in the Policy of 2013 was with respect to the cap level. The cap was increased from 80 megahertz to **120** megahertz as of 31st March this year, 2014.

Question 6:

If the answer to Part 3 is in the affirmative, will the Minister advise the House as to why these changes were made?

Answer:

As stated in the response to Question 1 above, the Policy of 2013 was introduced to stimulate competition by ensuring that spectrum and in particular, low-band spectrum would be available for acquisition by new entrants and existing operators in the Jamaica telecommunications market in order to expand their networks.

The principal reason for auctioning the 700 megahertz band was to create a more attractive proposition for prospective new entrants. The results of the auction seem to indicate a lack of interest at the present time by prospective new entrants. While waiting for a few years may have yielded the desired result, it was our considered view that it would be best to award the spectrum to the incumbents in order to afford consumers access to "fourth-generation" cellular technologies, such as Long Term Evolution at the earliest possible opportunity, as well as to begin to earn from same.

The policy was varied in keeping with Clause 17 thereof to allow both incumbents equal opportunity to acquire spectrum in the 700 megahertz band and to enable the outcomes highlighted in the aforementioned paragraph.

Question 7:

If the answer to Question 3 is in the affirmative, can the Minister indicate whether these changes have been made publicly available in the form of an amended policy, and if so, where is it available?

Answer:

The amended Aggregate Spectrum Cap Policy has been made available on the website of the Spectrum Management Authority.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Thank you very much, Minister. Minister, I know that you are very passionate about competition in the telecom sector. (Laughter) Appreciating the fact that it will stimulate innovation and create employment opportunities and so forth. Minister, as it relates to this particular Aggregate Cap Policy that was put into effect September 2013, you had initially capped it at 80, now, after a couple months, you have moved that to 120, while in most other jurisdictions where in fact, the World Economic Forum - and just recently, the UNE-GOV analysis put them way above us. There the highest is 80 megahertz, which is found in Brazil, why then Minister, after such a short period of time you have changed that policy?

Mr. PAULWELL: The Member is absolutely correct that I am indeed passionate about competition, but that's the reason why from a situation of total freedom, we imposed a policy last year to cap it so that no one company could have more than they needed

and could deny competition in relation to available spectrum.

We increased the cap only and solely because we weren't successful to introduce a new player under the 700 band. It is well known that we went to the market and rather than deny our people the utilization of the 700 frequency, which will enable us to have true genuine wireless broadband capability that is not only going to enable Jamaicans to have access to cheaper data services, but also to enable the opportunities that exist in the call centre business and so on, to benefit from this additional infrastructure we thought it best to go now, and that's the reason why we have increased the band.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, was there any consultation as it relates to increasing this cap with - any consultation or agreement? Did you sought agreement from the regulators as relates to increasing the cap from 80 to 120?

Mr. PAULWELL: Let me say that in relation to spectrum it is the Minister who determines spectrum. I do accept advice and guidance, as I did in this case, of the Spectrum Management Authority. It's separate and apart from the role of the OUR into other aspects of telecom but in relation to spectrum.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Well, Minister, prior to you putting in place that policy in 2013, Spectrum Management Authority played a very key role as relates to formulating the policy.

Now, Minister, if you look back at the justification or justifications given then, why the cap should be at 80 megahertz to stimulate competition -

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Paulwell)

Dr. WHEATLEY: Yes, of course, it's your cap, Minister, but I am sure that when you were seeking to put that into effect that you must have asked the Spectrum Management Authority to even drive the process because, in fact, a public consultation was done where it was after consulting with the public and key stakeholders that they came about and put forward a policy paper with reasons and in fact, Minister, you lifted some of those same very reasons to justify then why you wanted to cap it at 80 megahertz. You also said then, Minister, that by capping it at 80 megahertz it would provide opportunity for new entrants into the market. Are you now reversing that argument and is it now, Minister that initially you consulted with them and now you did not consult with them but take the decision on your own?

Mr. PAULWELL: The Spectrum Management Authority operates under a board appointed by me, and we are in constant consultation and dialogue.

Indeed, the Member should be aware that last year the Spectrum Management Authority went to the market to seek expressions of interest, not only in relation to the 700 megahertz but in all the bands. And I dare say that where we have found interests are in those bands that are in the higher frequencies and that are readily and plentifully available for allocation, there is no shortage now and, in fact, there is another band within the 700 megahertz that we want to allocate and we are hoping that a new player will come for that.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, while I want to believe otherwise, I want to ask you this Minister. Was the increase of this cap a requirement imposed, Mr. Minister, collectively by the providers during the negotiation for advanced payment of their license, a license fee?

Mr. PAULWELL: The Member has been told already that the increase in the cap was to facilitate the purchase of the 700 megahertz frequency by Digicel. I think that is well known and there is no mystery around that.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, is there any monitory process in place to ensure that providers use all the frequencies that they have and that they are not hoarding frequencies, Mr. Minister?

Mr. PAULWELL: You will recall that in 2012 one of the first things we did as an administration was to amend the telecommunications law, and one of the important amendments was to ensure that the spectrum would be properly managed and regulated, and there are now rules that will enable the SMA where they find that spectrum is being hoarded, that is, that the spectrum is not being used efficiently, that people have more than they need, they are able to reclaim the spectrum, and that is as of law and we intend to enforce that strictly.

Dr. WHEATLEY: Minister, you said that the necessary legislation is in place, but is it now being used to monitor the current players in the market as it relates to hoarding of spectrum?

Mr. PAULWELL: Absolutely.

Mr. Speaker, I move for the recommittal of item, Questions and Answers to Questions.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
(Recommitted)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Henry.

Mr. HENRY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice at the expiration of 21 days I will ask the Minister of Transport to answer the following questions:

Question 1:

Will the Minister advise if a claim has been made by seven Grade One Contractors regarding fluctuations under the JDIP program

a) If the answer is in the positive can the Minister say what the amount of the claim is and how and when it will be paid and from what source?

b) If the answer is in the negative, will the Minister advise what the NWA or his ministry or himself knows of the intervention of the Jamaica Masterbuilders' Association on behalf of the contractors and whether this intervention involves

i) Fluctuations

ii) Final measurement for work completed

iii) Withheld sums for various reasons including absence of test results

iv) Return of retention sums

Question 2:

Will the Minister further state if he has or intends to meet with the Jamaica Masterbuilders' Association regarding this claim?

Question 3:

Will the Minister further state if he is aware of a letter re payment issues which was sent to the CEO of the NWA requesting a meeting from as far back as April 2014 to settle these issues?

a) If the answer is in the positive, can the Minister say what was the resolution?

b) If the answer is in the negative can the Minister say when the meeting will be held?

Question 4:

Will the Minister say if he is aware of a letter sent to the Contractor General by the contractors advising him of these outstanding issues?

Question 5:

Is the Minister aware that the contractors have written to the main contractors CHEC/China Harbour requesting the non release of the Employer from its obligations under the contract?

a) If the answer is in the positive will the Minister say what effect this has on the NWA and by extension the GOJ and future contracts?

Question 6:

Should the claim in question proceed to legal or quasi legal resolution, will the Minister advise what impact the outcome of this will have on the Completion of project and the likely cost to the NWA and the GOJ in settlement and legal fees?

Question 7:

Will the Minister further advise if all of the matters related to these claims were the subject of an audit?

If the answer is in the positive, will the Minister further advise who the auditors were and what were there findings?

Question 8:

Will the Minister further state if those findings were challenged by the contractors on the basis of an incorrect assumption by the Auditors?

If the answer is in the positive, can the Minister state what has been taken to address the matter?

The SPEAKER: House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the recommittal of items: Reports from Committees and Notices of Motions Given Orally.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal items: Reports from Committees and Notices of Motions given orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES
(Recommitted)

Mr. L. B. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the Report of the Regulations Committee of the House of Representatives, on its deliberations on the Deposit Insurance (Joint Trust and Nominee Accounts) Regulations, 2014, the

Office of Utilities Regulation (Amendment of First Schedule) to the Act, Order, 2014, and the Foreign Nationals and Commonwealth Citizens (Employment) (Work Permit Fees) (Amendment) Regulations, 2014.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY
(Recommitted)

Mr. L. B. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

> Be it Resolved that the Report of the Regulations Committee of the House of Representatives on its deliberations on the Deposit Insurance (Joint Trust and Nominee Accounts) Regulations, 2014, the Office of Utilities Regulations (Amendment of First Schedule) to the Act, Order, 2014, and the Foreign Nationals and Commonwealth Citizens (Employment) (Work Permit Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 15th day of July, 2014, be approved.

Dr. CHANG: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Chang.

Dr. CHANG: Mr. Speaker, the Report before us have three items, three resolutions that have been brought to the House. This side is particularly concerned about No. 3. That the Office of Utilities Regulations (Amendment of the First Schedule…

Mr. DALLEY: No, Mr. Speaker, I am trying to understand what we are doing now because I thought we will have to debate this matter at which time the Member will - so it has just been laid, so it's not going to be debated today.

Mr. HENRY: What was your ruling, Mr. Speaker, on that position? What did the House Leader say? Is it up for debate?

The SPEAKER: No, not today.

Mr. HENRY: Yes, but just be very clear because there is one section on that committee. What you were saying is that, and I am speaking to the regulations of OUR Transport Authority, are you saying that it's up for debate for the amendments to be made, or for the position of the Opposition in rejecting that position?

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the matter was correctly referred to the Regulations Committee of the House. They considered the matter and the Committee has forwarded a Report in support of the…

Mr. HENRY: And that's precisely the point. Yield, please, Minister.

The Committee has forwarded a section of the Report in which it states; "Your Committee having considered the issue against one objection recommends that it be approved". And I want to be very clear that the Opposition, from my total understanding, is totally against that. But if the debate is where we are going to correct that I want it to be made clear, because as a member of the Committee I do not want it to be adjusted to in this approval.

The SPEAKER: You should have had a minority report, Mr. Henry. You should have submitted that minority report.

Mr. HENRY: That is why, Mr. Speaker, I have to seek your guidance continuously, because I do not want it to believe that the Opposition agreed with this report and/or the recommendation.

The SPEAKER: When the Report is debated then you have the floor of the House to make your input.

Mr. HENRY: Well, would you so instruct the Clerk in terms of it that the Minority Report must be then prepared, because the Clerk should have known that and then attach it, that's why I said I was not going to be signing this Report, and it was amended to record the position of the Opposition.

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, can I as a member of the Committee…

Mr. HENRY: No, because this only came to me today to sign, I objected to sign it, I was asked to sign it on the understanding, I almost said overstanding, that the Opposition is fully against that position, and I wanted to make sure it's recorded as being withdrawn.

(Heckling)

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, as a Member of the Committee the Member objected to the Resolution. The Report which is tabled here correctly records that a Member objected, but the majority on the Committee support it. So the Report is an accurate reflection of what took place.

A MEMBER: So we need a Minority Report... (Inaudible comment)

Mr. ROBINSON: No, but if that is so the Member had an opportunity. That's a different matter. The report, in my view, accurately reflects what took place at the meeting.

The SPEAKER: There is no question about that.

Mr. ROBINSON: Accurately reflects what took place.

The SPEAKER: There is no question about that.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker…

Mr. HENRY: (Inaudible comment) - Leader of Opposition, I have to pass the matter to him. My understanding, if I read correctly this matter was even debated and objected to in the Senate, and there is a clear opposition position that we are against this. So I want to be very clear in the debate for the pros and cons, because…

Mr. JACKSON: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Jackson.

Mr. JACKSON: I want to make a suggestion. As was reported that the Report captures what took place, however, it's the Opposition's prerogative to table its own Minority Report if the general report does not reflect or they don't wish to be identified with the general report. In the circumstance, Mr. Speaker, I am suggesting that since the Report is not going to be debated now, then they can table the Minority Report and it be taken in debate with the full report.

Mr. HENRY: That position is to be responded to by the Leader of Opposition Business, I continue my position of the total withdrawal of that decision.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised and disappointed that we have come to this situation at this stage, because I think at our meeting earlier this afternoon we had a clear understanding of the Opposition's

position, and I think we were shown a clear path as to how to bring forcefully to the House our position, and in our discussion we concerned ourselves about being locked out in terms of a timeframe. That discussion took place in your office. So I am a little confused now, because apparently there are two issues on the table.

The SPEAKER: No, no, it's not two issues. The Report...

Mr. D. SMITH: The twenty-one days begin today?

Dr. DAVIES: NO! NO!

Mr. D. SMITH: Can I address you, Mr. Speaker, without the shouting in the House?

Dr. DAVIES: NO!

Mr. D. SMITH: And that is the reason why I had a meeting with you and the Clerk today, because we want proper guidance. This is unprecedented, so we are not really sure of the process.

The SPEAKER: Let me hear the House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the resolution was correctly put to this Parliament, and the time allowed for it to take effect has elapsed. It was referred to the Committee, and the Committee has a Report in support of - yes, for adoption, in support of the resolution. Now, the Opposition could always table its objection and there is nothing wrong with that. But if that's what you wish to do then you really should have tabled a Minority Report now. But the resolution has taken effect, it has taken effect, so...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PAULWELL: Yes, that's the nature of negative resolutions. Now, it's a different matter in the Senate, and it's not our business, so leave that to the Senate. We, here, quite properly put it through a Resolution Committee, and it has been by majority approved by the Resolution Committee.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, when we discussed that issue today what I am hearing the House Leader say now was not made very clear at the earlier meeting, right. We had a clear understanding that a motion which we put together would be in order to have that tabled or proposed in the House today.

Now, I took the step to get a clear understanding, because I am repeating again, we don't have any precedence in which to refer to. And I will yield so as you have some consultation with the Clerk to get official and proper and adequate guidance.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Smith, my understanding is that the Report will be tabled, and when the Report is to be debated then Dr. Chang would have his input. Wasn't that your understanding, Dr. Chang?

(Dr. Chang nods his head in agreement)

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Dr. CHANG: There is a mis-understanding, however, about the time involved. My understanding is that the twenty-one days begin today when the Report is laid.

Dr. DAVIES: No...(Inaudible)

Dr. CHANG: Let me finish, sir. My understanding - if it is incorrect you may do so - and that, however, the order is in place, but on debating the motion I can again move for

its annulment. Whether that's accepted or not by the majority, is the issue, but I have the right to do so in the debate. Am I - Leader of Opposition Business, is that the understanding?

Mr. D. SMITH: That was my understanding.

Dr. DAVIES: Are you wrong or are you wrong.

Dr. CHANG: That is my understanding. House Leader, was that my understanding? Correct.

Mr. D. SMITH: Where are we now, sir?

Mr. L. B. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, is it that the resolution has been passed or...?

The SPEAKER: No.

MEMBERS: No.

Mr. L. B. SMITH: It has not been passed.

The SPEAKER: Let us move on.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE HOUSE FIRST OBTAINED

The SPEAKER: Minister Arscott.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I now move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill shortly entitled, "The Municipalities (Validation and Amendment) Act, 2014".

Bill shortly entitled:

The Municipalities (Validation and Amendment) Act, 2014,

read a first time.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of second reading of the Bill.

I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today I will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the second reading of the Bill and to take it through all its concluding stages.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the sole item under Public Business is that which the Member has just given notice of. The Minister of Local Government and Community Development will take that item now.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Arscott.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Municipality of Portmore is governed by the Municipalities Act. The Municipalities (Validation and Amendment) Bill seeks to amend the Municipalities Act to serve a number of purposes.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill introduces greater certainty to, and confidence in the procedures of governance within the Municipal Council. It ensures confidence in the legitimate continuity of Government at the Municipal level, by specifying the process to be implemented where the Mayor or Deputy Mayor of a Municipality is not capable of carrying out his or her functions for reasons stated in the Municipalities Act.

In relation to this, the Bill seeks to remove a long-standing obstacle to procedural smoothness and decisive decision making by conferring specific voting rights on a person who presides over a meeting of a Municipality or any of its committees.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill seeks to indemnify and validate the official acts of the Deputy

Mayor of Portmore, in his current capacity as Acting Mayor of Portmore, and of the Portmore Municipal Council. This is necessitated by the expiry of a six-months period within which the Deputy Mayor and the Municipal Council can conduct official business once a casual vacancy for the post of Mayor is officially recorded by the Council.

I wish to highlight some clauses in the Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Clause 1, the Short Title and construction. This Clause sets out the short title of the Act.

Clause 2 is Interpretation.

Clause 3, Validation of acts by an indemnification of the Deputy Mayor. This Clause validates and confirms as lawful all official acts done by the Deputy Mayor of Portmore, Councillor Leon Thomas, in the purported exercise of the powers, duties and functions conferred upon him as Mayor of the Municipality of Portmore, during the period commencing July 8, 2014, and ending on the date of the enactment of the Bill.

The Clause also makes lawful all emoluments paid to and received by Councillor Thomas, in his capacity as Acting Mayor.

This section also indemnifies Councillor Thomas and all other persons who may be liable, directly or indirectly, against the possibility of legal proceedings, on the basis that the exercise by Councillor Thomas, of the powers and functions of the Mayor of the Municipality of Portmore was unauthorized, unlawfully done or otherwise illegal or improper, as of July 8, 2014.

Clause 4, Mr. Speaker, the Validation and Indemnification of the Portmore Municipal Council and its organs. Consistent with the provisions of Clause 3, this section confirms and validates as lawful, all acts done in good faith by the Portmore Municipal Council or any of its members or committees, in the purported exercise of the powers, duties and functions conferred on the Council during the period commencing on April **8**, 2014, and ending on the date of the enactment of the Bill, July 8.

Additionally, the sections indemnify the Municipal Council or any of its members or committees, against legal proceedings on the ground that a by-election was not held in conformity with Section 4(9) of the Municipalities Act.

Clause 5. This Clause creates clarity by defining terms, electors, polling divisions, and save their meaning as noted in Section 2.

Clause 7. This Clause allows for any Councillor whose electoral division does not fall totally within the boundaries of a Municipality, to nonetheless take his or her seat on a Municipal Council.

It should be carefully noted that this provision applies where the electoral division contains polling divisions entirely within the Municipalities boundaries, whose electors amount to more than 50 per cent of the total number of electors for that division.

Clause 8. This section introduces amendments to the Municipalities Act intended to ensure the discharge of the public business, or the Mayor or Deputy Mayor of a

Municipal Council is affected by physical, mental or financial challenges, or any other qualifying fact as specified in the principal Act.

More specifically, Clause 8 provides, amongst other things that…

1) The Deputy Mayor will assume the office of Mayor in the event of death, resignation, absence, incapacity or disqualification for any cause of the Mayor, where such vacancy arise within 15 months of the incumbent having held the office of Mayor. In that case, the Deputy Mayor shall exercise the functions of the Mayor until a Mayor is next elected, supplied casual vacancy in accordance with section 8(3) of the Parish Councils Act, and section 14(3) of the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation Act applying where relevant and with necessary modifications.
2) Where the Mayor is unable to perform the functions of Mayor for any of the reasons stated in the Act, at any time after 15 months, the Deputy Mayor shall assume and exercise the functions of Mayor until a Mayor is next elected under section 4(11) of the Municipalities Act, which election shall take place on the day or days on which the next General Election of Councillors is to be held under the provisions of section 8(1) of the Parish Councils Act, or section 1491 of the KSAC Act.
3) The person presiding at any meeting of the Municipal Council will have an original and a casting vote.

Clause 9. If section 3 providing for Validation and Indemnification of the actions of the Deputy Mayor of Portmore Municipal Council, since July 8, 2014, this Clause provides for his continuation in office in the capacity of Mayor, until the elections for the positions are next held in keeping with section 4(11) of the Municipalities Act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I got the impression that the Bill tabled by the Minister last week that the Minister would have withdrawn the Bill and make the necessary adjustments to the Bill. The Bill, Mr. Speaker, makes reference to coming into effect on the 8th of July, today is the 15th of July. But, Mr. Speaker, what this Bill is actually doing is depriving the people of Portmore the right to participate in a by-election because what it is actually doing is to postpone the by-elections in Portmore.

It also raises, Mr. Speaker, some serious concerns about the legitimacy of the operations of the Portmore Municipal Council based on what has been tabled in the House by the Minister. What this is suggesting, Mr. Speaker, is that all transactions undertaken by the Portmore Municipal Council since the untimely passing of former Mayor George Lee is up for question, because the law then at the time did not allow the Deputy Mayor to

undertake any such responsibility within the Municipality. So what it means, Mr. Speaker, is that all transactions in Portmore by the Council can be deemed illegal, if I go by what the Minister has tabled.

So it begs, therefore, Mr. Speaker, the question that needs to be answered, when was the death of the Mayor recorded in the Minutes as required by law at the meeting of the Portmore Municipal Council? Because all of that, Mr. Speaker, has not been - no light has been shed on that, Mr. Speaker, and there are serious concerns about the question of governance. I said in the Sectoral Debate for an administration that speaks so eloquently about its commitment to law and order it is quite clear that there was an absence in this area during the period, I think, from October last year until this moment. So the Minister needs to say to this Honourable House what is the position, as I said earlier on, with all the transactions that took place in the Council during the time, and what are the steps that are going to be taken to legitimize those actions that were taken.

Mr. Speaker, while the Bill seeks to bring some level of calm to make the system work, it will also, Mr. Speaker, raise some concerns as it relates to Clause 5 of the Bill that now speaks to electoral boundaries. Mr. Speaker, this Honourable House, with all due respect to the Minister, has no authority under the regulations to make any adjustments whatsoever to the boundaries. And I would have thought, Minister that you would have excluded - it speaks about divisions, polling divisions, it speaks about - the same that you tabled here that speaks about bringing those two divisions that can't sit. This Parliament has no such authority. The Minister has no such authority. Because if the Parliament records that when this matter was raised by the Member from South West St. Andrew the opinion of the Attorney General was sought.

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, South West St. Catherine.

Mr. McKENZIE: Sorry, South West St. Catherine. The opinion of the Attorney General was sought on this matter and the Attorney General made it quite clear that nothing could be done at the time because the process would have to wait the required period for adjustments to be made. We have not yet reached that stage, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister needs to be clear on this aspect of the Bill. The Minister needs to take this out because the Minister does not have the right, the Parliament does not have that right. That is left to the Electoral Commission to make that determination, Mr. Speaker.

So the Bill, Mr. Speaker, in its present form I am humbly - I am suggesting that the Minister withdraws this Bill, makes the necessary adjustment that is required, Mr. Speaker, and bring back the Bill so it can be dealt with in a manner that is conducive with upholding the principles of local government. And I tell you why, Mr. Speaker. There is a matter brewing in the St. Catherine Parish Council involving a Councillor who was...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Arscott)

Mr. McKENZIE: Please, Mr. Speaker, I am speaking about what the law says, the dictates of law - but is St. Catherine.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Arscott)

Mr. McKENZIE: You don't want me to go there. All right, I won't go there. I am begging you, Minister, to withdraw the Bill in its present form and to bring it back, right. I want to ask you to withdraw it or if needs be to make an amendment to the Bill to exclude the question as it relates to the two outstanding divisions, because already in the Parliament the records will show that the distinguished Attorney General (Laughter) gave, Mr. Speaker, gave his opinion, Mr. Speaker, which I trust, Mr. Speaker, was the right opinion which I endorsed, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I have nothing more to say. I only want to say, Mr. Speaker that we owe the people of Portmore an apology. We need to apologize to the people of Portmore for denying them the opportunity of having a fully constituted Municipal Council. We owe those two divisions where those councillors can't sit.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, if at the time when the matter was raised by the Member from South West, and I know he will speak on it, we on this side would have given support if a real attempt was made to deal with the matter, Mr. Speaker. But as it is now I have made my case, Mr. Speaker, and I am hoping that the Minister will listen and will consider and will take my advice on the matter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Warmington.

Mr. WARMINGTON: The issue here that the Member just spoke about, the amendment to section 4 including now (d) in section 4 that speaks about each Councillor represents an electoral division that, although not falling entirely within the boundaries of the Municipality, contain the polling divisions entirely within the boundary of the Municipality, and the other one (c) that says the Councillor represents electoral divisions that fall entirely within the boundary of the Municipality. I think it is a little untidy. This should not have come here with the indemnity because we are asking for indemnity of the action of the Mayor instead of a municipality. This ought to come in a different form. I don't think this amendment is correctly being placed in this thing here, I thought it would be elsewhere. What I see here, however, in an attempt to include those two Councillors or two parish council divisions in the Municipality. I think this is to get them involved now, so it's an attempt to get them involved, but it can't be done this way. This is why I am saying it should come in a different form.

The Bill that came through Parliament here, signed by the Speaker then, it says in section 3 in, Clause 3 subsection (6) for the purposes of this Act a municipality shall include all lands within the boundary set out in its Charter. And it says again the Charter shall be laid - it said the Minister shall have it laid within the House and it says here in subsection (10) the Minister shall cause a copy of the Charter to be laid on the Table of the House of Representatives and the Senate within 30 days of the date on which the Charter is granted. It says the boundary of the Municipality shall be defined in the Charter and then, that is section, in 3, and then

it says at the same time in subsection (10) the Minister shall cause a copy of the Charter to be laid within 30 days in the House and in the Senate after it's granted.

The Charter, Mr. Speaker, this was signed, this Act was signed really by the Governor-General Sir Howard Cooke, the late Sir Howard Cooke on the 22nd day of May 2003, this is when this Act came into effect or it was signed by the Governor-General. And the Charter was signed by the then Minister who is now Prime Minister on the very same date - it was signed by the then Minister who is now Prime Minister on the 22nd day of May 2003.

So both the Charter and the Act were signed the very same day. It stipulates that the Charter will tell what the boundary is, define the boundary, and it says also that the Minister will lay that within 30 days in the House and in the Senate after it is granted. She granted it on the 22nd day of May.

The records of Parliament show that the Charter was not laid until July 15, 2003 in the House of Representatives and on July 18, 2003 in the Senate. So in effect I don't think that this that was laid almost two months after is valid. I don't think it's valid. The Act that was signed by the Governor-General states clearly the time that it must be laid and it was laid almost two months after the Charter was issued, so I don't think the Charter itself is valid, in that it breached the requirement.

I'd like a legal opinion on that, but I'm pretty certain that if the Act, signed by the Governor-General, states clearly when it must be laid and it was laid two months after, this Charter is invalid. So the Municipality in Portmore is operating on a Charter that is not valid because it was not laid in the required time, it was laid two days after - two months after; two months after, so I don't think it is valid.

But added to this, Mr. Speaker, the fact - what it's saying if the Charter is not valid, Mr. Lawyer, it means that all they do over deh under this Charter is totally invalid. So 'yuh haffi' come back with another stuff here to validate, to validate all that they did.

A MEMBER: That makes it even more urgent.

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, no, make it more urgent, but that mean sey it's very untidy, very untidy because it does not include the breach of the Charter, so it makes it very untidy.

This is why I'm saying, what came should've come in this. I have nothing against the indemnities being sought 'yuh nuh', I have nothing against it, but I'm saying it's a little untidy. The section that deals with the boundary should not be in this and we have to come back here, not only to deal - what you ask for here is to validate the action of the Mayor; you've not asked for the validation of the actions taken by the Council.

Mr. JACKSON: Both.

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, but you've asked him to validate it since the death of the Mayor.

A MEMBER: Yes.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Jackson)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Right, but what

I'm saying, you can't ask to validate from the death of the Mayor, when all that was done before that...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Jackson)

Mr. WARMINGTON: You see what I'm saying, so it's a little untidy we have to – it captures all of this in the - we have to capture all of this in whatever amendment we're asking for here, because they don't have a valid Charter, there's not a Charter here.

And what is most, Mr. Speaker, we can't adjust a boundary that does not exist. Because we're asking here, we talk about a division that falls - a Council that falls entirely within the boundary of the Municipality, that's what it says here, or that that falls within 50%. That's what it says right here yuh nuh. It says the Councillor who represents an electoral division that falls entirely within the boundaries of the Municipality.

And we add now (d) to it that says, each Councillor that represents an electoral division that although not falling entirely within the boundary of the Municipality, contains polling division entirely within the thing.

So it says 50% and up would be. I have no problem against that but it cannot be done like this, that's what I'm saying. It cannot be done like this, because I've been saying all along that it's very untidy. It's unfair to rob the people of Portmore of representation in the Municipality. I've been saying that and I've been pushing that before the Municipal Election, and I've been saying what they did there is totally incorrect an adjustment should've been made before the boundaries came into effect. That's what I asked for them and it came back now to haunt us.

So the issue is that there is no boundary for the Portmore Municipality, because even though section 4 makes it clear that the boundary - section 4 subsection (6) makes it clear, that the Charter would carry the boundary, this Charter is deficient, it does not include the boundary of Portmore and that is what the Charter was supposed to do. If you go through this from page to page there is nowhere inside there mention the boundary of Portmore Municipality, it does not. So a boundary does not exist for Portmore. A boundary does not exist.

And I spoke to the Attorney General, when they talked about getting 7% of the electors and going through this process of referendum, I said to him, it's not needed. I spoke to the Minister almost two years ago and I said to him that the Charter does not define the boundary. It was not laid properly. At the time I believe it was not laid because it couldn't be found anywhere here. I had to get a copy from the Portmore Municipality because there's none in the Parliament here. I had to get a copy of this for the library. So none exist, so I thought then it was not laid. But then the goodly legal mind over there, she researched and found it for me.

So what I'm saying, I said to him then, all he needed to do is to include in this Charter the boundary of Portmore and then lay the Charter in this House, find somebody to lay it in this House. It could come as an amendment in that it was laid. It would come back as an

amendment including the boundary itself. So these two Councillors would have no problem sitting in the Council representing the people of Portmore. That's all I asked for, but it was not done. So this could've been done more than a year and-a-half ago. It's a simple, simple stuff, just to amend the same section and just to state what the boundary is and come back to the House and lay it. We would not have the problem.

But by doing what we're doing here, even if you pass it, even if you pass it, they can't sit, they can't sit. So that's why I'm saying, take this out, take this out, amend the Charter, it doesn't take - if the Minister amend this it can come back here by next week. It's a minor stuff so it can come back next week in that this was laid, and I don't believe it is valid anyhow; I don't believe that thing was laid two months after the required date by the Bill.

Mr. JACKSON: That was your original Act.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Huh?

Mr. JACKSON: That's your original Act.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Yeah, it was laid at that, but I'm not fighting because maybe I could be wrong, but I don't think I'm wrong. But if the Charter is upheld, even though it was laid two months after, then all he has to do is to go back and just do the amendment and come back next week yuh nuh. It doesn't need nothing, you just include now what you think the boundary is. And I spoke to you about it also and I spoke to the Attorney General after that and I gave him a copy because they couldn't find a copy, and I spoke to the Minister. It's a simple. Just do that and come back, it's a little untidy.

So as the Member asked for it to be withdrawn, it can be withdrawn. The indemnity I have no problem, but the section dealing with the boundaries I have a problem because it cannot go through as it is right now.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Jackson.

Mr. JACKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I made careful notes of the observation from my colleagues from both Western Kingston and South West St. Catherine. But before I proceed I think I should give a little context to what we're seeking to somewhat remedy. But before I start on I want to acknowledge something that both Members said. There is a fact that we do owe the people in the division - those two divisions - an apology because they've been denied representation in the Municipality since the last Local Government Election, and we concede that, okay. But there is no good to be made by prolonging an injury, the best thing to do is to remedy it at the earliest possible time.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Too long; it's not fair to them.

Mr. JACKSON: But before going further, Mr. Speaker, let me put a little context. In 2003 when this legislation came before this House, the truth be told, it was done in a bit of hurry.

A MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. JACKSON: Because the people of Portmore never wanted the next Local

Government to be held without the opportunity of a direct election of a Mayor.

The House on both sides concedes that the legislation was being done in a bit of hurry, so much so that we agreed that we would have a review of the legislation in about - I think it was three years - some period thereafter. And for a number of reasons, for a number of reasons, we were charting new grounds, Mr. Speaker, in the direct election of our Mayor and the new construct in Portmore. We conceded that in designing this new architecture, not knowing how the thing will work, we might need to come back and review and make some changes in it. We conceded that.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. JACKSON: But the issue you see, Mr. Speaker, these matters that this Bill is seeking to address are not existing in an abstract way, they are dealing with day to day life in Portmore. Portmore is a living organism; it's a functioning body and it is being impaired and injured by these things not being addressed. And for those reasons I submit to my colleagues, let us not make good the enemy of perfection.

There are a number of things, as you pointed out my colleague from South West that should be addressed. I agree, we should look at it, but don't let us further delay and perpetuate the injury to the people of Portmore by not making these substantive changes.

Mr. D. SMITH: You want to go ahead with a bad job?

Mr. JACKSON: Now the Bill seeks to do five things.

One, the indemnity and the validation of the actions of the Acting Mayor during the period of acting for all the period which he has acted and all the decisions that were done in good faith for the people of Portmore. Let us not deny that to Portmore, that's two distinct injuries, or two things that the Bill is seeking to address.

Mr. McKENZIE: We are not denying that one, you have our support on that.

Mr. JACKSON: The third, when we - when the people of Portmore came up with the desire for direct election, the truth be told, the by-election provision never really take full cognizance of the extent of it. In Portmore, a by-election for the Mayor is three constituencies simultaneously, not one that we're accustomed to and the attendant cost or two, three constituencies, twelve divisions at the same time. It's extensive. And however, this term is only for three years, the local government term, unlike say a parliamentary term which is five years. It's a very extensive exercise.

The truth be told Mr. Speaker, we never contemplate these things in any real way at the time, but when our beloved first Mayor passed, it was a reality that struck us in the face immediately. And indeed Mr. Speaker, there was a long period of grieving in coming to grips with the passing of the Mayor.

Now, one important thing to bear in mind about the Portmore Municipality and the construct that exists there, it never started from the Political Directorate, it started from the people of Portmore. The Political

Directorate came on board, gave support and to help drive the process.

Mr. McKENZIE: That's true.

Mr. JACKSON: Because of that, because of the genesis of the Portmore Municipality, I took it on myself to engage those same groups of persons in Portmore that gave life to this initiative of a direct Mayor. I called a meeting with all the collective groups, the - all Hellshire Leadership Council, the Portmore Joint Citizens Association, the Greater Portmore Leadership, all grouping over there, the Ministers Fraternal, all of the umbrella groups that were at the table at the beginning, I called them to a meeting and we discussed these issues. I got a consensus, there was only one person in that group who had reservation, but we had a consensus, look what we had before us, how should we proceed to go forward.

The law that is in existence was done out of consultation with you, I'm coming back to you for consultation to make any pertinent adjustment going forward. Given the shortness of the period that remains, the consent was that the cost involved with the election - and the General Election was just around the corner - it never made any pragmatic sense. And the truth be told, we in Portmore tried to be pragmatic in the decisions that we take, and so we said okay, let us go ahead and make the necessary adjustment to cause the Deputy Mayor to act.

And they were very, very firm, Mr. Speaker, that the Deputy Mayor will not become the Mayor though exercising the powers of the Mayor. The Deputy Mayor will serve as an acting member until the people of Portmore go back to the polls to elect their Mayor. In other words, the Mayor of Portmore will always be a directly elected Mayor and as such the Act reflects that. It captures the sentiments of the people in keeping with the genesis of the legislation. So we deal with the question of the completion of the term by saying once the directly elected Mayor has completed a minimum of fifteen months then the Deputy Mayor serves the rest of the term until the next general local Government Elections are kept. And I must also point out that the Act also provides that while the Deputy Mayor is acting out the term of the Mayor, the person who is now deputizing for the Deputy Mayor is an Acting Deputy Mayor to preserve the sanctity of the Mayor of Portmore being a directly elected Mayor. The Bill seeks to do that. That's the third provision.

Mr. McKENZIE: We have no difficulty with that. We have no difficulty with that.

Mr. JACKSON: The fourth provision of this Act, Mr. Speaker, after all is said and done the fourth provision of this Act is to remedy another shortcoming in the original Bill where the Mayor sitting in the Chair of the Council had no original or casting vote. That's the fourth provision, that's the fourth provision of this Act.

The fifth and final provision of this Act is a matter that my friend and colleague from West Kingston has taken on as a disciple to crusade against those two Councillors remaining outside of the municipality and my good friend from South West, from the great

parish of St. Catherine, share those sentiments too.

Mr. McKENZIE: So West Kingston is not great.

Mr. JACKSON: Well, okay, you are great too. (Laughter)

Dr. DAVIES: You using this word 'great' loosely.

Mr. JACKSON: Perhaps, perhaps. Today is my generous day.

The last and fifth item, Mr. Speaker, is those two Councillors. I, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, share the sentiments expressed over there about those two Councillors. One of them is in my constituency; one is in my neighbouring constituency of East St. Catherine.

Dr. DAVIES: The great parish.

Mr. JACKSON: Well, it's a given.

The overwhelmed majority of those divisions fall within the boundary, whether formalized or not, but as I said, Portmore is a living entity. It's not an abstract notion. The majority of the persons in those two divisions, electors, fall within that boundary of Portmore. Those residents have been denied representation in the Municipal Council since March 2012. What this Bill is seeking to do, Mr. Speaker, is to remedy that situation. I don't believe that my colleague would want one extra day to pass and those two Councillors are not able to represent the people who elected them. (Applause) I don't believe that they should subscribe to that.

Mr. McKENZIE: You can't go and circumvent the law.

Mr. JACKSON: It's for that reason. Mr. Speaker, the law that is being amended - this legislation is amending section 4 of the principal Act. It's a law that we passed here.

Mr. McKENZIE: But we don't have the power here to do that.

Mr. JACKSON: We had the power to pass the law in the first instance and we have the power under the constitution, I'm guided to make amendments to the law, which is what we're seeking to do now.

(Applause)

(Cross talk)

We are using the law to empower the people in the instant case.

Mr. McKENZIE: We're not against that, but in its present form it can't be done.

Mr. JACKSON: So, Mr. Speaker, today...

Mr. McKENZIE: Don't ramrod the thing.

A MEMBER: The other way around.

Mr. JACKSON: ...today is a wonderful day for the people of Portmore finally, finally these injuries that have been perpetuated for far too long will be remedied with the passage of this Act and I said earlier on, Mr. Speaker, let us not make good the enemy of perfection.

Mr. McKENZIE: We're not.

Mr. JACKSON: My colleague - whichever way, you know what I'm talking about. My Speaker, my friend from South West made mention about how elegant the Act could have been and you have made mention of how better it could have been. Don't let the beauty take precedence over the functionality

of the Municipality and it is being done without injury to the law.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. McKenzie)

Mr. JACKSON: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I feel the consensus from my colleagues over there...

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Absolutely.

Mr. JACKSON: ...in not wanting to deny the people of Portmore what this Act is providing for them.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Hear, hear!

Mr. JACKSON: With the conscience of my colleagues over there. I ask for the House to support this Bill in its present form so that the people of Portmore can then rise up and say the member of Parliament from Western Kingston recognized their plight and came to their support. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Brown.

Mr. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Government Members)

Mr. BROWN: Keep yourself quiet.

Mr. Speaker, the intervention by my colleague from South St. Catherine needs no support and in fact I fully endorse the sentiments that he has expressed. But a Bill of this nature, Mr. Speaker, it would be difficult for it to be laid here and be debated and for me not to intervene as I am one of the Members of Parliament that is affected. And the area that I wish to make a brief intervention on is in relation to the fifth objective that my colleague from South St. Catherine outlined that the Bill is seeking to address. And that is the issue of the representation of the Councillors from the Portmore Pines Division and I believe from the Portmore North Division who have been out of the Municipal Council since 2012 when the elections were held. I think, Mr. Speaker, that the need for them to be able to sit and have *locus standi* at the Municipal Council is impatient of debate. And in that regard, Mr. Speaker, I support this Bill in its entirety and fully especially in light of the correction that is being done to that situation where the people in Portmore who voted for these Councillors will have the benefit of these councillors representing them in the Municipal Council.

Mr. Speaker, before I stood to make this intervention, I made certain enquiries of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel who is here in the House in relation to this Bill. And I am very much convinced, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill that is laid before this Honourable House is well in order and that it is a Bill that we can, in fact, pass in to law and give effect the objectives that the Bill is seeking to observe and to bring into force.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make the point that whilst we may see some merit in the intervention from the Member from South West St. Catherine and also from the Member from Western Kingston, Mr. Speaker, the issue of the Charter is a separate matter from this Bill, I would want to submit. And that in truth and in fact that the issues raised by the Member from South West St. Catherine can be addressed at a later date and that this piece of legislation that is being brought here need not be delayed in order to address what the Member from South West St. Catherine has raised.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this correction that is taking place here is long overdue certainly as a Member of Parliament for one of the affected constituencies. I have made representation internally and I am happy that I'm being placed in a position by the Minister of Local Government to go back to my constituents and to report that we have corrected this anomalous situation in the Municipality of Portmore. (Applause) As a Member of Parliament I'm quite happy that I can go back and report that they now have their Councillors able to sit and to represent them in the Municipality of Portmore and as my colleague said so eloquently, I think that both Members on that side agree with us in relation to that need for that to happen.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles.

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, as a former Minister of Local Government I would like to say it very clearly that what is being discussed here this evening is very important. It is not that anybody oppose the amendment, but you know we have to stop acting like PNP and JLP and Opposition and Government when certain national issues come here; ...act like parliamentarians. We're in charge of governing the country.

Mr. WARMINGTON: We're all on the same page.

Mr. CHARLES: It is very clear that we have passed through a period of untidiness with Portmore. In fact, illegality – illegal – in fact, what is happening in Portmore couldn't happen in any big company in Jamaica. The Government would not put up with it. And we as Government are taking and doing some things that we should not be doing. We're not setting the right example. What we're doing we would not allow any company in Jamaica to do and we don't lock them up or dismantle or destroy them or throw them, but we come and do it, parliamentarians are comfortable clapping PNP and JLP standing aside because of this. We have to stop it.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, I don't see that there should be any opposition and the Member from I don't what part of St. Catherine...

A MEMBER: South.

Mr. CHARLES: ...put something clearly. You know when this matter was at the Committee Stage long discussions were taken about this same matter. This Member here from the beginning has been crying and complaining about the two areas of St. Catherine that is not represented. To me that is absolute rubbish that we have been here for so long and can't correct that.

A MEMBER: True that.

Mr. CHARLES: Absolute – we would not allow that to happen anywhere else. We would not accept that. The Government should not be setting that example. The Member is saying that nothing is wrong with the Charter, but how do you get elected and your elected person can't sit and we are comfortable in here laughing. That is the first amendment that should come here, during the nine months or three months when the Deputy Mayor was valid, we should have done that.

But come here now, are we going to be able to suspend a clause and proceed with a few clauses or we say, how long , tell us, how long will it take for the Minister to come with the amendment to bring in the two divisions that are out of Portmore. I mean how would you like to be elected for two years and you can't sit. How would you like to vote and you don't have a voice. That I think is worse than the other illegality of the Mayor's performance. I think you need to convince us. The Minister can convince us that he will forthright proceed to have the amendment done and to bring it here as quickly as possible. I don't know if it's going to kill us to take another few days to have the Bill properly and a tidy Bill get into the record or we have to go on with it because somebody gwine feel somebody win in the House and some fail - no win and fail business. We as parliamentarians must try and do the thing right. How we go outside and say that company can't do it, if we catch them we pass a law to lock them up.

(Inaudible comment by Government Member)

Mr. CHARLES: But I want you to hear it and believe it.

(Cross talk)

Some of you tek this hearing business as an insult, but I want to warn you be careful of it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to suggest that you guide us. You're Speaker of the House and the Minister who is in charge and has the responsibility of the portfolio guide the house as to whether or not it would take that long to come with the clause amendment. And as the Members have said over there, trust me, the Mayor will not be as happy as the people who are out of representation.

They would be happy if they hear tonight that we are going to bring them in. After the two years they have elected their Member who can't sit and they can't get representation that to me is the worst thing that you can do.

So, sir, we are parliamentarians, we have the responsibility. The people who are watching us, the Press who is writing about us don't separate us, don't care how much noise is making in here those of us who keep quiet still get mix up in it. So we have to take on the responsibility.

I close by saying, if we can just close our eyes against the win and lose and the PNP and JLP and act of parliamentarians on national issues together we will be better off.

Thank you, Sir. (Applause)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I don't have all the details like most of the previous speakers and I have listened to the contributions on both sides, and I have come to the conclusion that they are basically saying the same thing, meaning that we all want to achieve a common objective. But what I have also picked out of the discussion, Mr. Speaker is that there are some flaws that still exist, and we are trying to push through this document knowingly that there are flaws. Now, I feel badly about that because we are at a level where we need to at least strive for perfection, at least strive for perfection and what I am getting from my colleagues that what needs to be remedied, Mr. Speaker, it is not like

moving a mountain, it is relatively simple and can be done within a reasonable time frame.

So Mr. Minister, I can only recommend, we have some numbers here that will out-shout or out-vote or out whatever, and we don't intend to go into any voting. But I can only recommend that as part of your legacy, you don't know how long you are going to be around these parts. So as part of your legacy, I would ask you to hold and consult and when you look at your achievements down the road you were the Minister, in the seat at this time that was able to correct this anomaly which had been existing over time. So all I am doing, Mr. Speaker, is just saying, if we all know the thing is not perfect let us try. There is no major damage that will happen between now and then as far as I understand, so, my appeal really is to let us try to perfect the document more than sitting here going ahead, passing a document that we know continued to be flawed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the energy generated by this debate. I could not - where is the Opposition Member from West Kingston, I remembered he spoke with gusto and enthusiasm about the need to have these Councillors sitting in the Portmore municipality and, now that we are trying to adjust that wrong and to allow them. In fact, as the Member said, we in consultation, the citizens are actually demanding that the two Councillors sit in Portmore Municipality.

Now I want to say that there was an issue, there is an issue that was raised by the Opposition Spokesman and I want to point to you that in fact, it says here and if you had looked at the document, the matter was entered on the Minutes of the Council of the Municipality on the 8th day of January 2014. So therefore, the 8th day of July was the end of that 6-months period and, we only sought to deal with the period since that time. So it is well within the law in terms of what has been done. So the death was entered on the Minutes of January 8th, and the 6 months ended last Tuesday July 8.

In respect of the boundary issue, Mr. Speaker, there was not any proposal to adjust any boundary, but subject to the consistency with the constitutional principle the Parliament is acting within its authority, to make new provisions for the constitution of a Municipality. We are not adjusting the boundary by this Act we are including the divisions, an Act of Parliament that takes precedence over the Charter. The Act of Parliament takes precedence over the Charter.

The validity of the Charter, section 3(10) of the Act which speaks to the Minister laying a copy of the Charter....

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie, what is the point of order?

The SPEAKER: Go ahead.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, both Members of the sides of the House have ventilated their views. There is consensus in terms of the need to get those two members rightly on the Portmore Municipality.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I wish to close the debate, Mr. Speaker, of this Bill and ask that the Bill be read a second time.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be read a second time.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Bill entitled:

"AN ACT to Validate and confirm as lawful all officials acts done by Leon George Thomas, Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Portmore in good faith during the period commencing on the 8th day of July 2014, and ending on the date of coming into operation of this Act in the purported exercise of the functions conferred upon him as Mayor of the Municipality of Portmore; to validate and confirm as lawful all decisions and other acts taken and done in good faith by the Portmore Municipal Council or any member or committee thereof, in the purported exercise of powers, duties and functions conferred on the Council or any such member or committee by the Municipalities Act, or by any other person by virtue of the purported exercise of such powers, duties or functions during the period commencing on the 8th day of April 2014 and ending on the date of the coming into operation of this Act; to indemnify Leon George Thomas the Portmore Municipal Council and other persons from liability in relation thereto; to amend the Municipalities Act and for connected matters;

read a second time.

The SPEAKER: The House will now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider the Bill clause by clause

COMMITTEE STAGE

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, do you have any amendments?

Mr. ARSCOTT: No, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. JACKSON: Mr. Chairman, with your permission I just want to underscore one point in Clause 7. That it does not seek to change the boundaries that obtain now. All that section 7(c) and (d) seek to do is to define the two categories of how the Councillors divisional boundaries are that can sit in the Municipality. It does not address the question of the Municipality boundaries at all and that must be clearly understood, Mr. Chairman.

Secondly, is that the boundaries are not adjusted by legislation. The boundaries are adjusted by Order which can be done at any time so the passage of the legislation does not bring any injury to the whole question of the boundaries that's obtained now.

Mr. McKENZIE: So why then, Mr. Chairman, if you are now raising this as a new issue, as it relates to the Order, why not bring the Order and let us take the Order and then deal with everything after the Order. What is haste?

Mr. Chairman, this matter, and I would love if the Parliament could find the opinion that was given to the House, by the Attorney General on this matter when it was brought to the Parliament. Are we saying that the opinion

given by the Attorney General then is of no use at the time? This is not a matter, Mr. Chairman that you can use your majority to put through. All we are asking is that you do the thing in the right and proper way. We are not against the section that indemnifies the Deputy Mayor; we are in full support of it. We are in support of giving the Chairman a voting right. We don't have a difficulty with that, Mr. Chairman. We have a difficulty with the question of the two divisions that have been of grave concern. All of a sudden now, Mr. Chairman, we have found the remedy. It is not true. So let us, Mr. Chairman, I beg of this House through the Committee, not to use the majority that you have and to use sentiments and emotions to ride the law in the wrong way. Let us get all the advice that is necessary. It can't kill us. Can't kill us.

Mr. KELLIER: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. This is at Committee Stage, if the Member has an amendment to propose he should do so. If he doesn't have an amendment to propose then,
I move that we take the head and move on.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, the Member from South St. Catherine made a statement and that is what the Member is referring to. The Member said that this does not seek to amend the boundaries. What I am saying he said as defined now. What I am saying there is no defined boundary; there is no documentation of a defined boundary it was never brought here.

I just got an opinion from the eminent Council over there, that what it takes really is an Order, it takes an Order and that is an Order that is issued by the Minister, I believe, pursuant to section 3. So I thought really that it required an amendment to the Charter. What I had been told it does not require an amendment of a Charter, all it takes is an Order issued on the person made pursuant to section 3. But one was not done before to stipulate boundary, so I would like to define boundary, there is no defined boundary.

So all the Minister has to do starting tonight, sit with all of you from Portmore who know what the boundary is and start prepare the Order and just come with it, you see what I mean? So really approving this, I don't have a problem right now. But the issue is it cannot take effect until you come with the Order. So just liaise with him, and just get the Order prepare and take it here. That is all that it needs.

Mr. PAULWELL: The matter is not properly before the Committee, so I think the matter having reached the Committee Stage we have to proceed.

The CHAIRMAN: So, House Leader, the Order would be a follow-up to this.

Mr. PAULWELL: It's a follow-up as all Orders would be.

The CHAIRMAN: So we can proceed then? Okay.

Clauses 1, 2, 3 and 4 put to the Committee and agreed to.

I put Clause 5.

Mr. McKENZIE: No, I'm against Clause 5.

The CHAIRMAN: You want a divide?

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes.

(Inaudible comments by both sides)

Mr. McKENZIE: A so oonu a deal wid it?

(Inaudible comments)

(The Chairman gavels)

Mr. KELLIER: Divide is withdrawn, Mr. Chairman, graciously by the Member. (Applause)

The CHAIRMAN: Clauses 6 and 7 put to the Committee and agreed to.

Mr. WARMINGTON: May I ask - Clause 7, can the Minister give an indication how early he might be able to come with this Order to just tidy up?

The CHAIRMAN: The Order?

Mr. WARMINGTON: Yes. Do you have any idea how early he can come with it and tidy up the whole stuff? It shouldn't take long.

(Heckling)

Mr. ARSCOTT: Well, I'll try to have it before we go on recess, Member.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 7? I put Clause 8?

Clauses 7 and 8 put to the Committee and agreed to.

(*Sotto voce* comment by a Member)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Shut your mouth across there, don't come with that!

(Heckling)

The CHAIRMAN: (Gavels) We have an amendment. We have a small amendment at Clause 7 where we have Clause 8(3) subsection (3), where you have 4(11) is actually supposed to be a (9) in that bracket.

Mrs. NEITA-HEADLEY: Four, bracket 9. 4(9).

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. So I put the amendment to Clause 8.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

Clause 8 as amended put to the Committee and agreed to.

And we have the same correction to make in Clause 9 in the final line, bottom line, to change the (11) to a (9).

Amendment to Clause 9 put to the Committee and agreed to.

Clause 9 as amended put to the Committee and agreed to.

Title and Enacting Clause put to the Committee and agreed to.

The question is that I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage with two (2) amendments.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

RESUMPTION

The SPEAKER: I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage with two (2) amendments.

Minister.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I now ask that the Bill be read a third time?

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be read a third time?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Bill entitled:

"AN ACT to Validate and confirm as lawful all official acts done by Leon George Thomas, Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Portmore in good faith, during the period commencing on the 8th day of July, 2014, and ending on the date of coming into operation of this Act in the purported exercise of the functions

conferred upon him as Mayor of the Municipality of Portmore; to validate and confirm as lawful all decisions and other acts taken and done, in good faith, by the Portmore Municipal Council or any member or committee thereof, in the purported exercise of powers, duties and functions conferred on the Council or any such member or committee by the Municipalities Act, or by any other person by virtue of the purported exercise of such powers, duties or functions during the period commencing on the 8th day of April, 2014, and ending on the date of the coming into operation of this Act; to indemnify Leon George Thomas, the Portmore Municipal Council and other persons from liability in relation thereto; to amend the Municipalities Act; and for connected matters",

read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended to do any further business...

Mr. McKENZIE: Can I ask a question before?

(Inaudible comment/Laughter)

Mr. PAULWELL: ...today, I therefore, move for the adjournment of the Parliament until next Tuesday, July 22 at 2:00 p.m.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do adjourn until next Tuesday, 22nd of July at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

House stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at approximately 6:51 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015

TUESDAY, July 22, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2:34 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural

DR. DAYTON RICARDO CAMPBELL, (PNP), St. Ann, North Western

MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MISS JOYCE DENISE DALEY, (PNP), St. Catherine, Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

MR. WILLIAM JAMES CHARLES HUTCHINSON, CD, (JLP), St. Elizabeth, North Western

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Dr. Dayton Campbell

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

The SPEAKER: Before we get down to today's business let us welcome a large delegation from the Disabled Community that are visiting here with us today. (Applause)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 117**
  Cabinet Agenda Issues dated June 23, 2014
- Companies Office of Jamaica
  (An Executive Agency of the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce) Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year 2011/2012
- The Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation (JANAAC) Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Years 2010/2011 and 2011/2012
- The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Attorneys-at-Law) Order Resolution, 2014 Under The Financial Investigations Division Act
- The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Public Accountants) Order Resolution, 2014 Under The Financial Investigations Division Act
- The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Real Estate Dealers) Order Resolution, 2014 Under The Financial Investigations Division Act
- The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Casino Operators) Order Resolution, 2014 Under The Financial Investigations Division Act
- The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Gaming Machine Operators) Order Resolution, 2014 Under The Financial Investigations Division Act
- The Customs Tariff (CARICOM/ Costa Rica Free Trade Agreement) Resolution, 2014 Under The Customs Act
- The Customs Tariff (CARICOM/ Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement) Resolution, 2014 Under The Customs Act
- The Customs Tariff (CARICOM/ Republic of Cuba Economic Cooperation Agreement) Resolution, 2014 Under The Customs Act
- The Conch (Export Levy) (Rate of Levy) Order, 2014 Resolution Under The Conch (Export Levy) Act
- Certified Appropriation Accounts
  Report on the Statutory Expenditure from the Consolidated Fund Principal Bank Account for the Financial Years 2008/2009, 2009/2010 and 2010/2011
- The Early Childhood Commission
  Annual Report for the Financial Year 2012/2013
- Certified Appropriation Accounts

Head	Ministry/Department	Financial Year
3000	Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade	2008/2009
4100A	Ministry of Education	2010/2011
4200A & 4200B	Ministry of Health	2008/2009
4200 & 4200B	Ministry of Health	2009/2010

Head	Ministry/Department	Financial Year
4200 & 4200B	Ministry of Health	2010/2011
6400A	Ministry of Housing, Environment, Water and Local Government	2011/2012
800	Independent Commission of Investigations	2010/2011
800	"	2011/2012
800	"	2012/2013

The SPEAKER: I hear some strange noises.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

The SPEAKER: Dr. Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next sitting of the House I shall move the following resolution;

1. THE FINANCIAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION ACT

   The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Public Accountants) Order, Resolution, 2014

   Whereas by virtue of section 2 of the Financial Investigations Division Act (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") the Minister may designate a person or category of persons as a non-financial institution for the purposes of the Act;

   And Whereas on the 15th day of July, 2014, the Minister made the Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Public Accountants) Order, 2014;

   And Whereas it is provided by section 2 of the Act, in the definition of "designated Non-Financial Institution," that every order made under that provision shall be subject to affirmative resolution:

   Now, Therefore, be it Resolved by this Honourable House as follows:

   i. This Resolution may be cited as the Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Public Accountants) Order Resolution, 2014.
   ii. The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Public Accountants) Order, 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 22nd day of July, 2014, is hereby affirmed.

2. THE FINANCIAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION ACT

   The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Real Estate Dealers) Order, Resolution, 2014

   Whereas by virtue of section 2 of the Financial Investigations Division Act (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") the Minister may designate a person or category of persons as a non-financial institution for the purposes of the Act;

   And Whereas on the 15th day of July, 2014, the Minister made the Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Real Estate Dealers) Order, 2014;

And Whereas it is provided by section 2 of the Act, in the definition of "designated non-financial institution," that every order made under that provision shall be subject to affirmative resolution:

Now Therefore, be it Resolved by this Honourable House as follows:

i. This Resolution may be cited as the Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Real Estate Dealers) Order Resolution, 2014.
ii. The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Real Estate Dealers) Order, 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 22nd day of July, 2014, is hereby affirmed

3. THE FINANCIAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION ACT

The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Attorneys-at-law) Order, Resolution, 2014

Whereas by virtue of section 2 of the Financial Investigations Division Act (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") the Minister may designate a person or category of persons as a non-financial institution for the purposes of the Act;

And Whereas on the 15th day of July, 2014, the Minister made the Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Attorneys-at-law) Order, 2014;

And Whereas it is provided by section 2 of the Act, in the definition of "designated non-financial institution," that every order made under that provision shall be subject to affirmative resolution;

Now Therefore be it Resolved by this Honourable House as follows:

i. This Resolution may be cited as the Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Attorneys-at-law) Order Resolution, 2014.
ii. The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Attorneys-at-law) Order, 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 22nd day of July, 2014, is hereby affirmed.

4. THE FINANCIAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION ACT

The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Casino Operators) Order, Resolution, 2014

Whereas by virtue of section 2 of the Financial Investigations Division Act (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") the Minister may designate a person or category of persons as a non-financial institution for the purposes of the Act;

And Whereas on the 15th day of July, 2014, the Minister made the Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Casino Operators) Order, 2014;

And Whereas it is provided by section 2 of the Act, in the definition of "designated non-financial institution," that every order made under that provision shall be subject to affirmative resolution;

Now Therefore be it Resolved by this Honourable House as follows:

i) This Resolution may be cited as the Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Casino Operators) Order Resolution, 2014.

ii) The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Casino Operators) Order, 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 22nd day of July, 2014, is hereby affirmed.

5. THE FINANCIAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION ACT

The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Gaming Machine Operators) Order, Resolution, 2014

Whereas by virtue of section 2 of the Financial Investigations Division Act (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") the Minister may designate a person or category of persons as a non-financial institution for the purposes of the Act;

And Whereas on the 15th day of July, 2014, the Minister made the Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution)(Gaming Machine Operators) Order, 2014;

And Whereas it is provided by Section 2 of the Act, in the definition of "Designated Non-Financial Institution", that every order made under that provision shall be subject to affirmative resolution:

Now Therefore be it Resolved by this Honourable House as follows:

i) This Resolution may be cited as the Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution) (Gaming Machine Operators) Order Resolution, 2014.

ii) The Financial Investigations Division (Designated Non-Financial Institution)(Gaming Machine Operators) Order, 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 22nd day of July, 2014, is hereby affirmed.

The SPEAKER: Minister Kellier.

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next sitting of the House I will move the following Resolution.

Whereas by virtue of Section 3(1)(c) and 3(ii) of the Conch (Export Levy) Act, the Minister may from time to time, by order, prescribe the conch export levy to be paid under the Act:

And Whereas on the 21st day of July, 2014, the Minister made the (Conch Export Levy)(Rate of Levy) Order, 2014:

And Whereas it is provided by Section 3 of the Act, that an order made under the section shall be subject to affirmative resolution of the House of Representatives:

Now Therefore Be it Resolved by this Honourable House as follows:

a) This Resolution may be cited as the Conch(Export Levy)(Rate of Levy) Order, 2014 Resolution.

b) The Conch (Export Levy)(Rate of Levy) Order, 2014, which was laid on the table of the House on the 22nd day of July, 2014, is hereby affirmed.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport has answers for Question 1. The Member isn't present so it will be tabled.

Dr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, the answers have been ready since July 1, so I will just table them.

The SPEAKER: Table them. Thank you, Minister.

Mrs. Robinson.

Mrs. ROBINSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice at the expiration of 21 days I will ask the Minister of Youth and Culture the following questions:

Question 1:

Is the Minister aware that ground was broken for the reconstruction of the boyhood home of the Rt. Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey?

Question 2:

Is the Minister aware that funds were approved and allocated by the CHASE Fund for said construction?

Question 3:

Can the Minister update this Honourable House as to the status of the project and the funds that were allocated?

PRESENTATIONS OF BILLS WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE HOUSE FIRST OBTAINED

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I now move to introduce and have read a first time the following Bills shortly entitled:

The Tax Collection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014, and the Tax Penalties (Harmonization) Act, 2014.

Bill shortly entitled:

The Tax Collection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014

read a first time.

Bill shortly entitled:

The Tax Penalties (Harmonization) Act, 2014

read a first time.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of second reading of the Bills. I further beg to give notice that at a later stage today I will move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take second reading of the Bills and to take them through all their concluding stages today.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Local Government and Community Development, I now move to introduce and have read a first time; a Bill shortly entitled the Disaster Risk Management Act, 2014.

Bill shortly entitled:

The Disaster Risk Management Act, 2014

read a first time.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice on behalf of the said Minister of second reading of the Bill.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order No. 63, I seek the leave of this Honourable House to withdraw the Bill standing in my name at No. 10 on the Order Paper.

The SPEAKER: Is that the wish of the House?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Okay, proceed.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the Bill standing in my name at No. 10 on the Order of Business be withdrawn. I ask for the recommittal of Notices of Motions Given Orally, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal of item, Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY
(Recommitted)

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move to introduce and have read a first time, A Bill shortly entitled: The General Consumption Tax, an Act to amend the General Consumption Tax Act, 2014.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I am sure we can take note that since the start of the sitting the President of the Senate has joined us and we want to welcome him.

(Applause)

And also former Member of Parliament Phyllis Mitchell.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker today is a historic day for us in this Parliament, and that's the reason why we will start our Public Business with Item 7, the Minister of Labour and Social Security followed by the Minister of Finance with Items two and three under Presentation of Bills Without Leave of the House First Obtained. In that order, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Minister Kellier.

(Applause)

THE DISABILITIES BILL 2014

Mr. KELLIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is said that disability is a matter of perception, and I wish to begin my presentation this afternoon by declaring that I do agree wholeheartedly with the sentiment.

For this reason, Mr. Speaker, I have the greatest and distinct pleasure of being able to stand here this afternoon, in this Parliament, in the land of my birth, to participate in the bipartisan debate on one of the truly historic pieces of legislation put forward in Jamaica so far in the 21st Century.

(Applause)

The Disabilities Bill, 2014.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, we on this side and indeed the entire House, are extremely pleased with this historic development in the life of our people, and we take great pride in having endured the long journey in finally bringing reality to the rights of persons with disabilities.

We have had to endure along the route of this journey much slings and arrows from a cynical minority outside of the disabled community who persist in dishonouring the intention of Government to effect genuine national development, but because our tradition of service is deeply rooted in the character, tradition and struggle of personhood of our people, Mr. Speaker we never one day gave up the effort in the ten years it has taken to get us here today, where we are now ready as a nation to collectively move people within the community of the disabled from disability to super ability.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, the work to make this happen began with the process to enact a disabilities Bill that had its genesis in the visionary establishment of a national policy for persons with disability in the year 2000. This policy was adopted in keeping with the United Nation's standard rules for the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The goals of the National Policy included the improvement of the status and condition of persons with disabilities, so they can enjoy a better quality of life in all areas, such as education, employment, health, housing, transportation, and accessibility to all areas of the society.

In particular, the Policy aims to achieve the following: The integration of persons with disabilities in the society, so they can fully participate in all aspects of society, and the enhancement of the self-reliance and functional independence of such persons and ensuring the availability of services and access to the various systems of society and the environment to enable the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities.

(MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western, entered and took his seat.)

In speaking of the National Policy in January 2001, in the Senate, the present" President of the Senate, Senator Floyd Morris stated, and I quote:

"*Central to the National Policy is the situation where the Government is trying to unlock the potential of members of the disabled community, recognizing that they have the potential to do whatsoever they want to do in terms of national development."*

And, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to note that indeed the President is with us today.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker, this is precisely what the Government aims to achieve with the Bill now before us. It will pave the way for enhanced contribution to the society and economy of Jamaica by persons with disabilities by

ensuring that impediments to their full participation in society are completely removed.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to record my gratitude for the signal contribution of my colleague Ministers who, over the years, have participated in the process leading to the development of this Bill. The process, Mr. Speaker has been long, tedious and contentious. It began, however, with the initiation and involvement of the Most Honourable Prime Minister, Portia Simpson Miller, in her capacity of Minister of Labour and Social Security and Sport in the year 2000. (Applause)

The leadership given by her in this dynamic process continued under the ministerial leadership of the late Honourable Donald Buchanan, the Honourable Horace Dailey and the Honourable Dean Peart and the Honourable Peamel Charles, who advanced the process noticeably in his capacity as Minister of Labour and Social Security, before that portfolio reverted to me in 2012. (Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Rightly so!

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, the nation, and indeed, the disabilities community, is grateful to these Ministers in spearheading the dialogue, in raising the consciousness of the nation as to the role and significance of persons with disabilities to national development, which today has led to the Bill being before us.

Mr. Speaker, the infrastructure involved in the heavy-lifting process of the removal of impediments, involved the approval of the Bill by the Legislative Committee of Cabinet in February of this year, and Cabinet's approval for the tabling granted on the 7th of April, 2014. As you will recall, Mr. Speaker, the latter action paved the way for the eventual tabling of the Bill in this Honourable House, on May 7th of this year.

So, Mr. Speaker, to be clear, let me emphasize from the outset that this ground-breaking piece of legislation is not only being acted upon in fulfillment of a promise made to the country by this Administration, but it must also be noted that it seeks to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of persons with disabilities of privileges, interests, benefits and treatment on equal basis with other persons in the national community.

Mr. Speaker, with your permission I wish to declare that dozens of voices from across Jamaica have expressed through stakeholder group meetings and government departments and ministries, all contributed to the consultative approach underpinning the development of this piece of legislation.

The Legislative Committee, which was a sub-Committee of the Disabilities Advisory Board, that was established to assist with the issuing of drafting instructions to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, and to review the various drafts of the Bill, worked commendably and assiduously with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to make this Bill a reality.

I wish to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to express my sincere gratitude to the various persons who served on this Committee throughout the years, and the stakeholder

groups and government ministries and departments which were instrumental in the development and promulgation of this piece of legislation.

I also wish to place on record the thanks and gratitude of a grateful nation to all those persons who attended and participated in island-wide consultations held in St. Ann, St. Thomas, St. Catherine, Clarendon, Portland, St. James, Kingston and St. Andrew, Trelawny and Manchester.

Let me also say, Mr. Speaker, that all persons and groups representing the voices contributing to the consultative process were all united by one consideration, the experience of living in a society that recognizes the power and contribution of persons with disabilities to national development and, indeed, the Growth Agenda.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the task that falls to all of us in this Honourable House today and, indeed, the wider society more generally, is to make the political, social and economic changes necessary to enable the greater inclusion of persons with disabilities into the mainstream of the society.

(Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, the main objectives of the Bill are as follows:

- to reinforce and promote the recognition and acceptance within Jamaica, of the principle that a person with a disability has the same fundamental rights as any other person;
- to promote individual dignity and individual autonomy, including the freedom of choice and independence of a person with disability;
- to ensure full and effective participation and inclusion in the society of persons with a disability on an equal basis with all others;
- to prevent or prohibit discrimination against a person with a disability ;
- to promote respect for differences and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of the human diversity and humanity.

Mr. Speaker, it must be pointed out that the Bill provides a definition of the term 'persons with disabilities' or 'persons with a disability'.

This, Mr. Speaker, is an individual who has a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which hinder his or her full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with other persons. Additionally, the legislation will provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Part IV of the Bill addresses the issue of protection from discrimination. It unequivocally prohibits any form of discrimination against a person with a disability. (Applause)

The term 'discrimination' is defined as:

"*any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability, which has the purpose or effect of impairing or*

nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others, of privileges, legal interests, rights, benefits and treatment in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, religious, educational or any other field, and includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable arrangements."

Mr. Speaker, it must be recognized that persons with disabilities can only be effectively integrated into society if there is an obligation to make reasonable arrangements. Reasonable arrangements include making the necessary and appropriate modification to ensure that a person with a disability can participate in all areas of life in the society. This includes the provision of assistive aides, such as:

- hearing devices
- wheelchairs
- prosthetic appliances
- computer software and
- the use of interpreters and taped audio visual recording texts

Mr. Speaker, Part II of the Bill legally establishes the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities. This body now exists as a department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, and after the passage of this Bill, will be a body corporate... (Applause) ...the Constitution of which is set out in the First Schedule of the Bill.

The function of the JCPD includes:

- advising the Minister on matters pertaining to persons with disabilities, and on current trends, policies and programmes concerning persons with disabilities;
- monitoring the operation of such trends; and
- conducting public education programmes in relation to the Act.

Clause 7 establishes a Board of Management of the JCPD which is responsible for the general affairs of the Council.

(HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security, entered and took his seat.)

The Second Schedule to the Bill sets out the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, in an effort to ensure that the interests of persons with all types of disabilities are protected, the Board will include a minimum of seven members from groups of persons with the following disabilities:

- the deaf
- the blind and visually impaired
- the physically disabled; and
- the intellectually disabled

It must be noted, Mr. Speaker, that The Council is also responsible for the maintenance of a confidential register with the particulars of persons with disabilities. Persons who are already registered with the Jamaica Council of Persons with Disabilities are not required to re-register. This registration requirement will assist in the

collection of adequate data on the number of persons with disabilities, the nature of their disabilities and their socioeconomic condition.

(DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

The aim in all of this is to enable proper planning for their needs.

Mr. DALLEY: Hear! Hear!

Mr. KELLIER: One of the central provisions of this Bill is the prohibition of discrimination and the removal of barriers in the areas of:

- education and training
- employment
- political office and public life
- health care
- housing and transportation

This will create an enabling environment where persons with disabilities can integrate into and participate in all aspects of society.

Mr. Speaker, it has long been recognized that education is the key to the development of an individual, and the society as a whole. It is therefore imperative that persons with a disability is granted access to education. (Applause)

The Bill, therefore, stipulates that a person with a disability shall not be prevented from being enrolled at or attending an educational or training institution, irrespective of whether it is a private or public institution.

Additionally, the educational or training institution is required to provide the support necessary to ensure that a person with a disability has the most reasonable access to the education or training provided, access to the facilities, and that reasonable arrangements are made.

A person who conducts training, examinations in relation to licensing or certification, is required to ensure that the examinations and courses offered are carried out in a manner and with facilities accessible to persons with disabilities.

In addition, the Minister of Education is required to make reasonable arrangements within the education system to facilitate the education of persons with disabilities.

Mr. DALLEY: Hear! Hear!

(HON. COLIN ALFRED A FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make it abundantly clear that this Administration will not condone in any shape or form, discrimination against persons with disabilities in the field of employment. There will be no tolerance of this abhorrence under our watch, since the utilization of all available human resources, in our view, is essential to this nation's Growth Agenda, going forward. To this end, Part IV of the Bill prohibits an employer from discriminating against a person with a disability.

There are numerous qualified persons with a disability who have surmounted

tremendous odds to obtain their qualifications, and it is unconscionable for some employers to seek to discriminate against these persons...

(Applause)

A MEMBER: True!

Mr. KELLIER: ...purely on the basis of their disability.

As such, Mr. Speaker, employers will be prohibited from discriminating in the terms of employment offered to persons with a disability in relation to opportunities for a promotion, transfer, training or the receipt of any other benefit, or by dismissing or subjecting him or her to other detriments.

The employers also have a duty, Mr. Speaker, to make reasonable arrangements to remove any disadvantage which the employee with a disability may suffer as a result of any employment arrangement made by or on behalf of the employer or the physical feature of the premises occupied by the employer.

In recognition of the fact that some persons may become disabled during employment, this far-reaching Bill makes provision for such an eventuality. That is to say, Mr. Speaker that if an employee becomes disabled on the job or as a result of some circumstances unrelated to the job, and is no longer capable of executing the task required under the employment contract, that employer should be required and seek to redeploy that employee to another position. But this new position should be commensurate with the current skills and abilities of the employee, and the employee should not suffer a loss of remunerations or benefits in the process.

However, it is envisioned that an employee or an employer may not always be in a position to redeploy the employee. In this case, the employer can seek to establish that there is a disproportionate or undue burden. Mr. Speaker, it is a fundamental right in any democratic society that every citizen is afforded the opportunity to participate in political office and public life.

With this understanding in mind, Mr. Speaker, I wish to call our attention to Part VIII of the Bill, which seeks to ensure that this right is to be extended to persons with disabilities. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this section of the Bill addresses access to health care, in that health care providers are to provide health care without discrimination on the basis of a disability. And persons with disability should be able to access general health care services and facilities.

Furthermore, the health care to be provided should extend to health services required, given a person's disability, which will include screening, early detection, treatment, rehabilitation, identification and intervention and the services designed to prevent or minimize any further disability.

Mr. Speaker, the ability to access housing has always been a vexing issue for persons with disabilities. Part IX of the Bill has therefore been devoted to addressing this issue.

According to Clause 36, the owner or the agent of the owner of existing private premises, a premises that is in existence or under construction before the day the Act

comes into effect, who intends to rent or lease the premises, is required upon request by a person with a disability to make or cause alterations to be made to the premises...

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELLIER: ...if it is reasonably practicable to do so. These alterations are to be made in order to ensure that the premises are accessible to, and useable by a person with a disability.

Mr. Speaker, the duty to make alterations also applies to public or commercial premises. The facilities to be altered in these premises include bathrooms, telephones, drinking fountains and emergency exits, if any. This duty to make alterations to the premises will not only apply where it is demonstrated by the owner or agent that it is structurally impractical to meet the requirements of that, the rationale for this exception is that it may be impossible or impractical to make the necessary alterations to some existing structures. Additionally, the owner or agent may establish that to effect the alterations would constitute a disproportionate or undue burden.

Clause 37 of the Bill speaks to new premises. Mr. Speaker, as regards to public or commercial premises, the construction of which began on or after the day of this Act comes into effect, the owners or agents are required to ensure that the premises being constructed are readily accessible to, and useable by a person with a disability and are built in accordance with the National Building Code, and are designed in such a way as to make the common areas accessible to a person with a disability.

We understand, Mr. Speaker, that it will not be possible for alterations to be made to premises overnight, hence in recognition of this fact, the owner, occupier or operator of the premises in existence before the day appointed for the Act to come into effect, has 24 months to make the necessary alterations. This period will start running from the day appointed towards the Act to come into effect and will end 24 months after this date.

Mr. Speaker, the owner, occupier, or operator of premises which are under construction immediately or before the day appointed towards the Act to come into effect, also has 24 months to make the necessary alterations, or until the day the construction of the premises is completed, whichever is earlier. No action shall lie against the owner, occupier or operator of the premises during these periods for breach of the provisions of this Act.

Mr. Speaker, it is envisioned that in some instances the person with a disability who is the lessee of the premises, may wish to make the necessary alterations to the premises to make the same accessible and useable. This individual should submit a written request to the lessor of the premises in an effort to obtain his or her permission before embarking on these alterations. The lessor has 30 days from the receipt of the request to communicate his or her consent or refusal. However, the lessor must be forewarned that his or her consent cannot be unreasonably withheld and that the

decision is subject to review by the Tribunal established under this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, discrimination against a person with a disability in relation to housing will not be permitted by this Administration. Clause 39 of the Bill specifies that any person authorized to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of premises, shall not knowingly discriminate against a person with a disability. This prohibition against discrimination includes offering different terms and conditions to the persons with a disability and refusing to dispose of the premises to the persons. Additionally, a person who manages a premises or a facility is not permitted to discriminate against a person with a disability. Mr. Speaker, indeed it is a truism that there continues to be a shortage of housing for persons with disabilities. And this has prompted this Administration to do its part in ensuring that housing solutions are reserved for persons with disabilities in the National Housing Trust Schemes.

(Applause)

A MEMBER Hear, hear!

Mr. KELLIER: But as a country, Mr. Speaker, we can do much more in this regard, which is why I wish to use this opportunity today to appeal to developers within the private sector to partner with the Government in offering housing solutions to persons with disabilities.

There's no doubt in our collective minds, Mr. Speaker, that should private developers agree to construct a certain amount of housing solutions in each housing development island-wide, which are accessible to, and useable by persons with disabilities, the problem of housing shortage *vis-a-vis* persons with disabilities would be significantly alleviated. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, in relation to transportation, under the Bill, the Minister with responsibility for public passenger vehicles is to ensure that as far as is practicable, public passenger vehicles are accessible to, and useable by persons with a disability. Public passenger vehicles include motor vehicles or any other conveyors or transports by road, rail, air or water, that provide the general public with a general or special transportation service on a regular or continuing basis.

Mr. Speaker, it would have been noted that in many instances reference has been made to the term disproportionate and undue burden. This term is in keeping with the language used in the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. It provides a mechanism by which the Tribunal can measure whether or not it was reasonable for the party against whom a complaint was made by a person with a disability to refuse to take or not to take the action complained of.

In order to determine whether there was a disproportionate or undue burden, the following must first be evaluated; the nature of the benefit likely to accrue to, or the detriment likely to be suffered by any person concerned; the effect of the disability as a person concerned; the financial circumstances of the person concerned who is claiming disproportionate or undue burden; the estimated amount of expenditure or other

allocation of resources required by the person claiming disproportionate or undue burden; and whether it is reasonably proportionate to the benefit likely to accrue.

However, Mr. Speaker, the Bill does not leave the person with a disability out in the cold in a case where disproportionate or undue burden has been established. In such circumstances the Government will have to facilitate the needs of the person with a disability as far as is practicable.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill would be ineffective without a mechanism for the making of complaints or for resolving these complaints. It is therefore important to note that a person with a disability, who is aggrieved by an act of discrimination or any other breach of disabilities act, can make a written complaint to the Jamaica Council of Persons with Disabilities, pursuant to Clause 16 of the Bill. The complaint may also be made by the caregiver of such a person, which includes a parent or a legal guardian.

As the Bill currently stands, Mr. Speaker, there is no stipulated timeframe for a complaint to be lodged with the Jamaica Council of Persons with Disabilities. The omission, Mr. Speaker, is clearly untenable, since an individual could lodge a complaint many years after the act of discrimination or any other breach of the Disabilities Act has occurred. In the circumstances then, and more important, in the interest of justice, it will be recommended at Committee Stage, that Clause 16 of the Bill is amended to specify that a person so aggrieved by an act of discrimination should lodge a complaint with the Council within two years of the date on which the matter constituting the complaint arose.

Over and against the proposed amendment, Mr. Speaker, I wish to draw attention to the fact that the complainant may be referred for alternative dispute resolution with the consent of the parties, or it can be referred to the Disabilities Rights Tribunal for settlement.

(HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land Environment and Climate Change, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. KELLIER: The tribunal, Mr. Speaker, will be established pursuant to Clause 15(1) of the Bill to assist in the settlement of complaints and similarly to the Industrial Dispute Tribunal the awards falling under it are final and conclusive and can only be challenged in the Supreme Court on a point of law.

Mr. Speaker, let me advise this Honourable House that the Disabilities Rights Tribunal will constituted of persons with the requisite skills, experience and qualifications and knowledge to properly hear and settle complaints; and that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman will be appointed by the Minister of Labour and Social Security after consultation with stakeholders. These individuals, Mr. Speaker, must have at least seven years experience as attorneys-at-law and at least one member of the tribunal will be appointed by

the said Minister of Labour and Social Security from organizations which represents persons with disabilities and appear to the Minister to have sufficient knowledge of disability issues. At least one other member of the tribunal, Mr. Speaker, should have knowledge or experience in one or more of the following fields:

- quantity surveying;
- building construction
- economics
- finance; or
- accounting

Mr. Speaker, it is an offence under the Bill to assault or obstruct an authorized person in the performance of his or her lawful function under the Act or to knowingly give false or misleading information. The penalty for these offences on summary conviction before a Resident Magistrate is a fine not exceeding $1 Million, imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or both such fine and imprisonment in the case of an individual. A body corporate which commits an offence is liable to pay a fine not exceeding $1 Million and each director, manager, secretary or other officer is liable on summary conviction to pay a fine not exceeding $500,000 or face imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or both such fine and imprisonment.

Mr. Speaker, while this Bill will go a long way in removing barriers and addressing discrimination being faced by persons with disabilities, it is patently clear that as a Government we cannot legislate a change in attitude towards such persons. In light of this fact, we should take this opportunity to remind the nation as a whole that life is so configured that anyone irrespective of their station in life, can become disabled at anytime. (Applause) In light of this reality then, Mr. Speaker, I am appealing to my fellow Jamaicans to graciously extend to persons with disabilities the respect that they deserve and to patriotically open to them doors (Applause) of opportunities previously closed to enable them to contribute meaningfully to the development of the society. (Applause)

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELLIER: Experience globally has shown, Mr. Speaker, that in the main persons with disabilities are not anchoring after handouts or for that matter special treatment. What they seek instead is what Peter Tosh lamented in song, that is, equal rights and justice. (Applause)

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELLIER: They want the equal enjoyment of privileges, interests, benefits and treatment to that afforded to the so-called able-bodied individuals. Granting equal rights and justice to persons with disabilities cannot beyond a country whose national motto is "Out of Many, One People". It symbolizes of unity and diversity as the cornerstone of our defining characteristics as a people of grit, courage and determination in the face of historically and seemingly insurmountable odd.

Mr. Speaker, the region and the global community awaits the response of this Parliament to this groundbreaking piece of legislation before us known as the Disabilities Bill, 2014. Our ancestors who have gone on

before us wait with bated breath to see if we will liberate the full potential of the sons and daughters of the soil who contribution to nation building is yet to be fully realized. Our great national heroes now look to us for that signal to confirm that their struggles on our behalf, while they lived, were not in vain and that as their legatees we are capable of guiding this country into 21st Century with common-sense and compassion and a genuine willingness to liberate the human potential of the mass of the population.

Mr. Speaker, colleagues of this Honourable House, Jamaica has waited a decade for the Disabilities Bill. Let us delay it no more.

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELLIER: We have the wherewithal in this country to move people from disability to super ability. Let us delay no more. It is time for us as Government and Opposition to come together in this historic effort and unite to lift a critically important segment of our population from the narrowing cramping circumstances of their lives. Let us delay no more.

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. KELLIER: Let us, Mr. Speaker, signal to the world in the trademark pose of Usain Bolt that as a country we are more than capable of forgetting their disabilities. We have it in us to point them upwards so that they can claim the length and breadth of this great isle Jamaica as truly their own and by extension the world. Let us delay no more. So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government and the community of disabled persons in Jamaica and in the name of our great ancestors, I now respectfully invite this Honourable House to consider with a view to passing into law the provisions of the Disabilities Act 2014 today.

I thank you.

(Applause)

Government MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: Mr. Charles.

(Cross talk)

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, the Act before us, as had been mentioned by the Minister, is not a controversial one. It's one that both political parties as Government have worked on over the many years to bring it to where it is today.

Government MEMBER: Hear, hear.

Mr. CHARLES: There are a few areas that I would have wished to make my comment on before it came here at the last moment, and I probably would ask the Attorney General to guide us. The Act as it is before the House has no definition of disabled - of disability and I think that is one could have enhanced - make it more important. The word 'disability' based on some of the talkings around many of us inside this House have some disability. (Laughter)

Mr. ROBINSON: Repeat it, repeat it.

Mr. CHARLES: Some of us have physical disability while others have mental disability.

(Cross talk/Laughter)

A MEMBER: Or both.

Mr. CHARLES: And some of us have both. Not a laughing matter. Physical or mental condition that limits a person's movement senses or activity is a definition

that I would have wished was in the Bill, because just to say the disability could cause us some concern. But as I said, Mr. Speaker, both parties of Government have worked on this, but there are some little things the disabled in the streets - not big things that we should not be fighting over, simple... like sidewalks, broken sidewalks, where the disabled have to walk. Manholes, open for days and those who are responsible for their cover... are stolen or what, sometimes don't remember that a disabled person, blind or otherwise fear the street. And there is a very important one, public transportation. Minister, that's where the Government has a responsibility as one of the largest of the public-owners of public transportation and we really need to look at that.

The Bill, Mr. Speaker - the Act will provide, promote and protect and ensure equal enjoyment of privileges to many of our disabled persons. We will be forced to treat them better and this is not only the average man. It's like... Government as an organization. In the past people with disabilities were excluded from schools, workplace, isolated and laughed at in communities and had to be taken care of by some of their relatives. Even some of their relatives isolated them, were left to be cared by others to be supported socially, psychologically, financially and otherwise.

Today, we are putting in place a law that the Government is going to be forced to abide by. And as I said entering public buildings you don't know how a wheelchair could get in there. And we have tried, both Governments, both sides, we have come some way. We have amended our building codes to make it mandatory that you have to build the entrance and exit to accommodate wheelchairs.

The introduction of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is welcome. The Act will provide, as I said earlier, and promote and protect the disabled community.

The society has a duty to protect from discrimination those of our citizens who have physical or mental challenges. It is a duty of the society to be enforced by law. Long gone are the days, Mr. Speaker, when persons with disability can be allowed to be ignored, ridiculed or even abused. In today's world, Mr. Speaker, disability is increasingly being recognized as one facet of human diversity and one over which the individual has no choice.

Many of us in this very Parliament and some who are sitting with us today, are only fortunate that we were not caught up in that social path of our lives. But the nature of that diversity requires that special statutory and other mechanism be put in place to ensure that they are not deprived of their rights to fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of life, Mr. Speaker.

The Bill is especially important in terms of employment discrimination. While recognizing that some form of disability may render a person incapable of working, the majority do have the ability to work.

And, Mr. Speaker, as a former Minister of Labour I can tell you, a trade unionist all my life, one of the hardest set of workers, workers who concentrate more on productivity or

production are the disabled. The telephone operator, the telephone operator, Mr. Speaker, has no time to waste on cellphones and chatting, and their presentation sometimes is as if they are owners of the company, the way they sound. And I will always say, that we have not given them enough recognition, have not paid them enough for their contribution and we have not - thank God - that we have not been caught in that part of the social net.

While recognizing that some form of disabilities, as I said, render a person incapable of working, the majority have the ability to work. Yet, many are deprived of training due to either deliberate exclusion or absence of enabling facility. Many of those who are trained are overlooked in favour of persons without disability. And you can understand that, you know, we are human. You have a special role in your company and you advertise it and three persons come to ask for the job, one is disabled, and the first .thing is productivity, is that person going to be able to perform as the other one and depending on the kind of job, they are always left in the background.

The ILO statistics indicate that labour force participation rate in developing countries with some disabled persons range from 40 to 50%. No comparable figure is available for developing countries because most of them do not capture the data in their survey and consensus, but it is credible estimate that between 20 to 30% are involved. This is buttressed by the UN Statistics which shows that 82% of disabled persons in developing countries live below the poverty line, 82%, Mr. Speaker.

The Bill is very well drafted and as I said, it has been worked on for many years by both sides, providing critical measures for the protection of the disabled persons without causing compliance to become a source of undue hardship.

And it is important for us to recognize that the person who is going to employ a disabled person has some sacrifice to make and we are not going to be saying that, because a person is disabled and we have a law you must put somebody out of their job whom you think could run faster, move faster, see faster, hear faster, do things like that, that's not where we are going. That's not where we are going. It is a delicate but necessary balance that we seek and the drafters have done an excellent job, in my opinion, in striking that balance.

I support the Bill wholeheartedly, Mr. Speaker, and my comments are intended to seek clarification and to strengthen the Bill where I think it needs strengthening.

Mr. Speaker, there is in the Bill, Exemption from Taxation. Clause 5 establishes the Council for persons with disability as a statutory entity.

Clause 10 seeks to exempt it from all payment of taxes including GCT.

This is typical of a legislation we often use to set up public bodies. However, Mr. Speaker, the new fiscal rules require that all Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies pay GCT as of June 1 this year. I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance if he would

assist us in clarifying whether or not the disabled community would be exempted from that - all GCT presentation.

Clause 16 states that once a complaint for discrimination is filed, the Council shall act in accordance with the provisions of section 18. Minister, you probably could take a look at it. This seems to be an error. It appears that the section which the reference is intended would be section 19, I ask the advisors to look at whether or not we are right on that.

Legal representation before the Tribunal, Mr. Speaker. Clause 18 empowers the Council to provide assistance to persons in filing and pursuing complaints to the Disability Rights Tribunal but expressly exclude assistance by way of legal representation. I have a little problem there. The Council is allowed to provide legal representation only when the complainant appeals to the Supreme Court against a decision of the Tribunal, Clause 22 says that. We need to reconsider this differential treatment.

The Bill will amend the Legal Aid Act to enable a person to obtain Legal Aid, to enforce an award to the Disability Rights Tribunal, that is Clause 51, but it does not include the proceedings leading up to the award. While not suggesting that the Council should be legally obliged to provide legal representation, I suggest, Mr. Speaker that it should not be prohibited from doing so, but rather should be allowed to consider the circumstances of which request to determine whether it is appropriate, reasonable and possible to do so.

For example, a person who is a deaf or mute person or someone who is deaf or mute and cannot afford to hire a lawyer will be without legal representation and the Council, even if so minded, would be powerless to assist. And this matter, Mr. Speaker - representation before the Tribunal, paragraph 12 of the Third Schedule says that a party to a complaint may either appear in person before the Tribunal or be represented by a lawyer or any other person subject to permission being granted by the Tribunal. The wording there suggests, Mr. Speaker, that you either appear in person or be represented. What if I want or what if someone wants to appear in person and at the same time be represented by someone better able to present their case? I ask you, Minister, to take a look at that. And why should the permission at the Tribunal to be sought before I can be represented by someone of my choice, by someone of my choice who does not happen to be a lawyer? There is some inconsistent treatment there and we need to examine that.

Clause 32, Minister, expressly provides that a person with a disability should not be prevented from serving in a public office - should not be prevented from serving in a public office. However, Section 34 follows on to say, that this does not apply to persons with mental disability within the meaning of the Mental Health Act. I cannot understand the reason for that section. What I don't understand, Mr. Speaker, is that only applies to Part VII that deals with political office and public life, it does not apply to other sections,

example, Part V that deals with employment rights and obligations.

It is conceivable that we could be saying that persons with mental disability must not be discriminated against in terms of employment, but can be discriminated against in holding political office or serving in the public sector.

Now I do know that, for example, we have with us the President of the Senate who proudly will agree that he has a little form of disability, because when he meets me and say, "I see you are looking very good today, Mr. Charles"

(Laughter)

Mr. ROBINSON: The President never said that.

Mr. CHARLES: Oh yes, he told me, "I've seen you".

Mr. ROBINSON: He never said that.

Mr. CHARLES: And he sees you, that is our - that's our right, our business, get out of it.

(Laughter by Mr. Robinson)

(Laughter by Members)

Mr. CHARLES: Insurance Companies and Pension Plan, Mr. Speaker Clause 41 exempts insurance companies and pension plans from statutory obligation everyone else would have towards persons with disability. If there is a technical reason for this, the Minister ought to provide us with some explanation.

Mr. Speaker, Clause 43 provides that where someone is unable to provide a required facility for a person with a disability, because it would pose a disproportionate or undue burden, the Government shall facilitate as far as is practicable to the needs of the person with a disability. Now, that is something that we need to look at. Are you sure that you want to go there, Minister?

While the Government does not provide assistance in various forms to a person with a disability, do you want to face the situation where when the Landlord says it would be undue burden to have to build an elevator to facilitate renting an apartment to a disabled person. The person can then cite section 43 and argue that the Government has an obligation to pay for that elevator, notwithstanding the qualifier as far as is practicable, I think you need to ask your people to look at that to see whether we are on the right track.

Mr. Speaker, paragraph 1 of the Third Schedule lists disciplines from which at least one member of the Disabilities Rights Tribunal must be chosen: Quantity surveying, building or construction, economics, finance and accounting. It is likely that many of these complaints will relate to charges of employment discrimination. Minister, it would therefore be useful to include human resource management among the disciplines from which membership of the community should be drawn.

As I conclude, I see the Minister of Finance is jumping to go. Paragraph 15(d) states that

> *"An Award made by the Disabilities Rights Tribunal shall be final and conclusive and no proceedings shall be brought in any Court to impeach the validity thereof, except on a point of law".*

Now Minister, you are well aware that that is one of the strongest part of the Industrial Disputes Tribunal. This places enormous power in the hand of the Tribunal and excludes it from judicial review, except on technical grounds, for example, complaints against an Award on the grounds of being excessive or unjust given the particular circumstances of the case; it cannot be challenged except on a point of law.

You, Minister, I am sure that the disabled community will consider this point one of the strongest in the presentation because everybody when there is an award looks to how can you get rid of it, and I think we need to put it here that it has been, it's in the Industrial Disputes Tribunal and it is in this Tribunal, and I fully support it not only as a trade unionist but I think it is right and fair for the protection of the disabled.

So, Mr. Speaker, those are some of the suggestions that we have on this side.

I want to state clearly again that we worked on the Bill while we were there. We found it when we got there. We carry it to where you found it and we are pleased today to join in making this as a presentation to the disabled community, long overdue and we would appeal to the population as a whole to read the Bill and to let us welcome the disabled community, long they should have been with these privileges that the country offer them, that the Constitution, their rights guarantee them, the United Nations and other bodies that take care of the disabled.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Minister Dalley.

Mr. DALLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments and encourage my colleagues to pass speedily this historic piece of legislation, the Disabilities Act of 2014. I decided to comment on the Bill briefly as I had something to do with it and brought it to a certain stage. I would like to commend the Minister of Labour and Social Security and his Permanent Secretary Mr. Alvin McIntosh and the team at the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, all those persons from the disability community and from the Council of Persons with Disability and all the support from the University of the West Indies and also from the UN, who helped Jamaica in putting this Bill together. But I would like to say a special commendation to my friend, my colleague and my comrade Senator Morris, Floyd Morris, for his effort, his work and his grit and determination to have this piece of legislation promulgated in Jamaica.

(Applause)

The Senator worked with me as my Minister of State when I was the Minister of Labour and Social Security, and the foresight of former Prime Minister P.J. Patterson in 2002 in appointing Senator Floyd Morris to the Government as Minister of State in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. (Applause) And while I gave him complete freedom as my Minister of State to take care but not to take charge, I gave him full latitude to work as I had worked under the leadership of former Minister and Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller with this community to help

to develop and push this Bill one step further. And he sought permission to travel to the United Nations to a conference on disability, which we quickly gave him and when he came back he came back with some amount of technical expertise and also commitment to support Jamaica in having the Bill coming to fruition. So Jamaica pays gratitude and debt (sic) to Senator Floyd Morris for his vision and effort in this Bill.

We have come a long way in accepting and in dealing with persons with disability. There was a time in the society people with disability were referred to as handicaps and the United Nations many years ago removed the word from its lexicon; like children, when we assented to the 2000 Convention on the Rights of the Child and in the Convention of Senior Citizens. The disability community is one of those communities in Jamaica that about 10% of your population suffers from disability as the United Nations and the international organizations say. And we have removed the word handicap and replaced the word handicap with persons with disability, and the country has now come to accept that within our society there are intellectuals, they are technically competent, there are persons who contribute every day to the development of the society in many spheres who suffer from a disability. And I think people have now come to realize that a disability, as the former Minister says, can be anything.

And one of the main reasons why I rise to support it and ask the Parliament to speedily approve it this afternoon with the two amendments that I think Minister of Labour and Social Security has, is when I was the Minister of Labour and Social Security I met a young lady - that's the story I want to tell - called Annmarie. And she worked with the Council. When she was - very beautiful young lady, intellectually sound and she was going to the University. On her way to school police tried to apprehend some criminals and a stray bullet reached her in her spine and she was wheelchair-bound from that day until now for the rest of her life. Simple, we are on the road driving and somebody who is intoxicated, somebody who is not thinking crashes in you and you are disabled, you join this community for the rest of your life, or you might, for some people who have temporary hearing disability like some of us, me too because of my years of exposure with other things.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Opposition Member)

Mr. DALLEY: No, seriously it's there, the loud sounds, the loud sounds that we listen to day and night all around cause you to lose some percentage of your hearing. It doesn't take anything for an able-bodied person this minute to be a member of the disable community by the act carelessness on our path or on the path of others around us. And the story of Annmarie has always been vivid in my mind. You have your children, they leave you in the morning, they go to school and something happens on a slide, something happens on a swing and that child is incapacitated and all arrangements in the family have to be changed to accommodate, to love, to care for this person with disability.

And so, Mr. Speaker, there has been for many years a Council called the National

Council for Persons with Disabilities and from time to time the Ministers of Labour has been saying to all of us, various Ministers, as MPs, have the persons with disabilities that we know in our constituency, have them registered. And this is one of my calls today. When we leave here and pass this Bill let us go out into our constituencies and make sure that every single disabled child, every person who has a disability in our constituency see to it that they are registered with the Council, the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, tremendous amount of benefits can flow having been registered and you know where these citizens are. I have met several persons, Dr. Hixwell Douglas, one of those persons of great intellectual capacity just like Senator Floyd Morris and others who have been contributing tremendously to our society through their efforts and their advocacy. I have always admired persons who advocate for their rights.

But let me say in closing the persons with disability not looking any sympathy from anybody or any part of the society. Of all those persons who I have worked with as Minister of Health and as Minister of Labour and Social Security when I had to interface daily with persons with disability, none have ever been asking for sympathy or for any handout. What the persons for disability and the community is asking for is equal treatment, equal access, equal opportunity as if you give to all other persons in our society. So the amendments that the Minister will put forward, which are few, I encourage the House, I implore the House to let us pass this Disability Act, landmark Act, 2014, with speed.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it would have been unfair for me not to participate in this debate. As someone, Mr. Speaker, who, in a different capacity, has worked with the disabled community in putting in certain infrastructures that would have benefitted members of that sector, I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, that I am a part of a Parliament today that will put into law the necessary protection to a very important sector of the Jamaican society. My only concern, Mr. Speaker, is that oftentimes we make laws, we pass legislation but the question of enforcement, Minister, is something that we don't normally follow upon. And I am hoping that the necessary protection that has been put in the Bill is not just there, Minister, as word of mouth or to frighten someone but that the question of enforcement and making those who fall foul of the legislation pay and pay in a way that you send a message that this sector of the Jamaican society is protected. I welcome the Bill and I want to congratulate the Minister and also the former Minister for making it possible that as a Parliament we all support unanimously this important bit of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. DALLEY: Best speech you have ever made.

The SPEAKER: Dr. Campbell.

Dr. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed.

Dr. CAMPBELL: Thank you.

Mr. SHAW: Why you leave - go to your seat.

Dr. CAMPBELL: I want to have a better view.

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: Permission not granted.

Dr. CAMPBELL: Mr. Speaker, firstly, I want to say that today might be one of the proudest days for me to be a Member of this House, because I really consider this Bill to be one that is a watershed moment in our history, and it is one that I am proud to be a part of a House that is taking a bold step to move forward with a piece of legislation like this. So congratulations are in order to the Minister and his team and to Members who would have done some work in developing this piece of legislation, all the former Ministers who have contributed, I want to say commendations are due to you.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that a disability is not something that is necessarily contagious, anybody at any point in time may become vulnerable and may end - may end up becoming a part of this society and we have to be conscious of this reality and we have to ensure that we do whatever is possible to protect these Members. You know, someone can be become disabled based on something that is intentional or just simply based on negligence on the part of someone who has a duty of care to that individual. So it is important that we are mindful that any Member of this House or any relative of any Member of this House or anyone of our constituents can suddenly fall into this community. Therefore commendation must be given to any move that is taken to ensure that protection - adequate protection is given to these members.

(Applause)

You know, in relation to education and Part IV, I think, of the Bill, I want to specifically commend that move because we can't allow for persons just because they have a disability for them to be excluded from any sort of facilities. You know, Mr. Speaker, and I do believe that we as Members of this House we have to lead the charge in getting that change. Because what is important is a change in the mindset of persons out there to how they treat with these persons that stigma that is there will have to be removed and we have to play a leading role in removing that stigma. And in my own area where we do our training programmes, deliberate effort was taken to ensure that in the skills training area that we have 20 persons from that society who are part of the programme, and it made it a little bit more expensive. We had to pay an additional funding to do it, but we ensure that we included those persons in it because we want to send that strong message that all persons in the society are welcome and that we want to see the development and the education of all Members.

You know, in relation to territory level education this is something that I have

mentioned before and I really believe that something ought to be done for these persons who matriculate to the tertiary level. The section - I think I had discussion with the President of Senate who is in the Well today re the number of persons who actually matriculate to a territory level institution with a disability and it was nothing less than a hundred. Essentially $50 Million or less would cover us providing that opportunity for these persons, and I think it is something that we really need to consider to see how best we can put forward that allocation to ensure that anybody with disability that matriculate to a tertiary level institution they can obtain that scholarship. And I do believe that it was also a part of the manifesto of the ruling party and it is something that I want to encourage us to look strongly at.

The next thing, Mr. Speaker, is in relation to the employment. There are a lot of students who end up going to the Universities and receiving their qualification and when they are finished they end up unemployed, not because they can't carry out the different tasks that is being asked of them but because persons, focused on the disability rather than focus on the ability. And a large part of treating with persons in this cohort is to ensure that we focus on the ability and not the disability. Because if the persons are qualified and they can carry out the task then there is absolutely no reason, why they should be shafted and they should be sidelined. So it is important and I want to commend as a good part of the legislation to ensure that we put that measure in place to persons who have qualified themselves can be give a fair opportunity to gain employment.

(Applause)

Also Mr. Speaker, re - Member of this House again re - our seasonal employment or whatever it is that we have some amount of say in. I want to also commend to the Members that those constituents who are a part of that community should be considered in those sort of seasonal employment, so that they can be active and they earn and they can become independent as well.

In relation to health care, the members of this society tend to suffer some abuse and we have to ensure that we put adequate measures in place to protect persons from this community against abuse of whatever form. And it is essential that when they go to these health care facilities that some amount of accommodation be made to treat with them in our health care facilities. So I want to encourage us to consider that as well.

And Mr. Speaker, my own view is that providing free health care we should do so to those who are vulnerable, children, the elderly, the improvised and the disabled. And I really think that we need to, look at how it is that we administer health care and what we want to offer and who is it that we want to protect. And certainly the disabled community is one of them.

My final point is a point that was raised by the Minister in the Ministry of Finance, Minster Dalley, is the registration of persons living with disability. And several times Senator-Floyd Morris, the President, has visited my own constituency and it is

something that we continue to do whenever we travel the length and breadth to ensure that those persons that we come across who are living with a disability that we refer them so that they can get registered so they can benefit from whatever opportunities are provided out there. And there are tremendous opportunities there for them. And the critical point is that it has been said before that the majority of these persons are not looking for anybody to baby them they really just want a fair opportunity so that they can access what is out there, they can be equality in access and equality in opportunity so that they too can pay a rightful role in our society.

So with those few words I want to commend the Minister and I want to say that this is a far-reaching piece of legislation that I fully support.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mrs. Ffolkes-Abrahams.

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Mr. Speaker, permission is sought to speak from a seat other than my own.

The SPEAKER: You may proceed

Mrs. FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to give support to the very important Bill and I would like to commend the Honourable Minister for this groundbreaking and inclusive piece of legislation.

(Applause)

The Social and Economic Studies 2005 from the University of the West Indies stated that persons with disabilities account for 10 per cent of the population and forms an important part of the assessment of growth as a social design and development.

Persons in Jamaica they stated with disabilities remain a low priority in Jamaica as evidenced by the limited availability of programmes and the lack of comprehensive legislative framework that incorporates their rights. I can say that today that that statement has been changed forever. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, disability rights were not included in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms when it was passed by the previous Government, and therefore, there was no specific law that would protect persons with disabilities in Jamaica until now. I would indeed say that today is an historic day and a day for celebration for persons with disabilities. (Applause)

If you think about it, Mr. Speaker, we all face the possibility of disability at some point in our lives and therefore, we should be mindful about and enabling the disabled. Mr. Speaker, our productivity could be vastly improved by giving all members of our society a change to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, our MSME policy Medium, Small and Micro Enterprise policy in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce speaks to cross cutting issue of women youth and persons with disability. (Applause) And so therefore, we salute today's passing of this Bill. Particularly with the work that we have been doing with the Consumer Affairs Commission, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the banks. We have articulated that the banks put forward a voluntary code of

conduct with regards to disability which until today has not been forthcoming. However, I would say now with this piece of legislation, banks and all businesses are advised and encouraged to introduce voluntary policies that will protect the disabled, provide ramps for entrances, and open their doors for engagement for persons with disabilities to enter the business world. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it is advised that they be proactive so as to give guidance to their operations. Also, Mr. Speaker, I note that we engage alternative dispute resolution as part of how we proceed and this is very important, that we use the administrative law system such as the Disabilities Council, to provide greater access to justice and to afford quicker and less expensive procedures for obtaining resolution to complaints.

Mr. Speaker, indeed today is a very important day for Jamaica, it is important for the people who have disabilities, but it is also important for business in Jamaica to take account of the productivity of persons with disabilities. (Applause) I want to say Mr. Speaker, that today is a great day for human rights in Jamaica and we herald this day as a great day.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Brown.

Mr. BROWN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, like my colleague before me I rise to support the piece of legislation that is being debated before us. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker that this piece of legislation, this Bill enhances the reputation of Jamaica in the international community and I make that point, Mr. Speaker, on the basis that back in 2007, September 18 to be exact Jamaica was among the first of five countries to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. And when we read the Memorandum of Objects and Reasons, it link this piece of legislation with that part of - with that piece of convention and therefore, we are in effect reinforcing in our domestic legislation the obligations that we have made at the international level to protect persons with the rights - to protect persons who have disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, it also reinforces Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international convention on economic social and cultural rights, and I think that this is very important because as we are all aware when we sign - on to these Conventions at the international levels, we are bound to and we are obliged to observe them and indeed to ensure that we make them part of our regular/normal laws.

Mr. Speaker, I want to join the Members from Southern St. James, North Central Clarendon and Northern Clarendon in commending the work of the various Ministers over the period of time that this Bill has been in gestation. This Bill has been in gestation for 10 years, Mr. Speaker, and I think that it is a matter that we need to take into serious consideration, the length of time that it takes for us to bring to Parliament and indeed to pass in Parliament important legislation such as this particular one which is

an advance that we are making in terms of the social agenda.

Certainly, in the context of this Administration, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is consistent with the progressive social movement and the progressive social agenda that this Administration is committed to over the years. And I think it is an important point that we should observe.

Mr. Speaker, I want to join in commending President of the Senate, Flovd Morris, and part of the reason I am joining in that, Mr. Speaker, is because Senator Morris is someone that I have known since 1993, and I have actually had the opportunity to observe him up close as a person who has not allowed his disability in any way to impede his progress, and particularly to see him in the context of the university setting and in the context of an educational institution, and that is why -

(Inaudible comment by a Member)

Mr. BROWN: Well, yes, if you play dominoes and you are not good at it you are going to get six love from him for sure.

(Cross talk)

But, Mr. Speaker, apart from his domino skills, apart from his domino skills I want to make the point about the importance of retrofitting educational institutions to accommodate persons with disabilities, and I think that this particular legislation that is before us now, places an obligation on the State to ensure that our educational facilities are friendly to persons with disabilities. What it means is that, if persons are able to take advantage of education at the lower rungs of the system, from primary coming up to secondary, it means that we are going to have far more persons with disabilities matriculating at the university level, and that is an important thing that we need to understand, and this legislation does that in terms of putting in place a regime that will require the State and private providers to ensure that facilities are in place for persons with disabilities.

I am, therefore, proud that the first high school that was built since the return of this Administration has been retrofitted to treat with persons with disabilities and I think that is indeed commendable.

(Applause)

As a result of that, Mr. Speaker, I have taken it on board as a Member of Parliament, to ensure that other institutions within my constituency are retrofitted to accommodate persons with disabilities because their best assets in many instances are in fact their minds and access to education is extremely important in this regard.

I want to address the issue raised by the Member from Western Kingston, and I think it was also raised from the Member from St. James Central. The issue relating to enforcement, and I think that's a very important issue that needs to be addressed because this Bill must not be a Bill in words only, it must be a Bill that is enforceable, and I want to commend the drafters, I want to commend the Ministry, because in this Bill there is a section dealing with an appeals tribunal or a tribunal that will deal with matters, the Disabilities Right Tribunal, Part

III to be exact, section 15 which speaks about the establishment of the Tribunal.

Mr. Speaker, what this mean is that persons with disabilities who are aggrieved do not have to take the matter in the first instance to the courts, they can go directly to this Tribunal where they can get redress, and what we need to do is to ensure, Minister, that the Tribunal is properly staffed and resourced so that they can respond to the issues that will arise as quickly as possible, and that we will not have a backlog of matters, and, therefore, that will assist in making this Bill very effective and worthwhile.

(Applause)

My colleague also mentioned the fact that the Bill speaks to dispute, alternate dispute resolution which is a major feature of our criminal justice system and indeed our system of governance from the judicial perspective, and those are important systems that are necessary to engender the speedy resolution of matters and that is one of the things I would want to make sure happen in relation to this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I want to say that this House can be proud this afternoon because this Bill has received bipartisan support and indeed both administrations have worked on this particular piece of legislation, and I think it demonstrates that there are some issues that are above the political fray and when we work together we can have important social advancement and movement in the country, and with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I fully endorse and support this Bill.

Thank you.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mrs. Robinson.

Mrs. ROBINSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to add my support to this long awaited piece of legislation. Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is incumbent on all of us, as people, that we acknowledge that persons with disabilities have the same basic rights as any other person in Jamaica, and I believe that this is what this piece of legislation seeks to do.

I want to talk about the inclusion of wheelchair accessible ramps and sidewalks, and the necessary modifications that will allow for persons with disabilities to use and enjoy all the facilities as they should be able to.

Mr. Speaker, the constituency that I represent is a tourist or tourism is the mainstay of the economy there, and my first obligation is to the people of St. Ann North East, so I believe that if we were to make all the sidewalks and all the public buildings accessible to the people with disabilities in St. Ann and St. Ann North East, then we would be able to accommodate people from any part of the world who have disabilities and who need to use these necessary ramps for wheelchair accessibility, or whatever else that these people might seek to need. And then it would be a niche corner in tourism, because when people make a buying decision and the disabilities group out there of persons is large, they travel too, they are normal people who travel, they might have a disability but they travel too, and if we were to make the destination friendly to persons with disabilities I believe that we would have a niche there for those persons. Because as I said before, people

buying a destination make sure that whatever they seek to get in that particular destination is available, and if we were able to say that all our sidewalks in Ocho Rios and Montego Bay and other tourist destinations, were wheelchair accessible and we were to say that all the buildings and all the hotels are wheelchair accessible, I believe that we could have that little section of tourism which would add to the full product that we offer.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk too about education, schools, educational institutions.

In St. Ann, North East we have made that step where we have tried to retrofit most of the schools and have them wheelchair accessible, because more and more we find that children with the disabilities are sitting the GSAT, the Common Entrance before, the GSAT and they are being placed in traditional high schools and they must access these classrooms, and the principals and the staff at these institutions, they have seen it, they have had the foresight to make the necessary adjustments, and I believe that it is something that we should all work on, as Members of Parliament, to make sure that all the schools in our constituencies can accommodate children who have any form of disability.

So this legislation is long overdue, I believe that this afternoon we are moving in the right direction, it is a step in the right direction and I wholeheartedly support this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: House leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I too want to join in this historic moment as we salute the efforts on both sides as governments to enact this far-reaching historic legislation as we recognize the important role that all our people play, and in particular this afternoon those in this community that we refer to as disabled.

Mr. Speaker, I want to very briefly just touch on an aspect that is a feature of this law and that has to do with the role of technology.

I think for those of us who are able-body, the role of technology is well spoken of and certainly in relation to the disabled community the role of technology is critical and we can think of all kinds of technologies that have enabled members of the community to have a better life. We think of the use of prosthesis, we think of the use of things like hearing aids, we think of wheelchairs, and so on and so forth to assist with mobility.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to focus on these remarks on the role of information communication technology, and again, as others have done, to salute the President of the Senate, because in those early days when we were caught up at the turn of the Century, with some of the problems that we were anticipating, Y2K and other problems, it was the Senator who alerted us to some of the opportunities that we were missing in terms of enabling our people in this community, the disabled community, to benefit from the world of opportunities that exist with ICTs, and so in that first decade of the 70s he convinced us

out of a fund that we had established, to do an elaborate training. We were able to bring scores of members of this community, to train them in the use of ICTs. In fact, we developed a policy to enable those persons who were trained to work in some of our call centres, and I still want to urge that as we look to increase employment in the sector that we look to members of this community to assist.

The use of software to enable our people to utilize ICTs, was also a major feature.

Jamaica was one of the first countries to adopt the JAWS software that assisted in not only the training on ICTs but also the use of ICTs by members of the disabled community, and we have continued apace. One of the first things we did when we returned to office in 2012, was to amend the Telecommunications Act to carve out in the role that the Universal Services Provider company has a clear role for the disabled community. We made it quite clear in that law that in terms of universal service, that we did not want the disabled community to be regarded as 'have nots' and the USF has been working to ensure this in all the facilities, the institutions that exist across the country.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that come the first of September a major investment is being done by the USF in relation to six institutions that house members of the disabled community, including the Lister Mair Gilby School for the Deaf where we are installing in these institutions over $33 Million worth of ICT equipment on software, to enable members of this community to have first-hand, first-class, first-rate access to ICTs. And I should also point out that in relation to the Tablets in School Project, that we will be starting again in September, in one institution, we will be enabling every single student and every single teacher as part of the role out to have their individual tablet computer and to benefit again from the range of new software from the content material that is being provided across the educational spectrum.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we pass this important Bill today into law, I want to acknowledge that through ICTs we are going to be able to get a far more productive disabled community and one that will be on equal footing with those of us who are referred to as able-bodied. So I think it is indeed a tribute to our Parliament and to our people that we are coming to this historic past today.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Atkinson.

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker, I also rise to support this long-overdue Bill, and would urge my colleagues, or this Parliament, that we should put no further handicaps in its passage. (Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, I think the Member from North Central Clarendon had indicated that there was - it was deficient, in that there was no definition of disability. But I think he overlooked section 2, which describes who a person with disa - persons with disabilities, which persons include persons with mental, physical, intellectual, or sensory impairments. While, Mr. Speaker, this law must and will effectively make mandatory the structural adjustments that are needed to remove barriers

out of the path of persons with disabilities, we have to acknowledge that there are changes, Mr. Speaker, that are necessary in our society, which no law can effectively compel.

Mr. Speaker, as a people, as a nation, we need to resolve to confront and purge our minds and hearts of any and all the petty prejudices that lurk either consciously or subconsciously, against persons with disabilities. (Applause)

As the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance pointed out, persons with disabilities do not...

Mr. SAMUDA: Who is that?

Mr. ATKINSON: I beg your pardon - the Minister Without Portfolio.

(*Sotto voce* comments/Laughter)

Mr. ATKINSON: Indeed. Persons with disabilities do not want our condescension or our patronization. They don't need our sympathy, they don't need our pity. What they demand and what they deserve is to be treated with respect and dignity. They are not half-citizens and they are not Step-Jamaicans, they are our full brothers and sisters. (Applause) And they must be allowed to serve and assist in the growth and development of this nation, and in this regard, they are fully able to do.

Mr. Speaker, we must delay this no further. This Act is twenty-odd years behind what other enlightened nations have done. And it is full time, the time is now, and we must do it.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Mr. Hylton.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, many voices have been raised today in support of this historic piece of legislation, and I would like to add my own voice, and to give support to the passage of this landmark social engineering, with tremendous economic implications.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to, at the outset just to congratulate those who have been working in the vineyards for many, many years, to ensure that today we can all celebrate the passage of this, what is now being called - and quite correctly so - this landmark piece of legislation.

And I would like, in that regard, to thank the President of the Senate, who I know has brought a level of consciousness to the party that he is a member of, through his strong advocacy over a long period of time, pointing to some of us who, though we have eyes, could not see and understand the many ways, some of it large and small, ways in which we by our action or inaction, have helped to create difficulties, to place hurdles and barriers in the ways of our disabled community.

Because, Mr. Speaker, a number of them toil in the quiet and the silence of their disability; they exist in communities, shunned in some parts, ashamed in other parts, because as a society, we have not allowed them to feel welcomed in their community, welcomed with their disability, and often in our actions we reinforce the stigma and the biases that they feel on a day-to-day basis.

Today's passage of this legislation, would - it will not solve all the problems that they face, but I believe it will go a long way to say that the Parliament of Jamaica, and to a great extent the society, as a whole, are beginning to

come to grips with understanding the deeper challenges that the community faces, but also the possibility and the opportunity for us, as Jamaicans.

Mr. Speaker, I speak as the Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, understanding that we cannot address the growth of our economy without the full participation of every segment of our community. (Applause)

The Minister of State has mentioned, quite correctly, that the policy on enterprise entrepreneurship - micro, small and medium-sized enterprise and entrepreneurship policy, takes full account of the role for disability. This piece of legislation, though, goes further to put a framework, a legislative framework that really gives meaning to and helps to build out that enabling legislation, and to ensure that the business community, as well as the Government, are challenged to put in place some of the structural changes that must be in place if in fact we are going to give life to and full meaning to the rights and the participation of the disabled community.

I want to say that we at the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, armed with this piece of legislation, will be able to do more in the ways of the small - the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as we seek to address and to overcome any disabilities that will affect this community from playing its full role in the economic life of the country.

And so, I want to commend those who have toiled, who have laboured, and to say that although a piece of social engineering, we cannot underestimate the tremendous impact this will have, not only on the lives of the disabled community, but on the economy, as a whole. Because I think now, Jamaica has one less constraint, as we try to develop and to build our economy, and to grow the economy.

I welcome this piece of legislation as aiding in the effort to grow the Jamaican economy and to make it more productive and competitive.

(Applause)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Hylton.

Mr. André HYLTON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, wish to join in commending this very special piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, Eastern St. Andrew, my constituency, Mr. Speaker, I believe houses most of the institutions that have to do with persons with disability, one form of disability or the other. We have institutions like Hope Valley Experimental, which two Members of this Honourable House attended. An excellent project which is no longer an experiment, it has proven itself to be a very capable institution that has produced some excellent scholars, both physically able, and of course, physically disabled. Institutions, Mr. Speaker, like Sir John Golding, Danny Williams Lister Mair School for the Deaf, Randolph Lopez, *et cetera*. So we have a lot of institutions, Mr. Speaker, which deal with some of the concerns of persons with disability. So, I had to rise today, Mr. Speaker, to stand with that group who I have had on various occasions to meet with and discuss some of their issues.

Before I became a Member of Parliament, Mr. Speaker, I was always involved with community work. And as a Rotarian, many years ago, you will recall on JBC TV at news time there was a sign language expert interpreting the news. This was a project, the first of its kind, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Kingston of which I was a member. Also, the creation of a handbook to deal with building codes, which was adopted by the Town Planning Department of the KSAC at the time, which dealt with the regulations - or certainly, it dealt with the standards, some basic standards at the time, which became a very popular thing. And through that Rotary project, the awareness was developed - the building of ramps at places like the Little Theatre, and some of the public institutions by the same Rotary Movement, really highlighted the need in those days for us to consider persons with disability when constructing buildings.

So, my sentiments go far back, Mr. Speaker, of the need for us, as a country, to recognize and treat our brothers and sisters with the same level of respect and treatment as others.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that I would like to say is, as we and the Ministry of Construction and Works have considered this, but sometimes we build things like sidewalks in our communities, and with this legislation we see where these sidewalks must be built to accommodate persons with disabilities. And out of a meeting I had with the Combined Disabilities Association last year, through the JEEP project, we were able to build some sidewalks in the vicinity of Sheshire Village. And, by the way, Sheshire Village is probably the first of its kind, a community built to accommodate persons with disability. And it's in my constituency as well, Mr. Speaker, so we built some sidewalks along the Golden Avenue to accommodate this. And I understand from the Minister of Local Government, that he will be expanding on this programme very soon.

So I am very happy to stand in support of this legislation as the Member of Parliament for the constituency that houses so many institutions dealing with different aspects of persons with disability.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the President of the Senate, who is my very good friend and brother, also lives in my constituency, so he constantly reminds me that I need to stand up for the persons, our brothers and sisters. So I really am very pleased today that finally, after twenty years, this Government is passing this great legislation, and it has my full support.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Applause)

The SPEAKER: Dr. Ferguson.

Dr. FERGUSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as has been said by many speakers before me, this piece of legislation has been with us for a very long time. And, in fact, in 2007 there were approximately nine drafts to this legislation, and in a real sense, when we came back to power in 2011, I think there were up to about eleven drafts at that stage on this piece of legislation.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that as it relates to health, it is important that we continue to

make and to see the disabled group within the context of the vulnerable groups that we have to have special approach in how we deliver health care delivery. Sometimes problems of stigma and discrimination that these vulnerable groups face, I think it's important for us to continue, and the University of West the Indies Centre on Disabilities Studies, the Ministry has been working with them. In fact, last year they were the beneficiary of $9 Million and out of that, I think close to 200 health workers were sensitized and our professionals were trained in relation to how we will deal with the disabled community. We believe that that trend must continue. In fact, in 2014/15 our own expectation is that training for almost 300 additional persons will take place.

Mr. Speaker, we're of the view that in the southern part of the country there are some communities that almost every member in those communities have some kind of disability. And part of what the University of the West Indies Disability Studies group wants to do is to do research in those areas and to see what could be the cause of some of these problems. We will continue to support that and the legislation will be very timely as we go forward.

I also want to put on the table, Mr. Speaker, the difficulties that many persons with disability face in terms of assistive pieces of prosthesis, very expensive. And to that extent, while we have not come to a position yet, I believe that it is something that the Government must pursue as to how we can assist with some of these aids, because for many, just having the aid would be timely, would improve their capacity and it is something that I'm thinking about seriously.

Our health facilities, all our centres of excellence that have been built, the last four, we have made them disabled friendly. And others - we're in the process of making changes, because we're of the view that again, they must be able to come to our clinics, hospitals and be able to get the kind of treatment that they deserve.

So it is against that background, Mr. Speaker that we really want to continue the process, because even with the assistive prosthesis, it's about 70,000 disabled persons who would be impacted in that regard. So we're working closely with the University, and it is our intention as we continue the training of our health professionals, administrators and others, that in the long run we will be able to do what is best and what any progressive government would do for its disabled.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Dr. Guy.

Dr. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to make a brief intervention in this debate, Mr. Speaker, because indeed, as all the other speakers before me have expressed, this is a Bill that is long in coming.

Mr. Speaker, the Member from Eastern St. Andrew spoke about the great proportion of persons living with disability in his constituency, and the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing, mindful of that particular situation, has embarked on a programme

where, as it relates to ramps, as it relates to sidewalks for the usage of persons with wheelchairs and other aids, we have undertaken a programme, which will be ramped up further, wherein all sidewalks will be accessible for persons using wheelchairs. Special ramps are going to be created and any new construction activity that's going to take place will have provisions for easy access to these ramps.

But also, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the last number of buses that came for the JUTC, the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing recognizing the importance of having access by this community, ensure that of the numbers, granted it is only a small portion, but it is a programme that we've started, two of those buses are specially designed for the disabled community. (Applause) And I want to commend those members from that community who came out when we had the launch or the arrival of these buses and from all indications they were pleased with what the new facilities on the buses were offering.

Mr. Speaker, this, as all the speakers before me indicated, this piece of legislation is long incoming. I want to support this legislation and I recommend it to the other Members of this House.

Thank you, sir.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Dr. Bloomfield.

Dr. BLOOMFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There is no doubt that with obvious compulsion that I must stand to speak on behalf of those persons living with disabilities in my constituency who are number in the hundreds. I also must speak from the perspective of someone who just two years ago join the ranks of those persons who are living with disability as a result of a major accident. And so it is with this framework and background that I speak most clearly and most boldly, and I, in this short breath, salute the President of the Senate for the great work he and others have been doing over many years to ensure that we've come to a day such as this one.

No doubt, persons living with disabilities continue to remain among those persons who are marginalized in our society both here and internationally. And in spite of the protocols and the frameworks that have been established for dealing with persons with disabilities, we continue to be those who are left for last. In almost every intervention in society that I know of, persons living with disabilities have always, or almost always been left to the margins of what goes on in "normal society".

No doubt we've heard many persons speak today about persons living with disabilities, but I want to congratulate those who've formulated the framework for today, where we are now at the point where we consider a Disabilities Council where the association that deals with persons with disability now gains that legal and legislative framework which will impact on how we treat persons with disabilities.

It is also of great significance, Mr. Speaker, because in our society, given the physical constraints and the economic constraints that we are presented with, or have

to deal with, persons with disabilities will continue to remain on the margin of what we do, unless this Act is now put into action, unless the Bill is now paid its due respect. I am focusing today on the holistic approach to persons dealing with disabilities, because it is not just an isolated issue.

I have been working with persons with disabilities more than quarter century and seeing young persons come into adolescence and into adulthood and have to deal with the issues, which we're all aware of, those who are in back rooms of homes for 25 and 30 years, those who are not owned or claimed or accepted among families who claimed that they love; persons who are dealing with multiple vulnerabilities in our society, not just the fact that a woman comes in as physically, obviously disabled, but also the fact that she is female, the fact that she is lesbian, the fact that she has HIV, is compounding her life and we as persons who should be protecting such persons are not mindful of the social implications of what they have to do from day to day.

I'm amazed that even this weekend one person who is eminently qualified and trained professional, would say, I see a disabled person who is so different from us who are normal. But what is normal? It is we who become normal when we begin to treat our disabled as persons who're equal, not only under law, but equal based on our moral values, our attitudes towards persons who are vulnerable in our communities... (Applause) ...persons who're not necessarily physical drawn or you're aware of their physical disability, but those who're educationally, intellectually challenged.

Twenty-five percent of our students at school have learning disabilities; they're those who have autism; they're those who have attention deficit hyperactivity disorders; those who have numerous other types of disorders and so it is important and imperative that we not only just look at this Act, but we must put it into action. It goes way beyond just the provision of wheelchairs or the provision of ramps or the retrofitting and equipping of bathroom facilities, but also the awareness that must be attend unto it.

Not only the registration of all our disabled, not only building an electronic database where we can have access to where they are and who they are, or should I say who we are, but also the reality that we must look at their economic - our economic situations as the society impacts on our lives, and the education that must go with it so that not only society is educated, but persons living with disabilities must also be educated so that we understand how we must affect this rapprochement that will be able to deliver a cohesive society.

It is not easy for persons who come into disability to understand how to react and to respond as life goes on. And I can be personal, because having gone up a steep slope to see a 95 year old woman, and having come out of an accident, it was not easy for me to look down a steep slope going into a riverbed and to hand my two bags to one of the relatives to say, take this down, but looking down into that situation and realizing that I would not

expose myself to further disability from a fall, I had to ask one gently to help me to go down that slope.

I am better recovered now, but it taught me a lesson that even persons who are disabled in some way, have to open themselves, ourselves, to learning, to adapting and to be able to confront society in a real tangible and meaningful way. And so I now understand the challenges that are out there for persons living with disabilities, and personally as one who is now committed to advocacy in terms of creating that awareness so that our communities, our society, our country will be known not only because of the other issues that we have to deal with, but also the fact that we take care of our disabled persons.

Twenty Thirty (2030) is a laudable goal, but unless we as persons who are in leadership set out consciously to day by day begin to set the structures and the frameworks in place, to ensure that the outcomes which we desire become real in our lifetime, because certainly, 2030 is not too far away, and of course, it speaks to just this very issue, which the Act purports to complement.

And so I am appealing that today we don't just pass - we just look at this Act, debate it, set it aside and leave it for those persons who're living with disabilities, those advocates to continue that same struggle to bring awareness to the realities of part of this, our vulnerable communities, those persons living with disabilities of all kinds. I am sure they're everywhere and we're not even aware of it. They're those who're, for example, at the Bellevue Hospital, who're there because of social issues, because of disabilities and not - mental illness is just one of them.

So I challenge us today as we congratulate those who've toiled and laboured over 20 years to make this day a reality, to now see us as just opening the door to get into that space where we will become not only advocates, but persons who are, in a practical way, going to make sure that all these international conventions, our own Act become a reality in our lifetime.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Minister Kellier.

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, from the various contributions made by colleagues in this Honourable House today, the seriousness of this Bill is fully appreciated. I want to say profound thanks and gratitude to them all for their full support and backing of this Bill. I have taken note of all the points made in the various contributions to the debate, Mr. Speaker, and the recommendations that flow from them as well. And I want to give absolute assurance, Mr. Speaker, to all the Members that what is contained in this Bill is not rhetoric or a set of platitudes. The Bill contains commitments by the Government which have now to be translated into action.

There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that the full realization of this Bill and the outcomes that we're striving to achieve will require a substantial deployment of resources. The Jamaica Council of Persons with Disabilities, which is to enjoy the status of a corporate body, will have to be equipped with the resources to build adequate and appropriate

facilities, utilize trained professionals and, very importantly, maintain a rigorous system of monitoring. The Tribunal will function similar to our present Industrial Dispute Tribunal with qualified persons who can objectively and professionally process the various complaints that will be reported to it. This new organizational structure will be developed and the budget necessary to implement this Bill will be of necessity, have to be immediately pursued. So, Mr. President, let us not lose sight of the fact that the disabled community comprising over 10 per cent of the population have very high expectations of us as leaders to put in place a Bill that addresses their hopes and aspirations.

A number of points were raised, Mr. Speaker, and particularly those from the former Minister and the Opposition Spokesman on Labour and Social Security. And I want to just speak to those very quickly and those areas that require some amendments, we'll take those when we go to the Committee level. The question was put, Mr. Speaker, as to the definition of persons with disabilities and I want to advise that in section 2 of the Bill, there is adequate information there to state exactly what the definition of person with disability means.

In respect of the legal representation before the Tribunal, the Jamaica Council of persons with Disabilities may offer legal assistance to the complaint in respect to, or respect of legal proceedings before the Tribunal and we are going to make an adjustment as well at the Committee Stage to that.

In respect of inconsistent treatment of mental disability, in section 34 of the Bill this exclusion, Mr. Speaker, is in conformity with the Jamaican constitution. The quoted provision relates to disqualification from membership of the House and Senate, if one is mentally ill. We will propose some other consequently amendments to section 34 at the Committee Stage, Mr. Speaker. And the point about field of expertise that the Member also put forward to complement the quantity surveyors, the economist - persons with those kinds of things - disciplines we are going to include and make an adjustment in the section. Section l(l)(sic) and section 6(2) will be amended, Mr. Speaker, to add a human resource management personnel. I think the suggestion has very strong merit and we're going to be adopting that one as well.

Mr. Speaker, the other amendments which will be made, I will propose those in the Committee Stage and we have already circulated the clauses in Clauses 16, 17, and 18 and there are few others to be in 34 and so on. I will make those at that stage.

So Mr. Speaker, in closing, I wish to seek the full cooperation of both sides of this House to put in place the necessary structures to accommodate this Bill notwithstanding the constraints facing the Ministry of Finance and Planning. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Members of this House for their support and cooperation in the debate surrounding the Disabilities Bill 2014. We would like and we will be assured this evening after we have completed that we can give to the disabled community, Mr. Speaker, a

present for their independence 2014, the Disabilities Act 2014. I ask for second reading of the Bill.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be read a second time.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Bill entitled:

"AN ACT to Promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment by persons with disabilities, of privileges, interests, benefits and treatments, on equal basis with others and to establish the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities; and for connected matters."

read a second time.

The SPEAKER: The House will now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider the Bill clause by clause.

COMMITTEE STAGE

The CHAIRMAN: Minister.

Mr. KELLIER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, with your permission we could move it a little faster by taking the Bill in different section Clauses 1 to 4 and then we could do 5 to 14 and we have an amendment starting at 16. So we could take those very quickly and move on, because we have no amendments in those sections.

The CHAIRMAN: Okay. I put Part I, Clauses 1 to 4.

Clauses 1 to.4 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Part II, Clauses 5 to 14.

Clauses 5 to 14 put to the Committee and agreed to.

Mr. KELLIER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, in Part III, Clause 16 has been circulated - the amendment has been circulated and I would wish to commend...

The CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Mr. KELLIER: ...that Clause 16.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 16. I put the amendment to Clause 16 as circulated.

The amendment to Clause 16 put to the Committee and agreed to.

I put Clause 16 as amended.

Mr. KELLIER: No, not - Mr. Chairman, there is a further amendment - a new subsection (2) to Clause 16. We are going to delete from the opening words the word, *'shall'* and substitute it with *'may'.*

(Cross talk)

No, that's subsection (2). Small amendment. So 16 subsection (2), Mr. Speaker, that says:

"An aggrieved person shall..."

We are going to substitute that with *'may'* and..

The CHAIRMAN: And (b) delete paragraph (c) and (d).

Mr. KELLIER: Yes, we are going to be deleting paragraph (c) and (d) and substitute therefore the following:

(c) *failure or refusal of a person offering any benefit or membership under section 41(1) to ensure any specified terms and conditions of such benefit or membership are in accordance with section 41(2), subsection (2); and*

(d) any other contravention of a provision of the Act.

The CHAIRMAN: I put that amendment as read by the Minister.

Amendment as read put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 16 as amended.

Clause 16 as amended put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Part III, Clauses 15 through to 19.

Clauses 15 to 19 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clauses 21, 22 and 23.

Clauses 21, 22 and 23 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I go back to Part III and put the renumbering Clause 17 as 18 and Clause 18 as 17.

The renumbering of Clause 17 as 18 and Clause 18 as 17 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Part IV, Clauses 24 and 25.

Clauses 24 and 25 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Part V, Clauses 26, 27, and 28.

Clauses 26, 27 and 28 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Part VI, Clauses 29, 30 and 31.

Clauses 29, 30 and 31 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 32.

Clause 32 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: I put Clause 33.

Clause 33 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 34.

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Chairman, in Clause 34....

The CHAIRMAN: Okay, we have an error.

Mr. KELLIER: Yes, it should be 41 instead of 4. Delete (4) and substitute 41.

The CHAIRMAN: So, it should read sections 40...

A MEMBER: One.

The CHAIRMAN: Bracket (2) and 41, bracket 4. 41 (2); 41 (4).

Mr. KELLIER: That's correct, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I put that amendment.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 34 as amended put to the Committee and agreed to.

Part VIII, Clause 35 put to the Committee and agreed to.

Part IX, Clauses 36 through to 39 put to the Committee and agreed to.

Part X, Clause 40 put to the Committee and agreed to.

Part XI, Clauses 41 through to 49 put to the Committee and agreed to.

Clause 50 put to the Committee and agreed to.

Clause 51 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The First Schedule put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Second Schedule put to the Committee and agreed to.

There is an amendment to the Third Schedule I gather?

Mr. KELLIER: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the Third Schedule.

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Chairman, we are going to be removing in the opening words, we are going to delete "*either*" and also delete "*or*" and substitute the words, "*and*", "*may*" instead. So, it will read as 12(1), Mr. Chairman, in Part B of the Third Schedule, it says:

> *"Any part of a complaint referred to the Tribunal for settlement, may appear in person before the Tribunal and may be represented".*

The CHAIRMAN: I put the amendment to the Third Schedule.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Third Schedule as amended put to the Committee and agreed to.

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Chairman, if you could just give me a slight recommittal there at 12(l)(c), we are going to delete, *"with the permission of the Tribunal".* The Member had made a very strong proposal on that point and we are going to take it out.

The CHAIRMAN: So you are deleting Clause (c)?

Mr. KELLIER: No, just, *"with the permission of the Tribunal".*

The CHAIRMAN: So it would read, "*...by any…*"

Mr. KELLIER: "*…by any other person whom he wishes to represent him*".

The CHAIRMAN: I put that amendment.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Third Schedule as amended put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Title and Enacting Clause put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage with 10 amendments?

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

RESUMPTION

The SPEAKER: I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage with ten (10) amendments.

Mr. KELLIER: Mr. Speaker, I now beg that the Bill be read a third time.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be read a third time?

Put to the House and agreed to.

Bill entitled:

> "AN ACT to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment by persons with disabilities of privileges, interests, benefits and treatment on equal basis with others, and to establish the Jamaica Council of Persons with Disabilities and for connected matters",

read a third time and passed.

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: As a token gesture, I will present a copy of this Act to the President of the Senate, signed by Minister Dalley, Mr. Charles and Mr. Kellier.

(Applause)

(The Speaker vacated his Chair and handed document to the President of the Senate)

(Applause)

(The Speaker and the President embrace)

(Applause)

The SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I move the suspension of the Standing Orders to enable me to take the Bill shortly entitled: The Tax Collection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014 and the Bill entitled: The Tax Penalties (Harmonization) Act 2014 and to treat them for purposes of debate as requiring a single debate.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow the Minister to take both Bills as enunciated?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the House is asked to debate and approve two Bills entitled: The Tax Collection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014 and The Tax Penalties (Harmonization) Act, 2014, which are companion pieces of legislation intended to enhance collection, improve compliance and remove inconsistencies in the penalties across tax-types.

These Bills introduced a suite of amendments to the Tax Collection Act, the Revenue Administration Act, the Income Tax Act and the Education Tax Act, which are intended to improve and increase the collection of domestic taxes of all types.

This is to be achieved through the introduction of new collection related mechanisms, as well as the generalized applications of tools now available only in support of the collection of certain taxes. And these tools are to be extended across the entire gamut of tax-types.

It is generally acknowledged that enhanced collection powers are needed to lend support to the efforts of the Tax Administration to meet its revenue targets in a sustainable manner, thus reducing the need for amnesties and other special projects.

And I dare say, Mr. Speaker, we need to recognize that, as I have said on more than one occasion, that there is an endemic culture of tax avoidance and I dare say tax evasion that afflicts the country and has over many years created the conditions that underlie the build-up of debt in the country. We fail to pay taxes that are due as a general rule and everyone believes - those who avoid or evade think it is better to impose the burden of debt on the few who pay regularly.

These measures are intended in a sense, Mr. Speaker, not only for the practical effect that they will have in enhancing the capacity of tax administration to collect the taxes due, but will go a far way, in our view, in helping to change the culture of evasion and endemic avoidance, which has existed for much too long.

It is generally acknowledged and felt that the compliant population, those who pay, are the constant focus of collection efforts while the non-compliant, those who evade, play a skillful game of catch me if you can.

The amendments contained in these Bills are a follow-up to the 2013 amendments to the

revenue Administration Act, which strengthened the powers of the Commissioner General to gather tax-related information. These provisions should allow the information now being collected to be put to efficient use in support of collection. The intent of the new provisions is to bring non-compliant behaviour out into the open through mass media and public records, reducing the level of ease with which tax-dodgers and tax cheats proceed with their business, masquerading as good citizens, corporate or otherwise, while their lifestyle is subsidized by the compliant minority, mostly the pay- as-you-earn category of taxpayers, who are already too burdened and who have no option but to pay.

Mr. Speaker, this Honourable House will recall the passage and implementation to the Tax Collection Act in 2013, which allowed for the write-off of uncollectible debt. The references in those amendments were to debts administered by the Commissioner General of Tax Administration Jamaica. These are debts owed in respect of all tax-types, except Customs Duties, which are the remit of the Commissioner of Customs in the exercise of his powers under the Customs Act.

It is intended at this point, Mr. Speaker, that in an effort to promote better administration, coherence and equity in the administration of taxes, that the debt write-off policy should be extended also to include customs duties which may for all practical purposes be uncollectible.

For the same reason, the amendments make provision so that the Commissioner of Customs be given access to the variety of powers now available to the Commissioner-General under the Revenue Administration Act in support of assessment, collection and enforcement.

The principal provisions of the two Bills are as follows, Mr. Speaker: the Tax Collection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill seeks to amend the Income Tax Act, the Revenue Administration Act, the Tax Collection Act to provide additional measures to facilitate the collection of taxes. The additional provisions include first, a requirement in the Income Tax Act for all bodies corporate, including registered charitable organizations and other persons to be prescribed to file tax returns.

Second, an amendment to the Revenue Administration Act to authorize the Commissioner General to provide information to Credit Bureaus under the Credit Reporting Act regarding taxes owed by taxpayers.

Third, an amendment to the Revenue Administration Act to extend the powers of the Commissioner General with regard to the production of information and documents to include the Commissioner of Customs, that is to say the amendment will extend the powers now being exercised only by the Commissioner General of the Tax Administration of Jamaica, it will extend those powers to the Commissioner of Customs regarding the production of information and documents.

Fourth, an amendment to the Revenue Administration Act to authorize the

Commissioner General to establish an electronic communication system to facilitate tax collection operations, including the filing of returns, service of notices, payments of tax and issuance of tax receipts. Put simply, this is to enable the electronic filing by computer of the necessary tax returns and receipts as may be necessary. This provides for the compulsory nature of the filing because it is made possible. In other words, you can file but it becomes a legal method and in fact you can be compelled to respond electronically for the purposes of filing returns; for some tax types. The purpose is not to create conditions which cannot be satisfied by the taxpayers, the purpose is to secure taxes, but indeed many taxpayers would want to be satisfied that there is a system and there is an obligation on the Commissioner General to maintain such a system for the electronic filing.

Fifth, an amendment to the Tax Collection Act to authorize the Minister to prescribe by order the rate of interest applicable in respect of arrears of tax under the various Tax Acts other than the Asset Tax (Specified Bodies) Act, the Stamp Duty Act or the Transfer Tax Act.

Sixth, an amendment to the Tax Collection Act to authorize the Commissioner General to require persons who hold money belonging to a person who owes taxes or who are or will be liable to make payment to such a person to make payment to the Commissioner General, that is a provision for garnishment in relation to taxes due.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Samuda)

Dr. PHILLIPS: But garnishment exists in relation to many payments now.

Mr. SAMUDA: You want it under your shop.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, not my shop. Remember this Parliament established the autonomy of the Tax Department. You haven't had anything in this Administration that saw people being called off for collecting taxes by ministerial directive or anything like that as happened here, so don't make those kinds of comments 'bout this shop.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Dr. Smith)

Dr. PHILLIPS: That must be a different logic.

Mr. DALLEY: Buthelezi, you don't know anything.

Dr. PHILLIPS: The Amendment of the Tax Collection Act to authorize the Commissioner General to register a certificate of tax payable with the Supreme Court which would have the same effect as a Judgment of the Court and which may also be filed in various registries so as to create a lien or charge on property of a person owing taxes.

Next, an amendment to the Revenue Administration Act to authorize the Commissioner General to publish the names of delinquent taxpayers and also an Amendment to the Tax Collection Act to provide for the write-off of arrears of customs duties by the Minister after a determination by the Commissioner of Customs that the arrears are uncollected.

With respect to the Tax Penalties (Harmonization) Act, this Bill seeks to amend

the Education Act and the Income Tax Act so as to increase the penalties for the various offences under those Acts, make penalties for similar offences in the various Acts more consistent and remove those which are outdated. The new penalties in these Acts are designed to harmonize logically with those introduced last year in amendments made to the Revenue Administration Act in support of the gathering of tax-related information. It should be noted that amendments intended to bring penalties under the General Consumption Tax Act into alignment with those in the Bills before us are contained in the GCT Bill which was laid this afternoon. The clauses of the Bill are set out in detail.

In relation to the Tax Collection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act which shall come into operation on the 1st of August 2014, Clause 1, the Bill is shortly titled Tax Collection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act and it comes into operation on the 1st of August 2014.

Clause 2, the enactments - various tax laws, the enactments specified in the first column of the Schedule are amended in the manner in relation to them in the Second Schedule of the column. Various tax laws are to be amended and the amendments are to be construed as one with the laws they amend.

Clause 3 is a saving clause and says that the - it specifies that the validity of actions taken prior to these amendments is in fact preserved.

The Schedule sets out the amendment of the enactments.

In relation to the General Consumption Tax Act the provisions of the GCT Act, Section 46 interest rate on refunds is to be deleted and replaced by a reference to a new section 2(a) of the Tax Collection Act below which allows for a Ministerial Order in prescribing interest rates across all tax types subject to negative resolution of the House.

In relation to subsections (1) and (4) of section 54 of the GCT Act, section 54(1) deletes the words "the rate of two and a half per cent per month or part thereof *I* and substitute, the words, "*the rate to be specified by order*" in subsections (1) and (4) of section 54.

In relation to the Income Tax Act in section 2(a) in section 1 insert there the following '*next*' after section 71 as section 71(a) and 71(b) of the Income Tax Act. A new section 71(a) is inserted in the Income Tax Act. The aim of this amendment is to ensure that returns are filed by persons who are engaged in business. The Commissioner General may use his powers under the Revenue Administration Act to instruct certain taxpayers or groups of taxpayers as to what is required of them. Such persons need not be liable to income tax or have any source of income in the year of assessment to which they return relates. The affected persons or a body corporate established under any law, a trust or other institutions registered under the Charities Act, (c) a person carrying on a trade, profession or vocation or business who is referred to in a Ministerial Order prescribing persons required under this provision to make

a return. The Order should be affirmed by a negative resolution of the House of Representatives.

A new section 71(b) is inserted in the Income Tax Act to provide for administrative penalties for the late filing of income tax returns. The penalty is $5,000 per month or part thereof. The maximum penalty allowed is $1 Million. The late filing penalty is to be paid in addition to any penalty for failure to file which may be imposed by the particular tax statute. The late filing penalty is to be regarded as tax and to be added to the tax payable by the taxpayer. The Commissioner General may waive or reduce the late filing penalty in cases where in his opinion such action is justified.

Section 79 pertaining to interest on unpaid income tax is amended by deleting the reference to the current rate of interest and replacing it with a reference to the new provisions of the Tax Collection Act below, which allows the Minister to prescribe the rate subject to parliamentary resolution.

Amendments to the Revenue Administration Act provide, first, for a new section 17(f)(a) to be inserted into the Revenue Administration Act to provide for the disclosure of information by the tax authorities to credit bureaus for the purposes of the Credit Reporting Act. The information should relate to a tax debtor and should comprise the identity of the tax debtor, the tax owed. There are certain circumstances in which the information can be released. Those circumstances are, first, that the tax debtor has acknowledged the debt by way of filing a return but has not paid the tax owed.

Second, that the time allowed for an objection or appeal has expired and the tax has not been paid.

Third, that the objection or appeal if filed by the tax debtor has been finally determined but the tax is unpaid.

Fourth, that the tax debtor has not filed an objection or an appeal but has sought the intervention of the Court on a tax related constitutional or administrative matter. Where the Court has finally determined the matter and the tax is unpaid the authorities may disclose the information to the credit bureau. So that all steps are put in place to ensure that the rights of privacy of the tax debtor are not infringed in these provisions, that if there is an appeal it would have had to have been heard to the final point of determination, and finally determined. Or, that it is acknowledged as a debt, in which case it may be published and applied to the credit reporting bureau.

The relevant terms are defined in the section, the credit bureau is defined in the Credit Reporting Act, tax is defined in the Tax Collection Act and include penalty, tax debtor is defined in the Tax Collection Act as a person who owes an amount in respect of any tax penalties or sur-charge the information provided is regarded as credit information for the purposes of the Credit Reporting Act. The Commissioner or officer is regarded as a credit information officer under the Credit Reporting Act.

The Revenue Administration, the RAA

Act is amended. In section 17(g)(a) the following sections are amended by replacing the words, "*Commissioner General"* with the word, "*Commissioner*". The purpose of these amendments is to extend the powers now contained in those sections and currently exercised exclusively by the Commissioner General of the TAJ to the various Commissioners identified under the Revenue Administration Act in particular the Commissioner of Customs. The relevant powers are, first the duty of a public officer to supply information, the power to require returns, the power to require information and attendance, the power to make arrangements for the supply of information to the Commissioner; the power to impound books and records.

Currently, there is a new Part, inserted in the RAA (7) in the Bill making certain next after 17 (n) the following as Part VI (d) this new Part relates to electronic communications.

Currently, the Revenue Administration Act prescribes that the Commissioner General may request information in the manner or form he may prescribe. Pursuant to this general power large taxpayers, emphasize, **large taxpayers,** are now required to file their returns electronically. Increasing use of modern technology within the framework of tax system are now required, **large taxpayers** are now required to file their returns electronically. Increasingly, use of modern technology within the framework of the tax system gives rise to the need for rules to govern the use of technology, providing the certainty and clarity needed to protect both the tax payer and the revenue.

The Commissioner General is being empowered to establish the appropriate systems and rules. The transaction or activities to be covered are electronic filing of documents, service or issue of electronics documents, payment or collection by the electronics means, registration, the types of documents to be sent through the system, format and content of the document, rules to be invoked in the event of interruptions and errors, secrecy considerations, receipt of documents, service of documents and any other relevant matters. Actions taken on procedures pursued under the rules governing electronic transactions are valid and effective unless they are in breach of other laws such as the rules of the evidence. Documents sent via the system are deemed to have been received by the addressee baring proof to the contrary. Definitions are also provided in these sections for such relevant terms as electronic communications system, electronic document and electronic are defined in the same way as they are defined in the already existing Electronic Transactions Act.

In relation to the Tax Collection Act; **One:** in section - a definition for the hitherto un-defined concept of a tax debtor has been added to the Tax Collection Act and is to be applicable in relation to all tax types.

Tax debtor is defined as a person who owes an amount in respect of any - tax penalty or sur-charge. There is a new section contained in the Tax Collection Act, inserted

after Section 2, as Section 2 (a), a new Section 2 (a) is inserted in the Tax Collection Act to empower the Minister to prescribe by order, the interest rate for taxes in arrears across various tax types. In order to ensure that the interest rates accord market realities, the rates are required to be published by Order every six months. The order prescribing the rates for the first six months for the year should be published by January 31 of the relevant calendar year. For the second six months the Order should be published by July 31, as these amendments become effective August 1, 2014 an Order is to be issued on August 31, 2014 to cover the period August to December 2014 referred to as the specified period.

Where the Order is not published on the dates specified by the Act, the previous Order will remain in force until a new Order is made. The interest rate in relation to arrears collectable under the Tax Collection Act will take precedence over any other statutory provisions providing for interest in arrears of tax. These provisions, however, do not relate to the asset tax stamp duty or transfer tax types which establish tax regimes of a type substantially different from those here contemplated.

The third amendment to the, RAA Act, RAA (3) inserts a section 22(a), a new section relating to the payment. Where payment is made by a taxpayer which is less than the full amount owed, the Commissioner General may allocate the payment in the priority order of interest penalty surcharge and principle. This mechanism will ensure that those portions of the liability which increase with the passage of time are liquidated first. The oldest amounts are liquidated first. The Commissioner General or the Commissioner of Customs may agree in writing with the tax debtor to allocate any payments made in a manner other than the one prescribed. This may be done in the context of a settlement. For the purposes of allocation of amounts paid interest on penalties which are combined for certain other purposes under this Act are treated as separate. Allocation requires that the component parts of the tax liability are segmented and addressed in order of priority.

There is a fourth amendment under the RAA which inserts after Section 44 (a) as sections 44(b) to - sorry section 40(a),40(b) and 40(g) up to 40 (g). These provisions from 40 (b) to 40 (g) are inserted to allow for garnishment by direct payment to the Commissioner General, against someone who owes money, or holds money for a tax debtor.

The Commissioner General may act on the basis of knowledge, or suspicion. Where the assertion is made by the Commissioner General, that the person holds, controls or has custody of monies belonging to a tax debtor, or is or will become liable, to pay money to the tax debtor within the period of a year, the Commissioner General may require that person to pay the money to him, whether all at once or as the installments fall due. Specific mention is made to interest rent, remuneration on dividends as these tend to be on going significant sources of the income.

In the case of payments of these types of income the person is required to continue payments until the debt is paid out. The

Commissioner General may stipulate the amount to be paid over towards the tax debt out of each payment due to the tax debtor. The powers under this Section, the new 40(d) are exercisable only after steps relating to acknowledgement of the debt or objections have been considered by the Court on appeal and a Court ruling has been carried out, except where the amount is one deductable under any enactment.

The Tax Collection Act at Section 12 empowers the Commissioner General, to retain that is garnished taxes out of salary - the Auditor General, out of salary of a public official or public funds or anyone. The Section 50, the point is that these acts already exists, these powers of garnishment already exist. The Commissioner General is empowered to recovered monies owed by a defaulting taxpayer from a third party who owed money to the taxes. The new provisions, I should point out are adopted from the Canadian Federal Income Tax Act.

Finally, if the Contractor General does not act properly regarding garnishment, notwithstanding remember always that there is recourse to the courts in this matter.

In relation to liability to the debtor, where person pays money over to the Commissioner General, his liabilities to the tax debtor is discharged by the amount of that payment. Where a person does not comply with the request, the person is liable for the sum which is the subject of the request and that sum becomes collectable as if it were tax payable by that person. A notice may be addressed to a person using the name under which he does business, where the personal service method is used; the notice may be left with any adult who is employed at that person's place of business. In the case of partnerships, the notification may be addressed in the name of the partnership and is deemed to be validly served, if served on one of the partners or an adult employee at the partnership's place of business.

These powers may be invoked where the money is owed to or held for a tax debtor by the Government of Jamaica. In the event of the failure to pay, however, the Government does not become a tax debtor.

The concept of a tax lien is introduced in section 40(c). The steps involved in this are first: The Commissioner General issues a certificate indicating that a certain amount of tax which is due and payable, by a taxpayer, is unpaid. The Commissioner General's certificate is registered in the Supreme Court and has the legal effect of a judgement of that court against the taxpayer.

Rules of the Supreme Court. Step 3.

Consequences of registration in the Supreme Court means that the rules of the Supreme Court which apply to judgement debts now apply to the tax debt, the Commissioner General has the status of a judgment creditor. The following amounts are recoverable in connection with the Commissioner General's Certificate as though it had been included in it, cost of registration and cost of proceedings for collection.

Step 4.

The certificate is entered in connection with property of the tax debtor into a registry

system, such as the register of books, register book of titles, real property, the security interest register for personal property, the records office in the same way as a court judgment.

Step 5. Creates an interest.

The filing of a certificate serves to create a charge, a lien and priority over the relevant property as though the certificate were a court judgment against the tax debtor.

Step 6. The priority of interest.

The charge, lien or priority created by the certificate is subordinate to the interest of any other person which was properly established in keeping with the relevant law before that of the Commissioner General.

Step 7. The consequences incorporation into a registration system.

The Commissioner General may initiate proceedings to enforce payment of the tax debt, collect the interest and the cost of registration and collection proceedings, or to sell or dispose of the property and effect the transfer of title.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. D. Smith)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Subject to a court. It may initiate proceedings in a court, register it in the court. Renew or prolong the life of the certificate as required, cancel or withdraw the certificate, postpone the effects of the filing of the certificate in favour of the interest of another party as if the certificate were a judgement of the court.

Mr. SHAW: Madness, madness.

Dr. PHILLIPS: And the duty of official in a registry system. An official in a registry system to whom a certificate is presented is required to accept it and deal with it as he would a judgement of a court against a taxpayer. The Commissioner General has a right of access to any person, place or thing in order to register a certificate as if it were a court judgement against the tax debtor.

The section sets out the situations in which the power to create a charge, lien or priority is exercisable. These are situations in which the existence and quantum of the tax debt have been properly established, returned, file, amount not paid or tax has been assessed, deadline for objection or appeal has passed, amount not paid, objection or objection settled, appeal determined and the amount not paid.

So, I think it is important to recognize, Mr. Speaker, that these powers are only exercisable after all the steps have gone through. In other words, tax has been assessed, deadline for objection or appeal has passed and the amount has not been paid, or the objection has been settled, the appeal through the full legal process has been heard and determined and the debt still not settled.

Mr. SHAW: That is not in…

Dr. PHILLIPS: Well it's set out in sections 40(b) and 40(c).

Mr. SHAW: I will address it…

Dr. PHILLIPS: Well when you address it you address it and I will address this.

Mr. SHAW: It is not clear.

Dr. PHILLIPS: The debt otherwise determined by a court outside the context of an objection or appeal, be it, for example, in the constitutional or administrative proceedings. Those are the circumstances in

which this is exercisable. These are situations in which the power to create in relation to the exclusions, these are the situations in which the power to create a charge, lien or priority may not be exercised. Where the amounts required to be deducted or withheld and then remitted or paid or the penalty or interest on such amounts are excluded as the amounts involved are not liabilities of the party failing to withhold.

40(e) involves the recovery by deduction or set-off.

Where a taxpayer is entitled to any payment due from the Government of Jamaica, the Commissioner General may require that any amount due as tax be deducted from or set-off against that amount before it is paid to the tax debtor so as to reduce his liability.

Sections 40(b), 40(c) and 40(e) are without prejudice to other remedies. The remedies set out in 40(b) garnishment, 40(c) lien, 40(e) deduction and set-off do not operate to prevent the application or enforcement of any other provision for recovery of tax available under any other law.

40(g) makes provision for the publication of the names of tax debtors against who certificates of the Commissioner General in connection with a tax debt have been registered in the Supreme Court. Sets out the manner of publication in a gazette, newspaper available island wide, mass media, Government website, tax administration website.

Tax debtors against whom certificates have been the subject of list and tax debtors against whom certificates have been registered in the Supreme Court, and on the list may be included the amount owed, the name of the debtor and the type of the debt and it may be published periodically. Names will be removed from the list when outstanding amounts have been paid in full or an arrangement has been put in place for payment or a settlement has been reached.

There are other provisions in relation to 40(g) that provide for what occurs in relation to breaches of an agreement. If the tax debtor breaches the agreement after his name has been removed his name may be added to the next list published without the need to go through the registration procedure a second time.

RAA5, in relation to section 47(a), inserts after 47(a) a Section 47(b) to provide for the write-off of uncollectible customs duty. The amendment serves to extend to the Commission Customs the powers recently provided to the Commissioner General, to recommend to the Minister the write-off of uncollectible tax debts comprising customs duty, interest, penalty, arrears or costs. As was the case with the Commissioner General the Commissioner of Customs will be required to develop criteria forming the basis of his recommendation to the Minister. Those criteria will be available to the public in the form of regulations.

In relation to the Act to increase and harmonize penalties in the Education Tax Act and the Income Tax Act, again the structure of the Bill is similar. Clause 1 states the short title of the Bill, the Tax Penalties

(Harmonization) Act 2014, and names the day on which it comes into force. Clause 2 introduces the Schedule of the Act, which sets out the amendments being made to the named sections of the two Acts and incorporates the amendments being made into the Acts. Clause 3 makes clear that the changes that are being made do not invalidate anything that was done under the existing Acts.

In relation to the Education Tax Act, the amendment one in the Schedule, in Section 16, inserts next after the word, "*offence*" the following words, "*and shall be liable*" and it sets out. A specific liability of the employer to pay tax due from employed persons is set out. A specific penalty is imposed on the employers who deduct or recover the employer's portion of the Education Tax from the emoluments of an employee. A penalty is provided, the first offence of $2 Million maximum, or in default of payment, one year imprisonment, but the second and subsequent offences, $5 Million maximum or a maximum of five years imprisonment or both, and then there is the Circuit Court provision that can go to ten years. This replaces a general penalty imposed under Section 12.

Mr. CHUCK: All of that would mash up… (Inaudible comment) Why would they engage… (Inaudible comment) Mash it up.

Dr. PHILLIPS: For too many years people have been taking moneys not due to them and in fact belonging to the taxpayer using it on their own account and oftentimes to the detriment of the very taxpayer who can't get the benefits for which they have already paid. That in another language would be called theft.

Mr. CHUCK: The biggest offender is the Government. The biggest offender is the Government.

(Heckling)

A MEMBER: Set the example.

Dr. PHILLIPS: And that should be prohibited, that should be prohibited.

Mr. CHUCK: The Government that judges does it.

Dr. PHILLIPS: That should be prohibited.

Mr. CHUCK: Collecting NHT, NIS and don't pay it out.

Dr. PHILLIPS: That should be prohibited and those same officials will be liable, and institutions.

Mr. CHUCK: Yes, the Government. All those Ministries that don't pay over to NHT and NIS, they should be penalized.

Mr. DALLEY: There is no Ministry that don't pay over NIS.

Mr. CHUCK: Especially yours.

Mr. DALLEY: There is no Ministry…

Mr. CHUCK: When you were in Social Security…

Mr. DALLEY: The Ministry of Finance pay for them now. Go back down stairs and drink liquor.

Mr. CHUCK: Listen, I keep telling you I may be drunk but you are… (Inaudible comment)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Designation to the Education Tax Act…

Mr. CHUCK: Tomorrow I will be sober.

(Heckling)

Dr. PHILLIPS: …designates a responsible officer for bodies corporate. A specific penalty is imposed on a responsible officer who fails to report to the collector any outstanding balances of education tax payable by the body corporate at the end of the month. In the Tax Collection Act and the Education Tax Act, both require that every company designate an officer called the responsible officer whose duty is to ensure that tax-related obligations including the payment of tax are carried out, and the penalties are set out in this area.

In relation to the third amendment under the heading Schedule of the Education Act, a penalty is imposed on an employer who fails or neglects to pay tax, fails or neglects to comply with statutory requirements regarding payment, collection, furnishing of information, and the penalties are set out.

In relation to the fourth amendment in this Schedule on the Education Tax Act, Clause 4 introduces a new offence and an additional power. The offence relates to late filing. The penalties add teeth to the existing provisions which allow the Commissioner General to request a return of tax deducted from the emoluments of any employee by an employer, who is himself exempt - for example, a ministry or a department of Government, to answer the point just raised by you, albeit in a disruptive fashion - and to request a return of any employer who has failed to pay Education Tax, and provide for a penalty for late filing of those returns. Penalty for this offence is to be treated as a tax and added to the tax debt.

The Commissioner General has the discretion to waive or reduce the penalty for this offence if he is satisfied that such intervention can be justified.

In relation to monetary penalties, the Minister is given power to adjust the monetary penalties under the Act, by order, subject to affirmative resolution of the House of Representatives. The use of this process allows the Minister to keep penalties current and realistic while preserving parliamentary oversight for any changes.

In relation to the Income Tax Act, section 42 amendments provide a penalty for the unauthorized disclosure of tax information by employees, and set out the penalties.

The second amendment provides for the failure to disclose particulars of transactions between connected parties in tax returns, and to set out the penalties. In fact, these are really adjustments to penalties in the Act, where the power already exists in substantive terms in the Act. So there is nothing new, except in relation to the structure of the penalties in this regard.

A penalty is imposed on various actions, for example, the transfer of business to a non-resident, transfer of shares, stock or securities to a non-resident, the effect of which is to change the resident's ownership or control of a body corporate resident in Jamaica without the written consent of the Minister. And the penalties are set out. As I say again, these specific provisions really only affect the penalties now being set out or introduced in relation to the determination by a Court for these particular breaches.

In the fourth amendment to section 41(3), failure to deduct from an account for tax and payments made to any person where required by law, again, the penalties are set out. Two Million Dollars ($2M) or treble the unpaid tax, whichever is greater, or in default of payment, one year maximum with or without hard labour.

Section 49(5) again sets out penalties for the failure on the part of a husband who engages, whether alone or with others, in a trade, business, profession, office employment or vocation, to deliver written notice to the Commissioner General, that any income paid to his wife is commensurate with work done wholly and exclusively required to enable him to make a profit. And the penalties are set out.

Section 58(2) sets out the penalties for refusal, failure or neglect to deliver information regarding the receipt by any taxpayer of any taxable money, value, profits or gains belonging to any other chargeable person. And those penalties, again, are set out.

Section 66(3) of the Income Tax Act, sets out the penalties for the failure to deliver a declaration of estimated tax.

Section 67(8) sets out the penalties in relation to any willful failure to make a return, as required by the Act. The penalty, again subject to the determination of a Court, is set out in the system.

Section 69(3) refusal or failure or neglect of a partner to make a return of any trade, profession or business carried out by two or more persons jointly, indicating his share in the partnership income. Again, the penalties are set out.

Section 70(4), failure to comply with the request of the Commissioner General, to make a return, attend and give evidence, deliver a statement of profits or gains, deliver copies of accounts, make books, accounts and documents available for inspection. Again, the penalties are set out, we have discussed them, the scale of penalties, we have mentioned already in the provisions.

Section 72(5), aiding, abetting, assisting, inciting or inducing another person to make or deliver a false or fraudulent account, statement or declaration.

Section 75(5), where a taxpayer has made an objection and the Commissioner General has made certain requests in response, refusal or neglect to attend to give evidence, produce books or documents, answer any lawful question, knowingly or willfully giving false evidence.

Section 78A(4), designation of responsible officers by bodies corporate. And a specific penalty is imposed on a responsible officer who fails to report to the Collector any outstanding balances of PAYE income tax payable by the body corporate at the end of the month.

Section 89(1) relates to the failure to keep proper books of account in English.

Section 92(2) relates to the Minister's powers to make regulations, subject to the parliamentary approval, failure to comply with regulations in respect of furnishing a return, giving of any certificate, production of wage sheets or other records.

Section 99 sets out the penalties in relation to knowingly making a false

statement or false representation. And, likewise, Mr. Speaker, in all the other sections, 99(2) relates to aiding, abetting, assisting, counseling, inciting or inducing false statements; 99(3) obstructing, molesting or hindering persons lawfully exercising powers under the Act; 99(4) imposes a penalty for offences under Section 78A(4), failure to report outstanding tax balances. That offence has been deleted, the penalty has now been dealt with in Section 78A itself, in the section which introduces the responsible officer concept into the Act.

Section 99(5) deals with the failure of a prescribed person to obtain prior approval of the Minister, before accepting deposits and other investments, and to inform the Minister of any change which results in the loss of an exemption from tax.

Section 100 is a general, provides for offences under the Act for which no specific penalty is provided.

Section 101, refusing to allow a deduction of tax authorized by the Act to be made out of any payment. Penalty, again, being on conviction before an RM Court, of Two Million Dollars ($2M) maximum, in default of payment one year imprisonment. Second and subsequent offences before an RM Court of Five Million Dollars ($5M), and if convicted before a Circuit Court, the fine is to be determined by the Court, or in default of payment, ten years, maximum.

Mr. Speaker, in many respects we have operated a set of tax arrangements which put the public purse at a disadvantage, and in fact, facilitate the development of this culture of evasion that I have referred to before. These amendments are in keeping with standard practice in most jurisdictions that have effective tax systems. I mentioned Canada - in the United States the powers are even more extensive, the United Kingdom, also, to name but a few.

I commend these Acts to the House for second reading.

The SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

(Mr. Shaw and Mr. Derrick Smith rose - Mr. Shaw deferred to Mr. Smith)

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, we did get notification sometime yesterday that it was the intention of the Government to take these two Bills this afternoon. I note carefully, that you were listening intently, so was I. And it's quite obvious that this is a very complex and extremely technical situation to be dealt with under the current circumstances.

We are saying, Mr. Speaker, that we do need more time to give some very serious consideration to what has just been outlined to the House. And our appeal, Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. D. SMITH: No one is questioning when the Bill was tabled, that's not the question, that's not an issue, it was tabled last week. And with all the effort on the part of the Spokesman it was extremely difficult and almost impossible, Mr. - and he will speak.

(*Sotto voce* comments from Mr. Dalley)

Mr. D. SMITH: If you only listen and stop talking you will understand.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the point I was making is that we won't be able to conclude this afternoon.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Oh, that's what you want to say.

Mr. D. SMITH: And I am appealing to you to give some consideration to that request.

The SPEAKER: The Opposition Spokesman, who is willing to...

Mr. CHUCK: No, we need to discuss it. This side needs to discuss it.

The SPEAKER: What I am asking, the Opposition Spokesperson was about to rise...

Mr. D. SMITH: Yes, because he is prepared to commence a response.

Mr. CHUCK: But not to conclude.

Mr. D. SMITH: To commence a response.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I have heard the proposal...

Mr. DALLEY: Audley, stand up and debate like a man!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. PAULWELL: ...put forward by the Leader of Opposition Business. And our response is simple. We are prepared to accommodate the Opposition, as a whole, suffice it that there will not be a presentation this evening from the Spokesperson on Finance. Because if that be the case, I would see no reason why we wouldn't go through with the debate. But if the Opposition Spokesperson on Finance is not prepared to start today, we are prepared to allow the 24-hour period until tomorrow...

Mr. CHUCK: Yes, okay.

Mr. PAULWELL: ...to do this debate. So in a spirit of compromise we would suspend until tomorrow.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, Mr. Speaker, I think it should also be clear - just so that there is no doubt - the Bills were not laid yesterday or today...

Mr. SAMUDA: Last week.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...they were laid last week and with the clear understanding that we were going to be doing them this week.

(Cross talks)

Mr. CHUCK: There was no clear understanding.

Dr. PHILLIPS: But nevertheless...

Mr. CHUCK: There was no clear understanding.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the House Leader, we will accommodate it, it means tomorrow afternoon we can - the Opposition Spokesman can speak and the entire...

Mr. CHUCK: I want to speak yes. I want to speak.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Then you may. And we can adjourn now, Mr. Speaker, suspend this debate now...

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...until tomorrow.

The SPEAKER: Does that meet with your satisfaction, Mr. Shaw?

Mr. SHAW: Well we will accommodate it.

(Inaudible comments by a Member)

The SPEAKER: So the debate is suspended till tomorrow afternoon when we will reconvene.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to...

(Heckling)

...I'd like to recommit the item Notices of Motions Given Orally.

The SPEAKER: The question is for the recommittal of item Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY
(Recommitted)

The SPEAKER: Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move the following resolutions:

I don't know, Mr. Speaker, if in the interest of the House we could circulate the terms of the Resolution rather than having me read the six pages...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. D. Smith)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes.

...that have been tabled. That is to say the Customs Tariff (CARICOM Republic of Cuba Economic Cooperation Agreement) Resolution 2014...

Mr. CHUCK: Circulate it, just circulate it.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...the Customs Tariff (Costa Rica Free Trade Agreement) Resolution 2014; the Customs Tariff CARICOM Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement) Resolution 2014.

Mr. BARTLETT: For the purpose of time you can treat those as one because they're all agreements with the same component.

Dr. PHILLIPS: You want us to take them now?

Mr. BARTLETT: No.

(Inaudible comments by a Member)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended for us to do any further business this evening so I therefore move for the adjournment of the Parliament until tomorrow, July 23 at 2:00 p.m.

Just to remind Members that the Senate inviting us to be present at 10:00 a.m. for the sitting to pay tribute to the late Governor-General, Sir Howard Cooke.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House do adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday the 23rd of July, at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned.

The House was adjourned accordingly at 6:55 p.m. to Wednesday, July 23, at 2:00 p.m.

JOINT SITTING OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE

SESSION 2014 – 2015

WEDNESDAY, July 23, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 10:09 a.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

HON. MICHAEL ANTHONY PEART, (PNP), Manchester, Southern, Speaker of the House.

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

THE MOST HON. PORTIA LUCRETIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Western, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester, Central, Minister of National Security

HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

DR. THE HON. KENNETH WYKEHAM MCNEILL, (PNP), Westmoreland, Western, Minister of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. LUTHER BARTLEY MONTEITH BUCHANAN, (PNP), Westmoreland, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, West Central

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

DR. DONALD KEITH DUNCAN, (PNP), Hanover, Eastern

MR. ANDREW MICHAEL HOLNESS, (JLP), St. Andrew, West Central, Leader of the Opposition

MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Senator Alexander Williams.

The Senate resumed its sitting at 10:09 a.m.

The PRESIDENT: (Gavels) Please be seated. This Honourable Senate resumes its sitting.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT: Madam Clerk, could you kindly request the attendance of the Members of the House of Representatives at the place appointed for the meetings of the Senate.

(The Clerk did as instructed and accordingly the Speaker and the Members of the House of Representatives entered and took their seats.)

The PRESIDENT: Please be seated.

Speaker to the House of Representatives, the Honourable Michael Peart, Prime Minister of Jamaica the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller, Leader of the Opposition Mr. Andrew Holness, Members of Senate, Members of House of Representatives, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, families and friends of former Governor-General of Jamaica, Sir Howard Cooke, a pleasant good morning to you all.

We are gathered here today to pay tribute to an outstanding and exemplary Jamaican, one who has given selfless service to the country for over seven - almost seven decades. For me, it is a sad and joyful occasion and I say so, Members, because the passing of Sir Howard is a major loss for our country.

He has given selfless service to our country and it is difficult or impossible to replace an exemplary Jamaican such as Sir Howard, and death is so tragic and sudden and it has a devastating effect on families and friends. But whilst I am saddened and we all are saddened by his passing we have much reason to celebrate and be joyful. I am particularly joyful, Members, because one, today is my forty-fifth birthday. (Applause)

Secondly, this Parliament that Sir Howard served with distinction yesterday gave me the best birthday gift or through the House of Representatives yesterday gave me the best birthday gift that I could ask for, which is the passage of the Disabilities Bill. (Applause) And I have to mention it because I recall vividly in November 2001, when I was sworn in as Minister of State for the first time in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security at King's House, Sir Howard whispered in my ears and said, "Make sure that you take care of your disabled people". And I am happy that whilst we pay tribute to Sir Howard the Disability Bill has been passed, fulfilling the wish of many Jamaicans who are committed to the improvement of the poor and most vulnerable within our society. And I want to commend all the Members of the House of Representatives that contributed to the debate on the passage of the Bill yesterday.

Members, Sir Howard, as I indicated was an outstanding Jamaican and he was a decent and honourable man and every time I hear individuals in the society make negative

references to the group of individuals called politicians they lump all politicians in a bad category. And I think that is an injustice to the vast majority of politicians who have given selfless service to the country and, indeed, to an individual such as Sir Howard because he gave selfless service to our country and he served us with distinction. And I want to say that as parliamentarians we must ensure that in order to fulfill and continue the mission and work of Sir Howard, we have to ensure that as parliamentarians we adopt some of the qualities that Sir Howard exhibited whilst he served our country. We have to change the negative perceptions that individuals have of the group of individuals known as politicians. Sir Howard had those qualities that we need to adopt and demonstrate in our daily practice.

I want to express on behalf of the Senate that Sir Howard served as President between 1989 and 1991, so I am very good company that I am proud of. I want to on behalf of the Senate express our profound condolences to his family members, to his close friends and relatives and to say that, yes, it is sad that we have lost a giant of a man, but we all can be comforted that whilst he lived for ninety-eight years it was ninety-eight good years (Applause). Ninety-eight good years. And Sir Howard was a man of God, a devout Christian and with his faith he believed that someday his Maker will return and we all support or most of us support the faith, look forward to that day when we shall meet Sir Howard once again, and it is incumbent upon us to make sure that we live the life that will ensure that we meet Sir Howard on the other side of the shore.

May his soul rest in peace.

(Applause)

Mr. Peart.

Mr. PEART: Senator, the Honourable Floyd Morris, President of the Senate, Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller, Prime Minister, Honourable Andrew Holness, Leader of the Opposition, Members of the Senate, Members of the House of Representatives, former Members of Parliament, Members of the Cooke family, Members of the Diplomatic Corps and the Consular Corps, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to be giving a tribute on behalf of the Parliament of Jamaica to Sir Howard Cooke, and I begin with a quotation that goes like this:

> *"No Government can be greater than the people it serves. We may pass laws and Ministers may make regulations, but in the final analysis, it is what the people do in the country to build that counts."*

These words seem to have been the philosophy of the man who uttered them around 52 years ago, right here in this Chamber, the Most Honourable Sir Howard Felix Hanlan Cooke.

Sir Howard was a man who gave the fullest of himself to all his endeavours. We will all remember him for his contributions to various sectors of the Jamaican life that includes education, youth, community

development, sports and government. I will speak today of the man who saw his participation in the political and parliamentary life of Jamaica not as a means for self-aggrandizement but as an opportunity to contribute to the advancement of the people he loved, the people he served so faithfully, the people of Jamaica. He was involved from the very beginning in the creation of our modern day democracy. He was involved in the struggle for Universal Adult Suffrage way back in 1938.

Sir Howard began his parliamentary career as a Member of the West Indies Federation Parliament in 1958 and served as a representative for St. James until the dissolution of the Federation in 1961. He entered the Jamaican Parliament in 1962 as a Senator and has the distinction of being one of the first Members of our independent Parliament. While in the Senate, he demonstrated his commitment to responsive and responsible governance and his belief in inspiring and empowering the populace to participate in their own development. Serving in the Parliament at this juncture in Jamaica's history when we had just waded into the sea of Independence, time and time again Sir Howard expressed his confidence in the determination and resilience of the Jamaican people. He was truly excited by the prospect of helping to guide Jamaica onto the path of development and modernity.

In 1967, Sir Howard became a Member of this Honourable House representing the St. James North West constituency that he held three times successfully. He served his constituency with distinction. (Applause)

His dedication to his people and his penchant for hard work led to his appointment to the Cabinet in 1972 and he served in various positions between 1972 and 1980. He served as Minister of Pensions and Social Security, Minister of Education and Minister of Labour and the Public Service.

Sir Howard ended as he began, finishing his parliamentary service in 1991 in the Senate, which he served as President. He served with decorum and dignity in that House.

Sir Howard will be truly missed by all who knew him. He was always willing to lend a listening ear and give advice and direction when it was needed.

To Lady Cooke and members of his family, I say, take courage in the knowledge that Sir Howard has served his country and his people well and will indeed reap his reward. He is truly a man of the people and a man for the people.

Sir Howard Cooke was the epitome of commitment, dedication and integrity. May his soul rest in peace.

(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Madam Prime Minister.

(Applause)

The PRIME MINISTER: Thank you very much.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Opposition Leader, Members of both Houses of Parliament, former Parliamentarians, the Chief

Justice, President of the Court of Appeal, the other members of the Judiciary, our Director of Public Prosecutions, members of the Cooke's family, I rise today in this Honourable House to pay tribute to Sir Howard Felix Hanlan Cooke, former Governor-General, they called him, "Teacher".

Sir Howard Cooke began life in converted slave barracks on an old sugar estate and ended his distinguished career of service at King's House. This esteemed Public Servant, fondly known as "Teacher", dedicated his entire life to nation building and service. He was teacher, trade unionist, insurance manager, Member of Parliament, Senator, Government Minister, Elder and lay-Pastor and Governor-General.

Indeed, along Sir Howard's journey from Cane Fields to King's House, he came to manifest the qualities of a man for all season. (Applause)

Teacher Cooke as he was called, dedicated 23 years of his professional life to education with a teaching career that began at Mico College in Kingston. (Applause) His educational reach soon extended to Hectors River and Port Antonio in Portland as Headmaster of the Bell Castle All-Age School and the Port Antonio Upper School. Eventually, he went Westward to St. James where he also served as Headmaster of the Montego Bay Boys School.

Sir Howard's egalitarian outlook and belief in advancing the welfare of his people converged in his ideological and spiritual positions, which he explained to this Honourable House in 1974 when he said:

> *"My socialism is based on my Christian philosophy. I want to repeat and underscore that because the Master Himself when He talked said, a new commandment give I unto you, that you love one another I mean, true love from the heart".*

Within this accomplished teacher and union man, who eventually became the President of the Jamaica Union of Teachers, burned the desire to represent and educate his people, which lent itself naturally to nation-building.

This passion was forged in the crucible of colonial Jamaica amidst the groundswell of agitation taking place in the Caribbean in the 1930s.

At the early age of 22 years, Sir Howard served on the PNP's 21-Member Steering Committee and the 7-Member Committee that drafted the party's first Constitution for its September 1938 launch. (Applause) He served with Norman Manley, who chaired the Committee, O.T. Fairclough, H.P.Jacobs, Noel 'Crab' Nethersole, Rev. O.G. Penso and W. G. McFarlane.

Mr. Speaker, Howard Cooke's concern for the representation of the interests of all Jamaicans and education of our people in pre-independent Jamaica lent itself naturally to nation-building to which he dedicated his life. For him, political representation was not an end in itself, but a means of service in the pursuit of people's development.

(Applause)

When he entered the arena of political representation as the St. James representative of the Federal Parliament of the then West Indies Federation in 1958, it is said that the question was raised as to why young Howard Cooke was not appointed a Minister in that Federal Cabinet. However, when the young PNP foundation member served in the Senate from 1962 to 1967 and was elected to the House of Representative in 1972, Prime Minister Michael Manley named the "Teacher Cooke" Minister of Pensions and Social Security.

In the Book by Yvonne Coke, "From Cane Fields to Kings House", Sir Howard admitted to being upset at being overlooked once more, having not being selected as the Minister of Education, where his expertise lies. However, he described the contribution he was able to make moving with alacrity towards the establishment of the National Insurance Scheme.

Later, as Minister of Education, the Honourable Howard Cooke put his experience in teaching and educational administration for the work. He was responsible for fundamental change in the governance of our schools and colleges.

Under his watch, Boards of Management were more democratically constituted with the inclusion of staff representation, and in some cases, student representatives as well.

We can also thank Sir Howard for introducing Community Colleges as an element in the restructuring of our tertiary educational system. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Sir Howard was a distinguished parliamentarian; he had an abiding love for the Parliament. His contributions to parliamentary debate were marked by this scholarliness and urbanity expected from a Miconian of his generation. The elegance of his expression was generally matched by firmness of conviction and absence of any spirit of angry confrontation.

As younger members of a political movement and the Houses of Parliament, he made us all feel that he had a personal interest in all of us as individuals when we interacted with him or heard him speak.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, as a lifelong educator he used his skills and his principles to educate parliamentarians, especially, the inexperienced among us in the area of our parliamentary traditions and best practices.

Throughout the years since he left the Parliament as Governor-General and even in his retirement, he offered his time to interact with us as parliamentarians, to learn more about what we were doing and to counsel us appropriately, whether we were Government or Opposition Members. Sir Howard was deeply grounded in his understanding of historical circumstances and their impact on development.

Biography: "They Call Me Teacher" traces his lineage from Ireland through Panama, from West Africa to Kent Estate in Trelawny and onward to Goodwill in that

parish where he was born and raised. The diversity of Sir Howard's lineage caused him to ponder on the significance of our motto: "Out of Many, One People" and the importance of understanding our history as a people in order to truly address the challenges of development and progress. He never forgot where he came from. (Applause) In fact, where he came from became a crucial element of the significance of his journey from the cane fields to King's House. (Applause)

In 1974 he told this Honourable House, sir, I know the circumstances from which I come; I know the historical circumstances from which I come. We have come, sir, from the days of the plantocracy when our forefathers were merely hewers of wood and drawers of water. We have come from circumstances where many of us knew the cane fields very well and when our greater skill was the handling of the axe and the machete and the hoe. We have come from circumstances where our sweat, blood and tears flowed as a group. This rich and vibrant history Sir Howard often said was central to the formulation of his thinking, outlook and contribution as a policymaker and an educator. The Parliament of Jamaica owes an invaluable debt of gratitude to Sir Howard for the legacy of statesmanship and dedication to the nation's service.

In articulating Government's policy in 1997, Sir Howard said, in this very House:

> *"What we seek is a Jamaica which is productive and competitive and in which all our citizens, managers, workers, farmers and students will have a meaningful stake. We seek a society which recognizes the different interest of all social groups of workers and managers but which will nevertheless be based upon partnership".*

Before being elevated to the high office of Governor-General in 1991, Howard Cooke served briefly as President of the Senate where his qualities of even- handedness and respect for the rights of all were admirably demonstrated. Many Jamaicans will remember Sir Howard as an energetic and engaging Governor-General who served in that high office for 14 years. He never forgot being denied access to King's House as a 17-year-old scout he said. Little did he know then that his destiny lay be beyond those gates that remained shut to him on that fateful day.

Mr. President, Sir Howard Felix Hanlan Cooke was an outstanding representative of a generation of men and women who defined and exemplified the essence of Jamaican nationhood. He demonstrated an unqualified belief in the capacity of his countrymen and women to excel, a tireless dedication to service and community building and a burning passion for education and creative expression as pathways to liberation. Sir Howard's connectedness to the grassroots of our society, his strong moral fiber, his deep abiding spirituality and remarkable courage to stand up firmly for what he believed was right, it kept him grounded and focused.

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, persons from all walks of life who came into contact with

him quickly sense his deep interest in every aspect of national life and his concern for the improvement of the quality of life of all Jamaicans. Sir Howard loved people. He was personally interested in their development and this was conveyed to all who interacted with him. Here was a man who used every opportunity to promote not his personal advancement but the well-being of those who causes he championed. Here was a son of Jamaica who would never missed an opportunity to remind Jamaicans of the major advances in the life of the nation even while we struggled with fiscal and social issues. Here was a realist who always saw and promoted the glass as being half full rather than half empty. (Applause) As patriot, he encouraged us to place the national objective ahead of our partisan positions.

Sir Howard Felix Hanlan Cooke will be remembered not only because of the extent of his service to Jamaica and the stamina which he obviously possessed, but also because of his passionate interest in national life and his concern for the improvement of the quality of life for all Jamaicans. As we look back at the life of this distinguished gentlemen, as we look at his life today to say Sir Howard's service to the nation was exemplary is not an overstatement by any stretch of the imagination.

Any area he participated in he rose to levels of leadership. As a teacher, he rose to the position of Headmaster; in the Teachers' Union he became President; he was not only a Senator but was named the President of the Senate. In sport he captained the cricket team for the Country of Cornwall; as statesman he rose to the highest level of our governance structure, Governor-General of Jamaica; he was truly a life of service and leadership.

We salute Sir Howard as a truly outstanding representative of the best of our national leadership in modern Jamaica. We salute Sir Howard as one who brought to bear within the Parliament, as well as in his work as a Minster of Government, the strength of his character. We salute his fixity of purpose, a generosity of spirit and a commitment to realizing the national vision. We saw in him the virtues of a committed and practicing Christian, the confidence of a high achiever; in his chosen profession, the insights and skills of an effective manager, above all within him we saw the innate humility, one who placed service well ahead of personal ambition. His legacy remains to challenge and to guide us as we continue to play our part as Parliamentarians for Jamaica land of our birth and infant nurture.

Today, as Members of this Honourable House of Representatives and of the Senate, we join with Jamaicans everywhere in paying tribute to Sir Howard as we mourn with his family his passing on July 11. To Lady Cooke, Lady Ivy and their children, Mr. Richard Cooke, Miss Audrey Cooke, Honourable Justice Howard Cooke and Mrs. Heather Cooke, our dear Clerk of the Houses of Parliament, and the entire family, we restate for the record our sympathy at this time of separation that I know you will feel more

deeply than we can mention. We hope that you have found some measure of comfort from the outpouring of condolences since Sir Howard's passing. Sir Howard's words from "They Call Me Teacher" offers comforts, solace, guidance and empowerment to a nation in mourning, a nation which must carry on along its development journey. He said each and every one of us is a pre-requisite, a determining factor of peace. That's my wish for Jamaica now, peace that we can find within ourselves the means of becoming.

Mr. President, as he wished, Sir Howard left King's House and went home to St. James where he said, "The people don't call me Governor-General or Sir, they still call me Teacher, that's me and I like it." Now he has truly gone home. All Jamaica rises with respect to say, walk good Teacher, may your soul rest in peace, light perpetual shine upon you.

I thank you.

(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Mr. Andrew Holness, Leader of the Opposition.

(Applause)

Mr. HOLNESS: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. Speaker, Most Honourable Prime Minister, Members of the Cooke's family, Members of both Houses, former Members, Honourable members of the Judiciary, Excellencies, members of the Diplomatic Corps, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, Friday, July 11, saw the transitioning from mortal to immortal of one of Jamaica's distinguished sons and with it the end of an era, an era which saw patriotic, visionary and dedicated men and women stepping forward defying the odds, challenging the status quo and their circumstances at birth to give selfless service to their country and their fellow men. Those men and women, like Sir Howard, have earned a high place in the history of our great nation. It is against this backdrop and within this context, Mr. President that I rise this morning to pay tribute to Sir Howard. I am humbled as I am honoured by the opportunity to salute in this place, the seat of our democracy, the life and work of one who led so admirably. Sir Howard was one who served graciously, impartially, conscientiously and unceasingly. Even at an age when most of us would consider retiring, Sir Howard kept on serving and serving and serving.

And it didn't really matter in the areas that he was serving, he kept on serving and serving and serving and it didn't really matter the office in which he was serving, he kept on serving and serving and serving, and for that a grateful nation has started. (Applause)

As said by the Prime Minister, Sir Howard - and permit me to call his full name, Sir Howard Felix Hanlan Cooke, was a dedicated nation builder, revered public servant and shining example of excellence that all generation that followed, should strive to emulate.

His sterling contribution to Project Jamaica is one that will be remembered for generations to come. He served our country,

and indeed the region in virtually every aspect of national and political life, from civil activism to founding party member, from the West Indies Federation as a MP to Minister of Government, in the Government of Jamaica, from President of the Senate to Governor-General of Jamaica. He was in so many ways a giant of a man, not only did he have considerable physical presence, he also had considerable presence of mind, the presence of mind that made him a giant in deeds, thoughts and service to the Jamaican people. The debt of gratitude we owe Sir Howard as a nation and individually is one we could not possibly begin to contemplate or measure.

Mr. President, the parliamentary Opposition, in a spirit of reverence and in recognition of our indebtedness joins the family of Sir Howard, his friends and colleagues, his parishioners and indeed all Jamaica, in mourning the passing of this national icon.

He was the embodiment of excellence and integrity, and we are honoured to be paying tribute to him, celebrating his life and giving thanks for having shared with him and learn from him. Indeed, his was a life well lived, the legacy he leaves behind is one from which we all can take so much. Mr. Speaker, it is most fitting for the institution that he serves so well during his lifetime, the Parliament of the land to sit jointly on this occasion, not only to bid him farewell and to pay tribute, but to meaningfully reflect on his legacy.

We will remember Sir Howard in a number of ways. He was a humble man, from humble beginnings, yet he would come to amass considerable acclaim and distinguished himself to eventually holding one of the highest offices in Jamaica.

Mr. Speaker, Sir Howard circumstances at birth wasn't different from that of so many other ordinary Jamaicans, his mother was a seamstress and his father was a wheelwright carpenter and a penny keeper. A man obviously of not much means, but a man who recognized the value and importance of hard work. While he grew up as a typical rural boy, it is clear that Sir Howard steadfastly acknowledged the value of hard work, discipline and perseverance.

He was insistent on not having his station in life as a youngster determined who or what he would become. He was one who endeavoured to inspire people and to lift them up, his was the view that the only occasion on which it is appropriate for any person to look down on another is an occasion which sees that person lifting up another.

Mr. Speaker, Sir Howard was an unapologetic patriot; he was zealous about his country and embrace a vision of what Jamaica should become. In fact, it was as recent as last year that Sir Howard was quoted as saying, in Parliament, Jamaica has some of the finest material on both sides; however, they are not using their creative genius together for the good of the country. (Applause) Instead they spend their time denigrating one another trying to find faults, not using their creative energy to build the country. (Applause) Well said.

He also remarked, we are a great people, and we need to stop giving the impression that we are worthless. Look at the number of institutions we have helped to develop, the number of missionaries Jamaica has sent to minister in African countries and other parts of the world, yet we tend to focus only on the sorried side of life.

On his retirement he urged Jamaica, never forget that we are a great nation and that we have more positives than negatives in our favour, read our history and you will find that we are one of the greatest countries in the world. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, it would be most appropriate for us to salute Sir Howard and honour his legacy by seriously reflecting on these words.

Mr. President, and by the way Mr. President, congratulations your birthday.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

Mr. HOLNESS: Your birthday is one day past mine.

Mr. President, Sir Howard spent some time in the private sector. He served as the regional manager for a prominent life insurance company at the time, and he did very well in that industry, obviously the charisma that he had so much of in the political arena served very well in that endeavour. And at his retirement from that endeavour, Mr. President, several tributes were given to him and I found one to be particularly interested. The manager of the company, pointed out that, Sir Howard, bought a particular policy, and that policy he says, is that honesty is the best policy and Sir Howard never allowed that insurance policy to lapse. (Applause)

Mr. Speaker, Sir Howard was the patron of several organizations one of which was Food for the Poor, and on being recognized with a citation, the citation read, of Sir Howard, one year, in particular he reminded the nation's poor that they are a people of power, promise and potential. The citation further mentioned that Sir Howard used every possible platform to encourage Jamaicans to support the mission of Food for the Poor should be used as we work, as they work, Food for the Poor that is, in the most depressed areas and seek to improve the social and economic and spiritual lives of the people.

In responding to the citation, Sir Howard remarked, Food for the Poor is one of the greatest organizations in the world. But you must spend more time telling people about the great work you are doing. We need good stories about Jamaica and Jamaicans to be told.

(Applause)

I am touched by this, Mr. President, because though there are many lessons to taken from the life of Sir Howard, I believe that in being positive, in being optimistic that there is value. Instead of tearing down ourselves we can build up ourselves. I believe in the lesson taught by the great teacher, Sir Howard, let us be positive about our country, let us build our country. (Applause) That, Mr. President, is the greatest tribute that we could pay to the life of a great Jamaican.

May his soul rest in peace and light eternal shine on him.

(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Before I invite Minister Pickersgill to speak, I wish to remind Members that I see I have 18 speakers on my list and I am asking Members kindly to pay attention to that so that we can complete the business of the sitting of the House within good time.

Minister Pickersgill.

(Applause)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Thank you, Mr. President (Applause) and I noticed that you made the comment just before I - Happy Birthday, sir.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: And Mr. Speaker, and members of the Cooke's family, the Honourable Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition happy belated birthday, I have a gift for you.

I would like to adopt as my own the salutations proffered by the previous speakers.

Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Sir Howard on behalf of the People's National Party. Sir Howard, as you have already heard, was born in a time when sons and daughters of the Jamaican soil were being galvanized into social, economic and political action by the repulsive conditions of poverty, social decay and colonial domination. At the height of the national movement in the late 1930s and 40s, the emerging nationalist leaders were committing to ridding Jamaica of the vestiges of the existing plantation society. It was a time when the oppressive conditions in which the majority of the people found themselves increased the determination and resolve of enlightened leaders. Sir Howard was numbered among those enlightened leaders.

(Applause)

It is no surprise that with a social conscience and full of nationalist fervour Sir Howard became attracted to the leadership of Norman Manley, his mentor, and the ideals of the People's National Party.

Born November 13, 1915, young Howard Felix Cooke left the Ward Theatre on September 18, 1938 as one of the founding members of the People's National Party. History will recall that Sir Howard, as you have already heard, was elected to the West Indies Federal Parliament in 1958. However, his local political career in representational politics started in 1962 when he contested and lost the St. James, North Western constituency, on the 10th of, April, 1962, polling 9,332 votes. A lot of votes to the JLP's Herbert Eldemire - 9,776, losing by a mere 434 votes.

The margin of defeat might have been closer had Allan George St. Clair Coombs, the former PNP candidate, not run as an independent, taking away some of the PNP's votes.

It is interesting to note that although he lost in his attempt to enter the Lower House, he was elevated to the Upper House when Jamaica's first independent Parliament was convened in 1962. Sir Howard Cooke was one

of its distinguished Members serving as a Senator until 1967.

In February 21st, 1967 general election by polling 4,654 votes, Sir Howard Cooke defeated one Donat Crichton, who polled 3000 votes by a majority of 1,651 votes.

It is interesting to note, Mr. President, that of the three seats then in the parish of St. James, namely, South Eastern Central and North Western, only Sir Howard Cooke's seat went to the PNP. The JLP won the other two seats with an aggregate margin victory of 952, which was 699 less than Sir Howard Cooke's margin of victory in St. James, North West, namely 1,651.

On the 29th of February, '72, by polling 7,062 votes Sir Howard Cooke defeated one Hewart Henriques who polled 2,494 votes by a whopping majority of 4,568. In the December 15, '76 general election by polling 7000 votes to his JLP opponent, one Geoffrey Roach, who got 4,424, his margin of victory was a resounding 2,800. In fact, in that 15 year period Sir Howard Cooke ruled the western route like a mighty colossus until the 1980 general election, when he suffered his second defeat to Dr. Ken Baugh, therefore, in five outings he was successful on three occasions and not so successful on two.

Nonetheless Sir Howard Cooke never hung up his gloves. He continued to serve the people of Jamaica, and history will recall that he served as President of the Senate for two years, as you have already heard 1989 to 1991.

Sir Howard Cooke the politician in his 29 years of representational politics, over 27,000 votes were cast in his favour. In the Party he served for many years as a Vice President and simultaneously as a Regional Chairman.

It is interesting to note that at one time the PNP had four vice presidents who were categorized as first, second, third and fourth, and during all that time all four vice presidents usually came from the Corporate Area. The great Party that it is noted the imbalance and said that at least one VP should come from the rural areas. After the change was made the four VPs enjoyed equal status, and, of course, Howard Cooke was one of them.

On a personal note, as a member of the original PNP Secretariat, I had the privilege of travelling with Sir Howard to install candidates and to measure the political temperature in Jamaica from time to time. Sir Howard can only be described as a PNP stalwart who rendered sacrificial service to his Party. As we all know he was a nonagenarian and fell short of being a centenarian by only two years. He was never separated from his Party that he loved so well. Whether you judge his contribution to the Party by its donation or its duration, he was simply outstanding.

(Applause)

To top it all, he became the third Chairman of the PNP, a post which he served with dignity and decorum. No wonder one of his favourite Bible verses was Micah 6:8, which says, "What doth the Lord require of

thee but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God."

Indeed, I recall him chairing a meeting of the Executive of the PNP which lasted until 3:00 a.m. in the morning. My colleagues will say I am trying to emulate…

(Heckling)

As chairman, Mr. President, to a former chairman, let me say, Sir Howard, the trumpet has sounded and you have answered the call. Rest in peace Comrade Chairman.

(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. President, Honourable Speaker, Senators, Members of the House, distinguished invitees, members of the family of Sir Howard Cooke, with the passing of Sir Howard Felix Hanlan Cooke, the national community bid farewell to the last of the giants who presided over the political process that laid the foundations of modern Jamaica. The last of the living links to those who by their energy and vision and philosophy propelled this country to grasp the challenge of independence and nationhood, has now passed, and we would do well to recall their strengths as we continue on the course that they set.

At different stages of my own life I have known Sir Howard as a family friend, a political mentor, a parliamentary colleague, we served together in the Senate, and as an elder Statesman and Governor-General and I dare say, personal counsellor. At each stage his intellect, his love and commitment to country, his integrity, his spirituality and his deep love for his fellow human being, enhance every encounter with him.

I grew up knowing that Sir Howard and my late father, both Mico men, shared rooming facilities not only at Mico but also when they were students together in London, at a time when but a few were privileged to pursue tertiary education. I was all the more confident at the beginning of my own political career, knowing that Sir Howard represented a voice of reason and wisdom that I could always rely on for guidance. Indeed, more often than not, Mr. President, he summoned me to offer that guidance having on occasion considered that I needed such counselling.

It was an inspiration for my generation to know that Howard Cooke at 23 years of age had already demonstrated the qualities of leadership, patriotic commitment, and the capacity for nation building, to have been invited to sit with six other Jamaicans as members of the committee which framed the constitution of the then incipient nationalist party, the People's National Party.

(Applause)

There is perhaps no greater tribute to the vision of Sir Howard, and that of the other founding fathers, than the record of the Party that they built. That record shows that the Party not only survived the vicissitudes of political life but to this day enjoys the confidence of the Jamaican people.

(Applause)

It is commonly accepted by both sides of this Honourable House, that if there was one member who was admired, respected and

trusted, not only by his colleagues of similar political persuasion but by the people of Jamaica as a whole, that man was Sir Howard Cooke.

(Applause)

This was no accident, for in every way his public life reflected his deeply held Christian values and his abiding faith in the Jamaican people.

His entry into the political process preceded the era of excessive partisan competitive politics. The movement that he helped to build and to shape was a participatory democracy in which representatives of all the people would serve a national interest. Even when partisan political competition superseded the original concept he still held to the view that every Jamaican was entitled to the same consideration and should share the same rights, privileges and responsibilities.

Sir Howard's character can be seen by the scope of his own engagement, teacher the appellation he probably valued most, politician, church man, preacher, proponent of the Moral Re-armament movement in Jamaica and internationally, Minister of Government, Statesman, a member of the Masonic Fraternity, Governor-General and a committed member of the ecumenical movement. He never wavered in well doing. But for me, the defining quality of the man was his unremitting and infectious optimism, his belief in the innate goodness and perfectibility of the human being, and his belief already mentioned in the capacity of Jamaica to achieve greatness.

We offer condolences to his widow and to his children, and to the other members of the family, and we honour him by recommitting to his goals and aspirations for our country.

I thank you.

(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Dr. Horace Chang.

Dr. CHANG: Mr. President, Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Members of the Senate, Members of the House, Lady Cooke and the Cooke's family, distinguished guests in the House this morning, I rise to pay tribute to Sir Howard Hanlan Cooke, having the privilege of representing the same constituency in which Sir Howard served his 15 years in the Lower House.

Teacher, Preacher, Politician, Insurance Professional, Statesman, a father of the nation and a founding member of the governing party today, one of the two parties that has formed the basis of Jamaica's democracy. Sir Howard lived a full life of service to the people of Jamaica.

I would like to remind this House of my impression of Sir Howard Cooke, as a practising politician. I didn't have the privilege of being taught by him in school, I was taught by his son. But I remember Sir Howard very well, walking with a deliberate pace down Barracks Road and Hart Street, regularly, sometimes in his suit, always with what would appear to be a right amount of

time for everyone. He would make the stop by Roy's bar and some other bars for a few minutes, not drinking, but he would always be prepared with a ready smile and a word of comfort and hope for those he would greet. And there were many of them. But this was something you became used to as someone who lived and worked and grew up in Montego Bay. You could see Howard Cooke moving across the inner city effortlessly, but in a very dignified way.

On the other hand, I want to mention he owned a Zephyr 6 car. When you heard that coming you made sure you get out of the way very fast. That was a different style. He drove very fast through Montego Bay and you could recognize the sound of that Zephyr 6 coming when you were around in Montego Bay.

Later in life, when I in fact started my own activity in politics, I would also observe Sir Howard Cooke, travelling across the Western belt regularly. In fact, I think he dedicated one day per week - he later told me either a Wednesday or a Friday - and then leave urban Montego Bay through the hills of Hanover and then to the plains of Westmoreland, stopping by to meet various constituents and various members of the Peoples National Party.

It's also true that he was a very active leader of the Church in that region. He would effortlessly and without any kind of almost overlapping, you might say, meet the members of the United Church. He maintained a very strong link with his church throughout the region.

But Sir Howard practised an engaging brand of politics. Loyal to the party to the core, but never petty, never contentious, always reaching across to everyone and always willing to listen and engage with any member of the community while passing. (Applause)

As a teacher at the Montego Bay Boys' School - now the Corinaldi Primary School - he helped to mould the minds and character of many of the young leaders of Montego Bay. He was an outstanding teacher, and for that reason many remember him throughout his life as 'Teacher Cooke'. That's the accolade that he particularly appreciated.

He was committed to moulding character and building men of character and dignity in the society. As I said, I unfortunately didn't have the privilege of being taught by Sir Howard Cooke, but his son is maybe more competent as a teacher, but at that time, given the nature of the teaching profession, I think he found it more appropriate to go in the legal profession and has served as a distinguished member of the High Court. In fact, Sir Howard's entire family has given public service in different ways, because it was the nature of the man, when you spoke with him, to inspire you to serve Jamaicans.

As a preacher in that region, he was a leader/elder of the United Church, and there are some of us in Montego Bay who call him 'Pastor'. And while my contribution will be short, it is of some note that in Montego Bay the United Church is often called 'Pastor Cooke's Church', 'Teacher Cooke's Church'.

That is a fact, right. That is partly true of the Farm Heights Church, but generally speaking, the United Church in Montego Bay is referred to as Teacher Cooke's Church.

There is a kind of almost amusing incident while unfortunate, that when he became Governor-General, a number of people went and captured the entire Farm Heights Church property on the basis that Teacher Cooke now as Governor no longer needed land, because the land was Teacher Cooke's, they viewed the land as Teacher Cooke's land, and since he had become the Governor-General he would not be in need of land anymore. And they took over the whole property. And it was part of the property of the United Church in Farm Heights in Montego Bay.

He was a well-known and respected Insurance Executive, and he will be remembered in Montego Bay as one who walked, carried his briefcase, made his sales.

He served, of course, nationally in many capacity, and I would not seek to review those or to repeat them or itemize them. As far as North West St. James is concerned in Montego Bay, Teacher Cooke, in particular, and his family, is very much a part of the character of that town. His passing marks the passing of a number of giants of the west, the last of them. He has left a legacy that we hope some of us will seek to follow. His was a life worthy of emulation.

I will make one reference to his life in the Parliament and Government. I know on one occasion I spoke to him, one of the things he enjoyed most and he said he thought was most pleasing to him as a Minister of Government, was that he had the privilege of appointing the first female Permanent Secretary - I think it was Mrs. Brown - it was his privilege as Minister of the Public Service.

(Applause)

Indeed, Mr. President, as I said, we could spend a long time itemizing his successes. But I like to think of Sir Howard's life is that - and work has been entwined in the national character. He was among those men who set the stage for the founding of the Jamaica nation and the building of project Jamaica.

Sir Howard at all times conveyed a vision of a great people. Maybe when you spoke to him others have referred to his optimism, he always articulated a vision of Jamaicans as great people. And his work as a Teacher, Preacher, Politician, Statesman, and G-G, reflected a commitment that his life would serve to carry Jamaica along that journey to greatness. That was the Sir Howard Cooke I knew, in his own simple way.

I want to take this opportunity to extend my humble word of condolences and sympathy to his family, Lady Cooke, his siblings, his many - his extended family. Sir Howard Cooke was a genuine family person as much as he was a politician and Statesman. He related to the entire Cooke family, which is an extensive family in Western Jamaica, and as part of the Peopled National Party, by and large.

I want again to extend an appreciation to the family members for allowing us to share - allowing the country, and in particular, the

people of St. James, to share in the life of Sir Howard Cooke. Thanks very much.

(Applause)

It is a privilege to have known Sir Howard Cooke, to have related to the members of his family. He has lived a life worthy of emulation by anyone who seeks to serve the public and to serve their country.

May we wish for Sir Howard a restful place, I am sure he will find eternal rest where he is gone. Sir Howard, enjoy your place in the bosom of the Saviour, the one you served so well during your sojourn on this earth. Rest in peace, my friend.

Thank you. (Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Minister Falconer.

(Applause)

Miss FALCONER: Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, the Most Honourable Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition - happy birthday - belated birthday, sir, and happy birthday to the President. Colleague Parliamentarians, Members of the Cooke family, members of the Diplomatic Corp, ladies and gentlemen.

I rise today to pay tribute to a man that I admired and loved and consider one of Jamaica's finest sons. His commitment, his sacrifice and multilevel contribution to the growth and development of Jamaica is unquestionable.

Mr. President, generations to come will benefit from - and it is our duty to not forget the contribution that Howard Felix Hanlan Cooke and his compatriots made to Jamaica.

Sir Howard approached the awesome task of nation building not as a work outside of himself for which he would dedicate time, but as an inextricable part of himself and the family who served alongside him.

In speaking of Sir Howard's contribution, we cannot do so without acknowledging and paying tribute to Lady Cooke, his partner and biggest supporter. (Applause) The good book of Proverbs says:

"House and wealth are inherited from fathers but a good wife is from the Lord."

(Applause)

God must have been looking down and smiling on a youthful Howard on that day back in 1938, when he visited the school where Ivy Tai, a beautiful and spirited twenty-two year old taught. The twenty-three year old tall, dark and handsome Howard was at that time a Special Junior Master at Mico Teachers' College. Sir Howard must have been struck by what the Italians call, the 'Thunderbolt'. They describe that as when love strikes someone like lightening, so powerful and intense it can't be denied. In Sir Howard's own words: "We were destined to be. From the time I saw her, the first thing I said to her, I am going to marry you. That shocked everybody, including her; she just froze." Of Sir Howard's promise of marriage, Lady Cooke said, "I never said a word". And that is so typical of her. They were married on July 22, 1939, and as they say, the rest is history. And what a history it has been. Yesterday would have been their 75th wedding anniversary. (Applause)

Mr. President, I am sure that things were not easy in those turbulent post-1938 years

when Sir Howard was engaged in sacrificial social and political work. The early years of marriage were spent in Belle Castle, Portland, where Sir Howard said he was sent when he was a single man, for only a month to straighten out a problem. However, when he got there and saw the beauty and bounty of the land, breadfruits, plantains, bananas, he decided to stay in what he described as God's Paradise.

When Mrs. Cooke joined her husband it was not an easy existence for the young couple. Lady Cooke has said that there was neither running water nor electricity, and the toilet was half a chain from the house in which they lived. In addition, the roof leaked - and we know the Portland rains - so they had to set containers to catch water inside the house.

Despite the harsh conditions, they both worked as teachers and community development practitioners while caring for and raising their children, Howard Jr., Richard and Audrey.

Sir Howard told me that in those early years it was no easy task mobilizing and getting the word out to the people. They would often travel to communities on the back of trucks and would sleep at nights on shop counters. Miss Ivy stood by him as he carried out his political and other work across the country.

It was Aristotle who said, "Love is composed of a single soul inhabiting two bodies". And it is also said that a satisfying marriage that lasts a lifetime is more likely to result when partners are fundamentally similar and share the same basic values and goals.

While romantic love initially brought Sir Howard and Lady Cooke together, what kept them together was an abiding love and friendship, an ability to communicate, a willingness to give and take, and a commitment to the institution of marriage as well as to each other. The spirit of humility, community and kindness of this couple did not change on the journey from Belle Castle to King's House. They remained affable and devoted, they exuded warmth and sincerity and never lost the common touch and love of the simple things.

Sir Howard never forgot his rural roots, always choosing to lead by example, and made King's House accessible to the people. He was a believer in eating what they planted and the King's House farm was their pride and joy. (Applause)

Sir Howard was particularly proud of the fact that in his first year as Governor-General, they planted more than 100 fruit trees, raised cows, chickens, and grew calalloo, pak choy, and many other vegetables and fruits, and they did so without the use of commercial fertilizer.

And with their generosity knowing no bounds, they happily shared the bounty, not only with their staff, but with their family and friends.

His success in politics, the teaching profession, farming and all the many other areas of his outstanding life, is unmatched by the legacy of a devoted and principled life, a

life lesson which the nation could well live by, one man married to one woman with one set of children having the love and stability of family. (Applause)

(Inaudible comment/Laughter)

Miss FALCONER: Sir Howard said it best and I quote:

"When you are young people you must sleep in the same bed all the time even if you quarrel..."

SENATORS: Yes.

Miss FALCONER:

"...In my case before daybreaks there is peace; we love each other and were faithful in spite of temptation".

(Applause/Laughter)

By example, their children and we too would come to see that an empowered and empowering life is one in which development of our spiritual, intellectual, physical attributes and the country's resources is prioritized, pursued and joyfully applied in service to our fellowman and to the glory of our Creator.

I am indeed honoured and privileged to have known this giant of a man and to be connected to a political movement and the dynamic, social, economic and spiritual changes that Sir Howard helped to shape and inspire; the optimism, moral clarity, confidence, sense of duty and love of country that Sir Howard radiated and which inspired many, is an important fire that we need to rekindle for the good of Jamaica.

(Applause)

A SENATOR: Yes.

Miss FALCONER: I would like to pass my condolences to Lady Cooke, his life partner, and the Cooke's family. May he rest peacefully in the sure knowledge that he has contributed to the blueprint for moving our country in a direction of positive, social, political and economic development and may light perpetual shine upon him.

Walk good, Sir Howard, and I know that you're resting in the arms of God, dear friend.

(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Minister Wykeham McNeil.

Dr. McNEILL: Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Honourable House of Representatives and Senate; Members of the family, members of the Diplomatic Corps, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Sir Howard Cooke, Teacher Cooke, as we refer to him, in his lifetime was unwavering in his service to the people of Western Jamaica and in particular to the parish of St. James. I'm honoured today to pay tribute to the Dean of Cornwall, as he was appropriately known, on behalf of the West.

Sir Howard's history in Western Jamaica as a political organizer in the early years of the formation of the People's National Party is well known to have started on the Campus of Mico Teachers College.

As you recall when we last spoke, it was the Head of Mico at the time, Mr. Mills, who recommended to O.T. Fairclough that the young honour student Howard Cooke, be one of two representatives of the Jamaica

Teachers' Union, which led him to attend the initial meeting of what would become the People's National Party at the Silver Slipper Club.

He was the only man from St. James to be included in this auspicious gathering. This led him to being at the launch of the party at the historic Ward Theatre in 1938, to become a member of the first executive of the Party and one of the six who formulated the Party's Constitution. He told me that at one of those early meetings, Sir Alexander Bustamante attended and sat right beside him. (Applause)

His outstanding organizational skills extended across the length and breadth of Jamaica. However, he paid particular attention to the constituency of teachers and to the mobilization of the West, as was said earlier. This role naturally led to him becoming Chairman of Region 6 and a Vice President of the Party. He served in many capacities as a Senator and later, Member of Parliament, representing the constituency of North West St. James, and during that time he remained accessible to his people, as he would hold consultations with all, regardless of their political affiliation.

You know, it is said, that Dr. Herbert Eldemire, who was his political rival in the West and who actually defeated him in one of the elections, remained his friend and his doctor to the day that Dr. Eldemire died.

Sir Howard was never one to simply go with popular view, and he was strong in his belief that the most important role of the People's National Party was the upward social mobility of the people of Jamaica. (Applause) Sir Howard represented the independent spirit of the West and we know where the West goes the country follows.

(Laughter)

Dr. McNEILL: That independence of thought, which is synonymous with Sir Howard, is consistent with at that time, Mo-Bay, which was referred to as the Republic, which has even greater significance - had greater significance then.

There are many stories of him fighting for his people. It is said that when he was Caretaker of the North West constituency of St. James, he laid across the road, defying former Housing Minister Wilton Hill, to run the tractors over him rather than bulldoze the homes of the people.

He maintained his belief in the spirit and ability of Jamaicans to move towards unity. His words uttered at a recent visit with him still resonate sharply in my mind. And I quote. He said:

> *"I find that in the House of Representatives we have some of the finest brains, but they spent too much time denigrating one another rather than spending time analyzing who has the best ideas."*

He went on to say that:

> *"The strength of the People's National Party is derived from our internal struggles and that the greatest achievement of the Peoples National*

Party has been the social development of the people of Jamaica".

(Applause)

It would be remiss of me to stand here representing the West and not make mention of one of the stories which has become part of PNP's folklore. Some may recall in 1977 when the Young Turks of the time sought to challenge Sir Howard as Vice President. This meeting became such a heated one, resulting in some having to flee the meeting and Sir Howard surviving the challenge. The story would be better told by some of those who are present and I'm sure that the Honourable PJ Patterson and Francis Tulloch would be happy to elucidate. When speaking about that all too famous events, I asked Sir Howard what happened, were things getting a bit out of hand? He replied yes they were, but the people really loved me. (Laughter)

Dr. McNEILL: Another one said that you had to tip your hat to him as a politician.

From time to time he would call and asked me to come and see him, he would summon me. And his first question was always, how is it out West? And it was during one of these visits that he would recall his many stories, sharing his vision and passing on his beliefs in the enduring strength of the capacity of the people of Jamaica. I felt in those moments, the overwhelming legacy that Teacher Cooke was passing on, as he regaled with the many stories of challenge and controversy.

Sir Howard is regarded by many in the Party as a father of the West, a true independent spirit who led the people unwaveringly, distinguished himself in all areas of Government. Above all, family was paramount. I recalled the time he told me when he first saw his wife of 74 years, Lady Cooke, he told her on that first meeting, you're the woman I'm going to marry. And marry her he did. He went on to tell me that I am as good as she made me.

Today as we ponder the path to renewing and reviving our values and attitudes to our young, I entreat all of us to look to the life of this great man, a statesman a politician a man of the people, a family man. He was a son of the West who became a father of the West, and we who stand on his shoulders in Western Jamaica thank him for his contribution.

Our condolences to his family and may his soul rest in peace and light perpetual shine on him.

(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Senator K.D. Knight.

(Applause)

Mr. KNIGHT: Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Members of the Judiciary, Law Officers of the State, Members of the Diplomatic Corps and Consular Corps, my fellow Parliamentarians past and present, members of the family of the deceased and other visitors to the Chamber.

Mr. President, there are some aspects of my tribute which are to be treated as corroborating those who spoke before me.

(Laughter)

I'm going to begin, Mr. Speaker, by referring to Julius Caesar, Act 2, Scene 2

where Caesar gave a speech about death and how it affected various persons and so on. But I'll simply use the closing line, and it says, seeing death a necessary end will come when it will come.

There are some of us who just wish that a man like Sir Howard would go on as if powered by an energizer battery, but death is a necessary end. His innings at the crease of life was well played, solid and stylish; a genuine contributor to the nation; one of the architects of our democracy; he dedicated his life to serving his country and his people. And we who shared a portion of his time on earth with him are the beneficiaries of the abundance of his accomplishments. A preacher, teacher, politician, legislator, statesman, he seems to have done it all. There is little more that he could have expected of himself and we could have dared to expect of him. His life was dedicated to excellence.

I knew Sir Howard well. I sat with him within the councils of his beloved party the PNP and for me, he was like a Gamaliel. Through his words and deeds he showed that being a devoted loyal party member was a means to an end and not the end in itself. To him a political party was a vehicle in which one could travel to enable oneself as a part of a team to give service to the country at large, not simply to those of the same political bent.

(Applause)

Becoming involved in politics meant embarking on a mission, the objective of which is to improve the quality of life of the people of Jamaica by doing those things which would be for the common good. A political party for him was a centre for the dissemination of competing ideas, formulation of polices; all geared to advance the process of national development. It was a pleasure to hear him on the conference floor; a fearless advocate for any cause that he embraced, articulate in presentation, passionate in his delivery, persuasive in content and commanding in presence.

No one who was present on such an occasion would forget the performance of the sage. I remember him in 1988 speaking about the soul of the PNP and seeing the then party leader, Michael Manley, listening to every word, seemingly willing him on, silently uttering: speak teacher, speak. (Laughter) Horace Dalley reminded me this morning, my comrade brother and friend, that when teacher came to the NEC you could know what mood he was in. If he wore his straw hat and it was tilted to the right, he was on the war path. (Laughter)

When he was Governor-General I had to interact with him in ministerial capacities. At one time when I held a certain portfolio which was characterized by strong challenges, his words of encouragement were motivational: "Don't give up, there has to be a solution, press on and go and find it", he admonished me one day. And shortly after the result was a raft of policy measures presented in this Parliament many of which survived until the present. Sir Howard, I don't think you ever understood how influential you were on many of us, some of whom are in the Chamber

today. (Applause) Then there were occasions on which I had the opportunity to be engaged with him on a social basis. Marvellous. A great conversationalist who imparted wisdom unassumingly and many times with humour. He was an intent listener as well, deeply interested and engrossed in what others were saying.

Sir Howard is to be remembered also as a member of the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands and the influential role he played in that arena. I did not attend the yearly synagogue, the church, but my late mother did and how often she spoke of his timely and wise interventions. He was a source of inspiration to many pastors, deacons, elders and ordinary church-goers. He believed in the goodness of others because there was so much goodness in him. He was a Christian man who hardly ever spoke publicly without acknowledging the mercies of God. Those who are aberrations in our society creating such mayhem and distress were the subjects of his prayers and sometimes the centrepiece of his sermons and speeches. Always he sought to reach deep into evil hearts, searching for goodness, praying for redemption and to those who could hear his voice, counselling for change. That is the Christian way and that was his way. (Applause)

It is impossible for me to pay tribute to such a man in whom the elements were so well mixed without referring to his nationally recognized integrity. Honest to the core he had an undying allegiance to principles which are worthy of emulation. (Applause)

A MEMBER: Yes, yes!

Mr. KNIGHT: I do not deify him because faults he must have had, but from my vantage point too few to mention.

When death occurs, the natural tendency is to mourn. Grieving is a normal human reaction, but as we reflect on the life of this truly great Jamaican there is so much to be thankful for. There are so many to thank him that our grief must be tempered by the celebration of the fact that we shared in his life. Those whom he thought, those to whom he preached, those for whom he was their political representative and so many others will remember him fondly and thank him for being who he was and a nation as a whole will long remember the patriotism, his commitment to service and his unyielding belief in the goodness of all our citizens. As for me and my household, we will never forget him.

I extend condolence to his family and pray that by the grace of God they may be comforted. I end with a biblical quotation referred to by the Lifetime Chairman of the People's National Party (Laughter) Micah 6 verse 8:

> *"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord requires of you, that you love mercy, you do justly and to walk humbly with they God."*

MEMBERS: Amen.

Mr. KNIGHT: The Most Honourable Sir Howard Felix Hanlan Cooke epitomized that admonition.

May his soul rest in peace and light perpetual shine upon him.

(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Senator Tom Tavares-Finson.

Mr. TAVARES-FINSON: Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Most Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Members of both Houses, Mr. President of the Court of Appeal, Madam Chief Justice, other judicial officers, members of the Cooke family and other distinguished guests today.

On Emancipation Day, the 1st of August 1991 Howard Felix Hanlan Cooke took the oath of office as the third Jamaican born Governor-General of independent Jamaica and was invested with the Order of the Nation. This joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament is to recognize his contribution to the development of our nation and to record our gratitude for his service so that the nation may take heed and also celebrate this servant of Jamaica. The tongue of good report has already been heard on his behalf from every quarter of this country: from Goodwill in St. James the village of his birth to the halls of learning and the halls of political power. Much has been said of his role as an educator, insurance executive, politician, family man and his commitment to the church. All have greeted his name with acclaim.

Sir Howard and Lady Cooke had been married for fifty-two years when he was sworn in as Governor-General, a feat remarkable in itself. Both were teachers who started their professional lives at the Bell Castle All Age School in Portland. They have two sons: Mr. Justice Howard Fitz Arthur and Richard Washington and a daughter, Audrey Faith, and may I add a daughter-in-law, our own, Heather Cooke, Clerk of the House. (Applause)

Mr. President, if reports are to be believed, his journey as Governor-General and to King's House was not as smooth as we may think. It is reported that when Prime Minister Michael Manley called him and informed him that he intended to recommend his appointment as Governor-General, Sir Howard Cooke responded by reminding the Prime Minister that he was off to St. Lucia to the funeral service of Sir Arthur Lewis and he would be away for a few days. He went on, it is reported to say, "look I cannot tell my wife that I am to become Governor-General because that is the last thing she would want. I am going to St. Lucia. If you want me as the Governor-General you tell her." (Laughter) Well, clearly he did and the rest as they say is history.

It cannot be denied that Jamaica has come a very long way since the audacious appointment of a primary school teacher from Westmoreland, Sir Clifford Campbell as Governor-General on the recommendation of Sir Alexander Bustamante. But if there is one thing that the vast majority of Jamaicans can agree on is that Jamaica has been well served by all our Governors-General. (Applause) If one were to question what the qualification is to be the Governor-General of Jamaica and

one formed the view that you had to be a teacher, one could be excused as all our Governor-Generals with the exception of Sir Florizel Glasspole have come from that background. What can be said, however, without exception is that the individual ought to have a good partner by their side for every Governor-General of Jamaica has brought to King's House a remarkable woman any of whom could have held office of Governor-General in her own right. (Applause) Of course, the gracious Lady Cooke is no exception and it is Lady Cooke who is uppermost in our thoughts today and we convey to her through her children, who are with us, our condolences and best regards.

In as much as Sir Howard was a teacher, he was also a gardener, a farmer and a keeper of livestock. All of which he engaged in while at King's House. He tended an organic vegetable garden of which he was extremely proud and planted as it was said over a hundred trees of every type on the grounds: mango, ackee, breadfruit and oranges. These trees, Mr. President, still make the news from time to time (Laughter) as they seem to hold an irresistible allure to praedial thieves (Laughter) who braved the security to help themselves to the fruits of Sir Howard's labour and end up in the half Way Tree Resident Magistrate's Court and on the front pages of our newspaper. And while on the subject of praedial thieves, I happened to have been at the Halfway Tree Police Station one morning when I observed an unusual buzz of activity. When I enquired as to the reason for this activity I was told that thieves had made off with one of the Governor-General's prized rams and he had called the Superintendent to say that he expected his ram back by nightfall (Chuckles). I wish to report that said ram was duly recovered from a nearby butcher's establishment and returned unharmed to King's House according to the Governor-General's instructions. And yes, much to the horror of some, Sir Howard reared goats, cows, chickens and buffalos, given to him by President Castro, on the grounds of King's House. (Laughter)

But our brows need not to have been raised, for Sir Howard was only continuing a tradition of maintaining the gardens and rearing animals of every sort, a tradition started by various English Governors who occupied the place over the years.

On a personal level. My first interface with the Cooke's family was through the beautiful and charming Audrey, who was every Sixth Formers at Jamaica College fantasy where she taught history. (Laughter) I don't think that before or after her time there had so many boys took 'A' Level History. (Laughter)

His Lordship, Mr. Justice Cooke and I were to meet later at the Inns of Court in England and subsequently spent over three decades in the profession. He, at the Director of Public Prosecution's Department, then in private practice as a Resident Magistrate, later as a Puisne Judge and finally, a Judge of the Court of Appeal. So my particular condolences go to them both.

When the Leader of the Opposition spoke of Sir Howard, he highlighted his role as a teacher and that is how many of us conclude he would like to have been remembered.

I am indebted to Jackie Ranston who in her beautiful Book, "Behind the Scenes of King's House 1873 to 2010", closes the chapter on Sir Howard Cooke with this account of his departure:

> *"When it was time for him to leave Kings House, Sir Howard headed home for St. James where he said: 'The people don't call me Governor-General or Sir, they still call me 'teacher', and that is the way I like it".*

Mr. President, like all good lessons, he played his part utilizing all the tools of his craft, laying his row of bricks true and straight in the construction of this structure that we call our nation, this *Jamaica, Land* We *Love*, and for that we are eternally grateful.

May his soul rest in peace.

(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Minister Julian Robinson.

Mr. ROBINSON: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. Speaker, colleague parliamentarians, Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, the Members of the Public Service who are here and the Cooke's family.

Mr. President, I intend to highlight just two aspects of Sir Howard's very illustrious life and career. One is the Sir Howard Cooke Character Development Centre, located in Nannyville in South East, St. Andrew, and secondly, his contribution to the United Church.

The Sir Howard Cooke Thursday Group was the name used to describe a group of persons who used to meet at King's House, under the patronage of Sir Howard. Our former Governor-General held the view that bringing people together from different backgrounds, whether it be religious, political, cultural or social could only be a progressive stimulus to further dialogue on critical issues, issues such as poverty, crime, religious intolerance and bigotry. This led to cooperation towards articulating possible solutions and to promote the understanding of commonalities that people share, rather than emphasizing their differences.

The participants at these sessions were from a variety of backgrounds. There were representatives of most of the world's religions including Christians, Muslims, Budhists, Hindus, Rastafarians and others and there were also representatives of all the varied denominations that operated in Jamaica, who were invited and perhaps attended one or more of the sessions. Politicians of all persuasions, representatives of community and service groups, technical and professional persons representing all occupations have at one time or another attended these sessions. A typical session would have an average of between 10 to 15 participants and was held in a very informal setting. Sir Howard, unless he was overseas or indisposed, attended and led the discussions at these sessions.

The group also provided a pool of persons from which Sir Howard would invite to attend the Annual Conference of the Initiatives of Change, formally known as the Moral Rearmament, held in Switzerland. These conferences usually involve representatives from many nations and have often provided a forum for the resolution of disputes that existed between various groups, and also for the sharing of knowledge and technology that could help to alleviate common human problems, such as poverty and disease.

By 2006 when Sir Howard retired as Governor-General, the group had evolved with a nucleus of regular attendees who concluded that some sort of action by the group was not only desirable but necessary. The group had relocated to the Bahai Centre on Mountain View Avenue and an approach was made to the Nannyville Community and representatives were invited to attend the meetings. The meetings were attended by members of the Thursday Group, the Nannyville Community and the Political Representatives. Out of these meetings, the abandoned squatter inhabited structure that used to be the home of ASHE, was identified as an area of major concern that required intervention.

The Group then established its presence as caretakers of the premises and initiated a homework programme, relying on the input of volunteers from the group. An application was submitted to Lift Up Jamaica, which resulted in the complete refurbishing and renovation of the Centre.

The Group decided to establish the Sir Howard Cooke's Thursday Group Character Development Centre as they agreed that the lack of good character could be identified as the root cause of most social ills that were generally universal. These social ills; crime, intolerance and violence as a means of settling disputes, and that character development is a lifelong process that aims to develop the most efficient, productive and happy human-beings.

A Committee to oversee the functioning of the project was established and comprised representatives of the Thursday Group and the Nannyville Community.

As time passed and the refurbishing of the Centre was near completion, the Committee was formalized. The Group now has a corporate structure and is registered as a private limited liability company, operating as a non-profit.

The vision for this Centre is that it will be a location that offers ongoing opportunities for skills training and character development. Sir Howard, up to his death, maintained a keen interest in the work of the Thursday Group and the activities at the Centre and remained in touch with all the Directors.

And since the formation of this Centre, there are a number of activities that have taken place there. It acts as a Homework Centre. There is a community access point with computers. It has hosted a number of Summer Camps, music programmes, cultural programmes and all other types of activities that have promoted the development of the individual.

Mr. President, a critical feature which defined Sir Howard's entire life was his strong and abiding Christian faith and his love and passion for the United Church. We can say that Sir Howard served his God by serving the people of Jamaica. Among the many positions he held in the United Church were:

1. Lay Pastor for the St. Paul's United Church in St. James;
2. Lay Pastor for the Farm Heights United Church, and the Member from North West St. James spoke about that, a Church that he was instrumental in its construction of and also of a Basic School, which is named in his honour there;
3. He was also the Chairman of the Cornwall Regional Council of the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman;
4. He was the First Chancellor of the International University of the Caribbean, which is owned and operated by the United Church;
5. He was an Ex-officio member of the Central Mission Council of the United Church, which is the highest decision-making body of the Church outside of Synod; he also served on a number of Synodical Committees;
6. He was also the Founder and the First Chairman of the Lay Persons Initiative, which was primarily concerned about ensuring adequate funding for the work of the United Church, particularly, in its role as an educational institution. This initiative led to a production called Starry Night, which is the main fundraiser for the United Church.
7. And while as Governor-General and even into his elder years, he was an active member of the Hope United Church.

Mr. President, we can say with assurance that the man whose life we honour today, fulfilled the requirements of his Lord; he acted justly, he showed mercy and he walked humbly with his God.

Thank you.

(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Dr. Kenneth Baugh.

(Applause)

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. President, Speaker of the House of Representatives, President of the Court of Appeal, Chief Justice, the Honourable Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition, Members of the Diplomatic Corps and the Consular Corps, colleagues on both sides of the House and the members of Sir Howard Cooke's family, especially Lady Cooke who is not here today, but also particularly Justice Howard Cooke, who I know very well from Montego Bay and from Cornwall College. I want to personally express my condolences and sadness, despite the length of life of almost a century, his passing is still very sad for us all, but there is a cause to celebrate.

Sir Howard Felix Hanlan Cooke, Order of the Nation, Order of St. Michael and St. George, Royal Victorian Order, Order of St.

John, titles all well deserved, was a man who gave a life - and I agree - of exemplary service. I salute him here today as a life dedicated to the welfare and the well-being of his fellow Jamaicans. I salute him as a pioneering politician, very active in the embryonic and formative stages of our nation.

I knew him as a Montegonian, as Principal of the Boys School, the Montego Bay Boys' School, although I did not attend that school, which later became known as the Corinaldi Primary School and brother school to Barracks School for Girls' in Montego Bay.

Sir Howard held himself to very high standards. He saw himself as a moral and spiritual leader.

A MEMBER: Yeah!

(Chuckling)

Dr. BAUGH: He exemplified discipline in his personal life as Principal of the school and in public service. He was held in very high esteem and in high regard by the people of his community and the region of the West. He was a Christian leader, as we have heard so many times, and a preacher. And I too was aware of the Farm Heights Church that he caused or he possibly built.

We were political rivals. When I challenged him in 1980, we were on opposite sides of the political fence, but respect was always mutual. And Sir Howard always pointed out to the excellent relationship that we enjoyed. There was never any guile, never any heated words.

In the days of emotive politics, when we were reactionary to a history of subjugation, oppression and exploitation, when the veil of colonialism and foreign domination was lifted, there was great political experimentation and political tensions followed in Jamaica. There was polarization on an ideological basis and when many young people with revolutionary zeal were consumed by exuberance, Sir Howard Cooke was always perceived as a voice of moderation, as a voice of reason and objectivity and stability in the political arena. He was a stabilizer.

As Governor-General he rose to the challenge of elevating himself out of the arena of political rivalry. He was warm and encouraging and his words and attitude, to both sides, were always encouraging. I remember particularly, when I was sworn in as Leader of the Opposition for the Interregnum, he was exceedingly warm and encouraging.

He governed at the higher plane of decency, unity and national pride. Howard Cooke, Governor-General between '91 and 2006 for 15 years; Minister of Government, Education, Public Service and Pensions and Social Security; Federal Member of Parliament, National Member of Parliament the constituency of North West St. James; Senator and President of the Senate; social worker, teacher at his school for 23 years but teacher on a national scale for a lifetime.

May his soul rest in peace and God's perpetual light shine upon him.

(Applause)

Acting PRESIDENT: Mr. Edmund Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT: Thank you very much.

President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Most Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, colleague Members of Parliament and Senators, Justice of the Peace, President of the Court of Appeal, members of the Diplomatic Corps, Most Honourable Lady Cooke in her absence, but I know she is very much present in her spirit, members of the Cooke's family and friends, I am tempted to say God is good every time, every time God is good. Because that is what Sir Howard would have me start his tribute with.

(The President returns to the Chair at 12:25 p.m.)

The lives of great men inspire our action and negate our fear. They tell us the virtue of patience and the value of care and they uphold us in the struggle to be honest, fair and trustworthy but, most importantly, they teach us to move forward and never to give up for doing nothing we can achieve just that, nothing.

Sir Howard Hanlan Felix Cooke ON, GCMG, GCVO, CD, our third native Governor-General who today this Parliament extols for his many virtues and recognize for his moments of humanness takes us through a journey in time from a small village in my constituency called Goodwill, through the geographical and geophysical characteristics of rural Jamaica to the metropolis of the world, the Parliament of our land and the stately portals of King's House to become an icon among us.

His life, Mr. President, reads like a classical novel of struggle, sacrifice, pain, thrills and triumphs. Its many pages of powerful expression of care and love for ordinary people and personal commitment to making things right where they were wrong and resolving issues whether it was ferment, sums up nearly one century of God's time well spent.

The many facets of life he spanned and the various metaphors he embodied convinced me that Sir Howard, as I called him, was indeed many people in one person, whether he was a Mico scholar, a sportsman, a teacher, insurance executive, parliamentarian, political activist, Minister of Government, church man, social engineer, mentor, friend, Governor-General, confidant and family man; these, Mr. President, are some of the people that he was. But in all these people lived a single great soul.

Mr. President, many of the anecdotes and moments of great reflection that I have of Sir Howard as a young politician, firstly as Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister in the eighties and later during the years when he was Governor-General of Jamaica. And one of the things that abide with me was the humility that he showed as reflected in a desire to serve the cultural needs of St. James. And after he lost the 1980 elections to Ken Baugh and left the Ministry of Social Security that he was, he wanted to serve as the Chairman of the St. James Cultural Committee. And I was a young Minister then and Hugh Nash came to me and

said, Minister, we need a good chairman for the St. James Cultural Committee and Mr. Howard Cooke wants to be. Without hesitating I said yes. But what inspired me most of all was the seamless transition which he displayed from the lofty position of MP and Minister to become an ordinary chairman of a cultural committee; because to him the importance was not where you serve but that you serve. (Applause)

The second critical point of reference that I have of him was his passion to see people grow and his willingness to embrace all people of all hues and faiths and persuasions. And I recall Members who are before me now and I had a particular experience, and the Member from South East St. Andrew spoke of the Moral Re-Armament movement and the role that Sir Howard played in bringing a number of us as young people to a wider realization of the critical importance of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. And to not only recognize that was something that we should strive for and do here but to be part of a global community of individuals of like minds. And so our annual trek to Caux in Switzerland was an anticipated event where a number of individuals, professionals of various strains in life would gather to intellectualize on key issues relating to human relations and the institutions that they represent. And I felt that in Sir Howard was an obsession for reconciliation and peace.

In closing, Mr. President, I want to indicate that Sir Howard has left great legacies which are enduring and emulating. But the greatest of all, in my mind, is his respect and love for family life. His 75 years of happy marriage with Miss Ivy is a testimony of enduring the value of the institution of marriage and his success as a husband and father must inspire a renaissance in good family life in our country.

Finally, this son of Goodwill reminds us that goodwill is one of the few really important assets of life. A determined man, Mr. President, can win almost everything he goes after, but unless in his getting he gains goodwill he has not profited much. So from Goodwill he came as a small acorn with goodwill he served and became an icon and in Goodwill we return him as a mighty oak tree - longest serving Governor-General in our history. My deepest condolences therefore to the Most Honourable Lady Ivy Cooke, his three children: Howard Jr., Justice Howard Jr., Richard and Audrey and a host of family members and a grateful community called Goodwill from which he sprung and whose goodwill we know will embrace the world forever.

May his soul rest eternally in peace. (Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Mr. Lloyd B. Smith.

Mr. L.B. SMITH: Mr. President, Senator Honourable Floyd Morris, Honourable Michael Peart, Speaker of the House, Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller, Prime Minister, Mr. Andrew Holness, Leader of the Opposition, Members of the Senate and the Lower House, members of the Judiciary, fellow parliamentarians and

especially the immediate family of Sir Howard, today I rise to pay tribute to a beloved and revered and truly great Jamaican Sir Howard Felix Hanlan Cooke.

Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. President and Mr. Speaker, as well as the Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives for the opportunity to pay tribute to one of the greatest and most accomplished Jamaicans to have lived in our time. Mr. Speaker and Mr. President, let me also use this opportunity to extend the sincere condolences to his dear wife Lady Ivy, his sons and daughter; one taught me and the other one we were partners in crime in school, as well as other members of his immediate and extended family, some of whom are visiting with us today. I urge them to take comfort in the fact that his was a life well lived. After all, at matters not how long we live but how.

Indeed, Mr. President, a lasting testament to Sir Howard's rich and indelible legacy is that he received so many honours and accolades while he was alive, which are usually bestowed after one's death. I dare say I cannot recall in recent times any other Jamaican in public life who has had such a distinct honour. In Montego Bay alone and by extension noble St. James, as that parish was called in his heyday there is the Howard Cooke Boulevard, the Howard Cooke Primary School, the ICU Sir Howard Cooke Campus, not to mention the Farm Heights United Church which is juxtaposed to the Howard Cooke Community and Resource Centre which also houses the Howard Cooke Basic School.

Lest we forget, Mr. President, Sir Howard was a devout Christian emboldened with an ecumenical spirit. His unrepentant and unapologetic stance with respect to infusing Christian values and tenets in all aspects of his private and public life was exemplary even though it may have jarred some people.

On a personal note, Sir Howard up to the time of his death was my friend and mentor. He oftentimes inspired me with his words of encouragement, admonition and at times chastisement. Well I recall when I was a student at the then Montego Bay Boys' School, now Corinaldi Primary, of which he was the headmaster and he used to visit every class on a Thursday morning with a long menacing cane in his hand to test every student with respect to their knowing their times table. If you failed to give the correct answer quickly the cane would find your derriere or outstretched palm with stinging accuracy. That morning when Sir Howard approached me I was terrified by his presence. Imagine this diminutive 10-year-old boy in short pants jumping up in trepidation from his seat as that towering specimen of humanity hovered over him and bellowed 'eight fours'. All I could think about was the caning, so by the time I was able to blurt out thirty-two the cane descended on me with a vengeance.

For a few years after that incident I feared Sir Howard and even entertained thoughts of revenge but his magnanimity and benevolence soon obliterated any feelings of illwill. I

remember his taking time out of his busy schedule to write to my now dear departed mother urging her to invest fully in my education as I had great potential. Thank you, Teacher Cooke. Today I can proudly say I am somebody. (Applause)

From then on he kept check of my progress and was always there like a guiding angel, he would always admonish me saying, you need to represent your people, you are the Governor and I would humbly say, yes sir, I will try.

Significantly, today I stand in this Honourable House paying tribute to him in my capacity as the Member of Parliament on this side of the House.... (Applause) ...that represents a large portion of what was then North West which he represented. And if you will spear me a little bit of indulgence, Mr. President, every now and then some of my older constituents declare, it looks like we get another teacher Cooke. (Laughter) That commendation I wear with much humility on my sleeve especially when the time gets tough. Even as we pay tribute to this exceptional human being, we in the West from where he hailed and was affectionately dubbed the "Dean of the West" has described his legacy - have decided rather that his legacy must not diminish as the years goes by. To this end, I have been asked by Region 6 of the People's National Party, of which he was the last living founding Member, to chair a committee to come up with a plan of action to honour and perpetuate his memory in that region. (Applause)

So far, a vigil will be staged at the Farm Heights United Church Hall on August the 5th, the same day when his body will lie in state at the Montego Bay Cultural Centre in historic Sam Sharpe Square. A memorial service will also be held on August 31 at the Farm Heights United Church, and on a timely basis this Committee will unveil its plan of action.

It is more than interesting, Mr. President, to note that it was at that same historic spot that National Hero Daddy Sharpe who was also called teacher by his followers was hanged when he defied his colonial masters by saying, "he would rather die on yonder gallows than to live in slavery". Sam Sharpe died that we could eventually rid ourselves of the physical shackles of enslavement; truly it can be said that Teacher Cooke lived to help enable us to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery.

(Applause)

One final personal reflection for me, and I have so many. Among the many positive and memorable moments I shared with him was when out of the blue, Mr. President, he telephoned me to say that he wanted to me to preach at this Farm Heights United Church. At first I protested because I was so taken aback, and let me hasten it add that I was not a politician then. Sir Howard, I said, "I am a most unworthy candidate for such a task, wretched sinner that I am." Then he replied in that commanding voice of his, "There is always room for one more... (Applause) ...especially for the vilest of sinner". (Laughter) And so I preached. He led me up to

the alter I was so sanctimonious and I preached. God is good.

MEMBERS: All the time.

Mr. L. B. SMITH: Much will be said today and hereafter about Teacher Cooke, but the greatest tribute we can all give him is to vow to walk in his footsteps.

As politicians and representatives of the people we must vow to shun narrow partisan agendas designed to divide and rule this nation. (Applause) Instead, we must embrace every attempt to unify this nation and build consensus around a shared vision that transcends political one-upmanship. (Applause) In this vein, as Sir Howard always insisted we must put God and country first, not ourselves or our party. (Applause)

Sir Howard not born great, neither was greatness thrust upon him, instead he achieved greatness. (Applause) And he used that greatness to do great things, not for himself, but for his people from all walks of life, never looking down on anyone, but extending a helping hand to lift them up, not tear them down. (Applause) And so as my good Parliamentary Colleague KD Knight alluded to earlier, in the words of Williams Shakespeare, his life was gentle and the element so mixed in him that nature might stand up and say to all the world, **"this was a man".** (Applause)

Sir Howard was an extraordinary leader because he made so many of us feel that we too were and are extraordinary. I urge the powers that be to ensure that a permanent monument be erected in his honour in Montego Bay, his hometown. (Applause) I also recommend, Minister Hanna, that his birthplace in Goodwill be made into a national heritage site with a museum. (Applause) From the cane piece to King's House Sir Howard triumphed over many odds to become a legend in his time.

Farewell my mentor and friend. Flights of angles sing thee to thy rest, and may light perpetual shine upon you.

Walk good Teacher.

I thank you, Mr. President.

(Applause)

Mrs. MALAHOO-FORTE: May it please you, Mr. President.

Mr. Speaker, Most Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Chief Justice, President of the Court of Appeal, Leader of the Opposition, Colleague Parliamentarians, present and past, Members of Sir Howard family, distinguished guests of the Parliament. Mr. President, on the occasion of this joint sitting of Parliament, to pay tribute to the Most Honourable Sir Howard's Felix Hanlan Cooke, Member of the Order of the Nation, Member of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Member of the Royal Victorian Order, Commander of the Order of Distinction) Former Governor-General of Jamaica, I want to firstly expressed condolence to Members of the bereaved family and I crave your indulgence, Mr. President, to also express condolence on behalf of my husband in particular to Justice Cooke, they served in the Court of Appeal and he has asked me to convey his sympathies.

Secondly, Mr. President, I want to express the gratitude of my generation, the gratitude of my generation for the work done by Sir Howard who exemplarily represented his generation of nation builders. Mr. President, when we gather like this to look back on a life well lived, we are presented with another opportunity to rethink our own approach to life, to re-examine our own motive for public service and to reflect on the legacy we want to leave behind.

Sir Howard's generation was crystal clear about their mission of securing political independence and laying the foundation for a sovereign nation.

(Applause)

As I listened Mr. President, to the many tributes paid, as I listened to the retracing of the steps, I cannot help but wonder about the commitment of my generation and this generation of Parliamentarians. What will we commit to ridding Jamaica of, what will be our legacy.

You see, Mr. President our high level of sovereign indebtedness and resultant economic dependency have compromised our sovereignty. The morale and social decadence of the society have made the work so much more difficult and I wonder, Mr. President, whether we have not in some way squandered a large part of the legacy bequeathed to us by Sir Howard and his generation.

But notwithstanding, Mr. President, having had the privilege of interacting with Sir Howard in a personal way as a young judicial officer, having benefited from his council and advice, I believe that the best tribute we can pay to him is to emulate the example he has set. They say they call him Teacher and I believe we can learn well the lessons he has taught, and among them I would just like to commend three:

First is public and political service with decorum and dignity.

Secondly, Mr. President, integrity in personal and professional life.

And thirdly, doing right by the people who are depending on us to improve the circumstances of their life.

To the Members of his family who mourn and in away, Mr. President, we are all members of his family for he served us well, almost as a father of this nation. Let us grieve and mourn as those with hope, because it is said that it is on the wings of death that the living soul takes its flight into eternity. So let us celebrate the life of Sir Howard as a life well lived and worthy of emulation.

May it so please you.

(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Mr. Delroy Chuck.

Mr. CHUCK: Thank you, Mr. President, and may I just say greetings to all.

Sir Howard Cooke was a great son of the Jamaican soil. He lived 'a truly exemplary life. Sir Howard stands tall a gentle giant amongst his fellow Jamaicans. I had to interact and work closely with Sir Howard on many fronts. As Governor-General, Sir Howard was Chairman of the Jamaican Rhodes Scholarship

Selection Committee and I acted as Secretary during the first seven years of Sir Howard's tenure.

Sir Howard got me involved mainly in discussions on morale rearmament. I had to brief Sir Howard annually on the candidate selected for the challenging King's House interviews at which the Jamaican Rhodes Scholars were selected. This briefing would occur a few days before the actual interview. Sir Howard and myself would sit for tea in his office at King's House for what initially I thought would be a ten minutes briefing on the candidates; well invariably these close encounters would last well over an hour. Sir Howard would interrogate me on the quality of the candidates and their merits and demerits. But beyond the briefing, Sir Howard was always keen to discuss the state of education, the social problems to be resolved and the importance of inculcating strong moral values in our students and our people. Our meetings and discussions dealt with a wide range of issues and concerns, they were always very informative.

After I joined the JLP, our meetings took on a political tone as we discussed partisan politics and the need for both parties to work in the interest of the Jamaican people. Sir Howard would provide me with lengthy histories of political development in Jamaica and he certainly was as huge reservoir of information. Whereas I entered these meetings to brief Sir Howard, I was usually well briefed by him on a wide range of interests and instructions as how to proceed in the political arena. I always felt refreshed and better informed after these briefings or meetings as I benefitted enormously from Sir Howard's vast experience and extensive knowledge.

At the actual interviews of the candidates I got the distinct impression that Sir Howard enjoyed his role as Chairman. He would urge the candidates to be relaxed and to be themselves. He was eager to question the candidates on what role and vision they had to uplift the Jamaican people and on the growth and development of the Jamaican society. At these selection meetings, Sir Howard always expressed his admiration for the high quality of the candidates and urged the successful candidates to be worthwhile ambassadors for Jamaica and to return and make their contribution to their homeland. He would console the unsuccessful candidates, urged them to reapply, if they could, but in any event to live up to the high standard expected of them and to continue to pursue their dreams.

Soon after entering the political arena I resigned as secretary to the Rhodes Selection Committee which disappointed Sir Howard greatly, but I told him in the traditional character of Rhodes scholars you must withdraw timely. He wished me well and insisted that I must visit King's House to campaign, which I did, and met Sir Howard on at least one occasion, gave him campaign material which he accepted gracefully.

After entering Parliament Sir Howard insisted that I join him on one of his annual visits to Caux Switzerland, which I did. There were dozens, perhaps hundreds of visitors to

Caux at Sir Howard's invitation. He considered these visits important exposure for the leaders of our society. Sir Howard was a strong believer in the moral upliftment of people. He was a strong believer in good moral values. He felt that the country's problems could be significantly eased and avoided if leaders with strong moral values emerged and led at every level of society. He was determined to identify not only political leaders but leaders from the business, the civil service, agriculture, the professions, the military, the police and others to join in, in the moral rearmament of our people.

In Caux visitors were exposed to a wide range of moral and social values that Sir Howard believed would serve them well. Those of us who joined Sir Howard on these visits benefitted tremendously from the experience and are better persons for having accepted Sir Howard's invitation. Sir Howard will truly be remembered for his unselfish and humane service to the people of Jamaica.

Towards the end of his tenure as Governor-General, I met him and Lady Cooke at a function and as he walked boldly and uprightly to the lectern to bring greetings, I remarked to Lady Cooke how well he looked and at 89 he can continue into his 90s. Lady Cooke remarked, "No, Mr. Chuck, I am 89, he is 90 and it is time for us to take it easy." Well Lady Cooke and Sir Howard were able to take it easy in the evening of their lives. Sir Howard's passing commemorated today is a sad occasion but we are happy to celebrate his life and the invaluable contribution he made for a better nation.

May his soul rest in peace and light perpetual shine upon him.

(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Mr. André Hylton.

(Applause)

Mr. André HYLTON: Mr. President, God is good, God is able, God is good all the time. These words, Mr. President, is words of a God-fearing, dynamic, powerful, humble Howard Felix Hanlan Cooke.

Jamaica has lost a stalwart, Sir Howard in his latter years resided in my constituency, and on behalf of the people of this great constituency I would like to offer my deepest condolences to Lady Cooke, Honourable Howard Cooke Jr., Richard Washington Cooke, Audrey Cooke.

I also wish to offer condolences to Sir Howard's daughter-in-law, Heather, our efficient and dynamic Clerk of the House.

(Applause)

Mr. President, my first encounter with Sir Howard was in the early 90s as the founding President of the Jamaica Classic Car Club. We visited him at King’s House, requested of him to be patron of our club, he gladly agreed. Every year after, for many years, Mr. President, we would as club members take a few of our exquisite beauties to visit with Sir Howard and sometimes he would take a drive off one or two of them.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Cars?

Mr. André HYLTON: Cars that is.

(Laughter)

He particularly liked, Mr. President, I remember a Triumph May flower. I am sure Chairman would know that car. Also he was in love, Mr. President, with the Jaguar E-type convertible.

Mr. President, Sir Howard is a man of integrity, principles and high standards. He believed in trust, honesty, purity unselfishness and love. The five core principles of the Initiatives of Change formally known as moral re-armament. Mr. President, Sir Howard's desire was to see both sides of the House truly embrace these beliefs and to see a unified Jamaica and a unified Parliament, and, Mr. President, most importantly a reduction of partisan politics in this country.

In keeping with this, Mr. President, Sir Howard invited, Mr. President, I would call it the Class of 1994, to Switzerland, and a few of the Members here spoke of this experience of Caux in Switzerland, and he invited a number of business leaders and politicians at the time. I represented the business group, Mr. President, at that time and we had Members, of course, like Member from North East Manchester, Member from East Central St. James, who made a tribute here today, Member from St. Thomas Eastern, Central Manchester, and, of course, now you have myself along with Minister Lisa Hanna from South East St. Ann, and, of course, Mr. Chuck from North East St. Andrew, and not to be out done, Mr. President, the Member from Kingston East & Port Royal who could tell his story of the Caux visit and other influences that Sir Howard had in his life.

Mr. President, my first encounter with Sir Howard and what really impressed me as a young man at the time, is when we visited Caux and a Member from Central Manchester will remember, we had the Governor-General of Jamaica serving visitors from around the world, leaders from around the world, breakfast, put on his apron and was serving breakfast, and I thought for a moment, what a man, and this is the man I would like to emulate. As a matter of fact, Mr. President, getting to know Sir Howard on that trip and having various conversations I learned so much, Mr. President, of the struggles we went through and he went through in the early days of trying to bring Jamaica and uplifting the people of Jamaica to a certain level. I really started my journey there, Mr. President, being attracted to politics through Sir Howard Cooke, because before that, Mr. President, when we speak of politics and politicians it was something that we resented, we did not talk about, there was such a negative image of politicians, but Sir Howard started to change that image in my mind and I want to thank him for that.

Mr. President, the Caux experience was fantastic and I remember just this morning my friend from Central Manchester were reminiscing on that Caux experience, but Sir Howard made us all feel so comfortable at Caux. One night, Mr. President, we went to a little - descended about 4000 feet to a little

community where it's very quiet - no cars, the only thing you could hear was the cows in the farms nearby, of course the cows had a bell around their necks and the Member from Manchester was very excited, I don't know why he was so excited at the time -

Mr. BUNTING: North East Manchester.

Mr. André HYLTON: North East Manchester. The Member from North East Manchester got very excited that night, Mr. President, and I think it may have been the bells that were ringing around the necks of the cows.

Mr. President, one of the initiatives that came out of the Caux experiences, one night we were there and as Jamaicans we are usually having a good time playing some dominoes, and an English man came in, was very upset with the Jamaican group that they do not participate and, you know, little conversation came about, and we thought that Jamaica has embraced domino so much, it's such a part of our culture that Sir Howard decided that he wanted to launch a project called Dominoes for Peace, and on his birthday, on the 15th of November that is going to be launched in his honour. It's the 14th of November. Thirteenth of November on his 99th birthday, that will be launched, Mr. President.

(Applause)

Sir Howard Cooke was my mentor and in his words of advice I have found wisdom. I will miss our talks on developing our people and country. I will miss sitting at his feet and learning from him, Mr. President. Sir Howard was a man of faith, a man who believed in brotherhood. He was an honourary member of the Rotary Club of Kingston and as member, Mr. President, from time to time, I recall Sir Howard saying to me, "André, come and pick me up at King's House but don't bother with the security and the ADC, just come and pick me up and let us fellowship as Rotarians at the club meetings." This is what I loved about Sir Howard, a man of the people and for the people.

(Applause)

Sir Howard was an approachable man, warm and friendly, Mr. President. No matter who you are or wherever you are from he would find time for you as a brother and deal with you on the level. Sir Howard was loved by the youths, elders, by the ladies in particular. To me he was more than Governor General. He was my friend, he was my brother, he was my comrade and he was my mentor.

One of the stories Sir Howard told me, Mr. President, is, I think Minister of Tourism mentioned about his warrior style, but one is told, Mr. President, of Mr. Norman Watson in St. Elizabeth who called him and said, Sir Howard, we were having problems in the constituency. The Opposition has brought some rogues and giving the people problems, and Sir Howard decided that he would come down to his aid, so he got three cars of ruffians from Montego Bay. First before they went in the car, Mr. President, he asked them to undo their pockets, to make sure they had no weapons, and on his way to St. Elizabeth

he loaded the three cars with rock stones, found himself in a nice spot overlooking the house where these boys were staying, and, Mr. President, they pelted rock stones on that house and all those boys that were there disappeared, Mr. President. This is the kind of warrior we talk about when we talk about Sir Howard Cooke.

(Laughter/Heckling)

Mr. President, may the youth of this country emulate the fine example of patriotism and nation-building of Sir Howard Cooke. May the spirit of unity in Sir Howard Cooke rest on this Parliament. May the Members of this House embrace the values of trust, honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love like Sir Howard did. May we continue to fight for Jamaica as Sir Howard fought. Like Sir Howard may we perform our allotted task while it is yet day for the night cometh when no man can work.

Mr. President, is this the end of Sir Howard's pride, glory, beauty, strength, intellect? Believe it not, Mr. President, though death be the end of this earthly life beyond the graves lies the summer life of immortality where freed from the trammels of this perishable frame and freed from all earthly passions his enfranchised spirit shall ascend to the mansions above to rejoice forevermore in the glorious light which emanates from the thrown of the great eternal.

In the words of Sir Howard Hanlan Cooke, "God is good, God is able, God is good all the time". Walk good my teacher, my friend, my brother.

(Applause)

The PRESIDENT: Members, we have come to the end of a very animated and exciting engagement where we paid tribute to a distinguished son of the soil. And I can say there were eighteen presentations, and they were excellent presentations. And the spirit of the tributes all had common themes running through the presentations. But I believe a statement from Senator Falconer's presentation would summarize and capture the essence of the tributes that were paid to this great and outstanding Jamaican, and I paraphrase: One man married to one woman with one family, working together to develop Jamaica. (Applause) I say, what a man, what a man! And I want all of us, all of us, to try as much as possible to walk in the footsteps of Sir Howard Felix Hanlan Cooke.

Just to indicate that we are going to be putting the presentations together and making a presentation at the appropriate time, to the family.

And also, to point out to Members - Mr. Hylton, you mentioned that there will be the launch of a domino tournament in November. Please be reminded that yesterday we passed the Disabilities Bill in the House of Representatives that is anti-discriminatory. So remember the disabled.

(Laughter)

Thank you.

May we stand up for a moment's silence.

(All present in the Chamber and the Gallery rose and observed a moment of silence)

The PRESIDENT: May his soul rest in peace and light perpetual shine upon him.

The Members of the Senate should remain standing whilst the Members of the House of Representatives take their leave.

(The Members of the House of Representatives leave the Chamber)

The PRESIDENT: Please be seated.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. NICHOLSON: Mr. President, sadly, it is not intended that any further business will be conducted today...

Mr. KNIGHT: No, no, no, I am protesting! (Laughter)

Mr. NICHOLSON: ...despite the protestations of others. (Laughter)

In the circumstances therefore, sir, we ask that the Senate be adjourned to a date to be fixed.

Mr. GOLDING: To Friday, Friday the 25th.

Mr. NICHOLSON: May I reverse that, sir. May the Senate be adjourned to Friday the 25th day of July, 2014.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the Senate be adjourned until Friday, July 25, 2014.

Put to the Senate and agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: (Gavels) This Honourable Senate stands adjourned.

The Honourable Senate was adjourned at approximately 1:16 p.m. to resume on Friday, July 25, 2014 at 10.00 a.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015

WEDNESDAY, July 23, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2.39 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health

HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development

HON. LISA RENÉ SHANTI HANNA, (PNP), St. Ann, South Eastern, Minister of Youth and Culture

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining

HON. RICHARD AZAN, (PNP), Clarendon, North Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Works

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western

MR. JAMES RUDOLPH EDWARD ROBERTSON, (JLP), St. Thomas, Western

MRS. SHAHINE ELIZABETH ROBINSON, (JLP), St. Ann, North Eastern

MR. KARL GEORGE SAMUDA, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Central

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Mr. Mikael Phillips

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

iii) Report of the Joint Select Committee on Private Bills on its deliberations on the Bill shortly entitled, "The Baptist Mid-Missions in Jamaica (Incorporated) (Change of Name) Act, 2011"

iv) Report of the Joint Select Committee on Private Bills on its deliberations on the Bill shortly entitled "The Power of Faith Ministries International (Incorporation and Vesting) Act, 2013"

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of this House I will move the following:

Whereas there are aspects of the Standing Orders which need to be reviewed to make them more relevant to a modern Parliament and to enable the House to conduct its business in a more efficient manner;

And Whereas there was a previous review of the Standing Orders where provisions were drafted but not adopted and incorporated;

And Whereas the Sectoral Debate has been a feature of this Honourable House over many years and there is no provision in the Standing Order which specifically addresses this debate in which most Members participate and many used an opportunity to highlight constituency matters:

Be it Resolved that this Honourable House conduct a review of the Standing Orders with a view to updating them:

Be it Further Resolved that the provisions drafted in the previous review of the Standing Orders be considered for adoption and incorporation into the Standing Orders:

And Be it Further Resolved that specific provisions be considered to incorporate the Annual Sectoral Debate within the Standing Orders and establish guidelines for the conduct of said debate including but not limited to the length of time allotted for speaking.

(HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister Without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, entered and took his seat.)

PRESENTATION OF BILLS WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE HOUSE FIRST OBTAINED

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Minister.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I now move to introduce and have read a first time, a Bill shortly entitled: The General Consumption Tax (Amendment) Act, 2014.

Bill shortly entitled:

The General Consumption Tax Act 2014 read a first time.

(DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of second reading of the Bill.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we intend to complete the debate which started yesterday on the two Bills that the Minister of Finance opened. Today, the Opposition Spokesperson on Finance will address both of them together.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

(Inaudible comments/Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has brought two Bills to Parliament and they were tabled in the House last week Tuesday. The Act to Increase and harmonize penalties in the Education Tax and the Income Tax Act and the Act cited as the Tax Collection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014. And I want to say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that while the Opposition is appreciative of the extra time by way of moving the response from yesterday to today, that there - we still have concerns about the procedural matter of how important Bills like these are being rushed through the House; and I will come back to that matter.

But let me go directly to first acknowledging, because I was Minister of Finance in this country and I think it is appropriate to first acknowledge the need that we need to collect the revenue that is not a matter that is up for debate. And I believe that everyone should pay his fair share - his or her fair share of the taxes that are due and payable. But, Mr. Speaker, the prescriptions that we use themselves must be fair and equitable, and must preserve confidence in our business environment. Because no matter the penalties, no matter the powers that we give to our tax authorities, in a free and democratic society we still are operating on the principle of voluntary compliance in relation to tax matters. I think it is important that we remind ourselves that we are still operating on the principle of voluntary compliance in relation to tax matters. And in that spirit of voluntary compliance, it therefore indicates the need for consensus building among all of the critical stakeholders in relation to taxation policy. (Applause)

Now the Government, as I said, has introduced two Bills in the House and which were tabled last week and which have far-reaching implications for how taxes are collected in this country. Unfortunately, under this Finance Minister, in relation to Bills being tabled in Parliament, I believe that a culture of disrespect for this due process of parliamentary review and scrutiny has emerged in recent months and I'm very concerned about it. The Minister declared last night these Bills were tabled last week and must be debated this week.

Mr. WARMINGTON: What?

(HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took her seat.)

Mr. SHAW: These Bills were tabled last week and must be debated this week.

Mr. D. SMITH: A him a run this House.

Mr. SHAW: His timetable is, table on the 15th of July, debate on the 22nd and I guess we must say we're lucky to get it to be debated on the 23rd. (Applause) And then no doubt, rush it through the Senate on the 25th for implementation on August 1, no doubt to celebrate Emancipation Day, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. CHARLES: Freedom day.

Mr. SHAW: The time-honoured tradition, which is now savagely, if not arrogantly and disrespectfully being dismantled, is that Bills of this gravity and importance are put to a select committee or Joint Select Committee of Parliament that has hearings and allows the public and stakeholders from a wide cross section of the society, to appear before Parliament and share their views. This is not being done in this case. And as we've heard from the Minister yesterday, especially the Miscellaneous Act, is a very weighty piece of legislation.

All of this time-honoured tradition, Mr. Speaker, is now being thrown out on the altar of the dictates of our new masters the IMF and we must hurry up and pass the laws and have them, hurry up and pass the laws in time for the next date that must be achieved and the next test to be passed. So we're bypassing due process of Parliament; we're bypassing the due process of a healthy engagement with all of our stakeholders. And let's understand this, this is not just us in this House the stakeholders are outside of here; they're the citizens of Jamaica; they're the Bar Association of Jamaica; they're the Institute of Chartered Accountants; they're the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica; they're the Jamaica Manufacturers' Association; they're all these various constituent groups that have their opinions, and that this Parliament, it is not a private club for us to take up serious pieces of legislation rush them through Parliament to achieve another IMF target while our people are (a), either ignorant of what we're passing, but notwithstanding their ignorance, they will be the subject of these serious decisions that are being taken in this House.

(MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. RICHARD ANTONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

Why is it very serious, Mr. Speaker? Well, the Minister told us yesterday that due to the endemic tax avoidance and tax evasion enhanced powers of tax collection are needed and that these measures are intended to have a practical effect and will change the culture of evasion and avoidance. Very ambitious. Very ambitious if the objective is to use a blunt instrument that even an instrument so blunt, even described as having in one case being imported from another jurisdiction; an instrument so blunt that instead of getting a culture of cooperation it might deepen the problem of avoidance.

The question is, Mr. Speaker, do we really need enhanced tax powers or do we need enhanced administrative capabilities to improve tax collection? That's an issue that has to be discussed. It was an issue when I was Minister. It remains an issue today.

(HON. NOEL GEORGE DELANO ARSCOTT, (PNP), Clarendon, South Western, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, entered and took his seat.)

One is the law, the other one is the practical matter of administering the law. And so the first question that has to be asked, Mr. Speaker, is whether we have adequately researched the administrative capabilities and necessities within the context of the existing

legislation, which is not short of powers. Not short of powers. Awesome too, that already exists.

Mr. D. SMITH: So why they want more?

Mr. SHAW: But in our mad rush to impose these enhanced, if not draconian powers, is this Government prepared to trample upon the constitutional rights of the citizens of Jamaica in order to achieve this objective? It appears so, and I will be getting to it.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, I will not take the time to enumerate for this Honourable House the raft of existing powers of search and seizure that is already available to the tax departments of this country. But we know that there are many, many powers of search and seizure including, as the Minister said yesterday the power of garnishment, which when he mentioned garnishment under the Miscellaneous Act he mentioned that this is something that already exists. Indeed, it is something that already exists. So if it already exists why are we....

Dr. PHILLIPS: Well, then when you ask the question.

Mr. SHAW: I will be.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Okay, sir.

Mr. SHAW: Yes, don't rush me. I never rush you yesterday.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. SHAW: Okay, don't rush me. You might mek me slow down.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ....slow down.

Mr. SHAW: Okay.

Mr. Speaker.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, it is our view that more draconian tax legislation as proposed in the Miscellaneous Provisions Act on top of the raft of awesome powers that already exist will likely lead to a further erosion of business confidence, which is an issue right now. It is already tenuous and could drive more businesses out of the formal banking system notwithstanding recent legislation that limits the amount of cash transactions that can be dealt with in a bank.

(MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. DERRICK FLAVIUS KELLIER, (PNP), St. James, Southern, Minister of Labour and Social Security, entered and took his seat.)

But this could lead to a further - to a larger underground economy, which is already at the very heart part of the problem of the Collector of Taxes' problem is the size of the underground economy and if you take steps that further dilute business confidence that cause more businesses to go underground then you're going to send the underground economy is getting larger and hence it affects your ability to raise your taxes once again.

Mr. Speaker, tax evasion and avoidance is a major issue and must be dealt with in a manner that is seen and perceived to be fair and equitable to all concerned. But we cannot afford to depart from the constitutional provisions that protect the rights of the people.

Opposition MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. SHAW: Very important and we're coming back to it. We cannot afford to depart from the constitutional provisions that are inherently there to protect the rights of the people. (Applause)

Opposition MEMBER: Can't let them down.

Mr. SHAW: Operating under the cover of what other jurisdictions do, as mentioned yesterday, citing a case in Canada in relation to the question of the lien and the certification through the Courts by the tax authorities. Citing that as an example can easily be taken out of context, Mr. Speaker, can easily be taken out of context. Efficiency in the Tax Administration must be the objective. Efficiency, not new unconstitutional and draconian legislation.

Mr. CHUCK: Hear, hear!

Mr. SHAW: Our larger problem has been an economy, Mr. Speaker, in persistent decline from over twenty years of mismanagement by the present Administration with high debt, high interest rates, high energy costs and persistent lack of growth since 1989.

(Applause) (Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, I want to mention a few areas mostly in relation to the miscellaneous piece of legislation. But let me say in relation to the Act to harmonize - let me say, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the Act to harmonize the penalties in the Education Tax Act and the Income Tax Act, just want to say in relation to that Bill that this sets out to harmonize penalties. And I have seen and observed where the penalties have increased quite significantly. And you know, Minister when you tabled this - the first Bill that was tabled last week did not have important attachments to it such as, what it is intended to replace and so on, the fines and the penalties. And I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that that's another reason why you don't rush legislation like this, because it was not until yesterday when the complete Bill was tabled that had the attachment of what it sought to replace. Before that because we know that these various fines that are changed over the years are all over the place makes it difficult for us to track it, and so we finally got the information when the proper Bill was tabled yesterday. So that very day when I was expected to speak is when we are scrambling to be finding the information which was just tabled because the initial draft that was tabled did not have that attachment to it, which it makes even more difficult to meaningfully participate in the debate. But my question to the Minister is this, is there any plan for a generalized review of all penalties and all interest charges across all tax types with a view - I believe that there has been a - I can't necessarily speak for the Minster, but certainly speak for myself that there has been a general view that one of the things we need to do is to look at all of the pieces of legislation that relate to charges, and regulations as well, that relate to charges and penalties and your interest and so on, and see how they might be adjusted generally downwards and perhaps more in line with international standards.

And I have seen where in terms of the General Consumption Tax proposed in the Bill that has been tabled by the Minister, a

beginning in relation to a cut from 2½ per cent down to 1½ per cent, which is a step in the right direction. And I really want to commend to the Minister that, I mean, beyond the horrendous increases that exist in this particular piece of legislation in terms of penalties which has introduced prison terms now - I think the old system that it replaces had prison terms of as high as two years. But this one now prison terms gone up to ten years. In a third instance, yes, but it gone up to ten years, if it has to go to the Circuit Court for - and if the fees are not being paid. And so with all of these hefty fines being imposed now it's even more important, Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Minister looks carefully at what the interest rates are on debt that is outstanding; what the penalties in terms of, you know, what I called intermediate penalties are, because part of the problem is that if you have the interest rate and the penalties too high and that can accelerate too fast then you're going to make the thing uncollectable, which the Minister is now trying to deal with hundreds of billions of dollars of uncollectable debt which is already in the system and which he is now putting in a system for write-off. And I'm going to come back to that particular issue because it is also an issue in the other Bill and I'll come back to that in a moment.

So I'm simply saying that if - Minister, you don't review the rates overall then it is not if people gwine go to prison is when you *gwine* build more prison space for people in Jamaica, because where it *'mawga it gwine haffi bruk'* off. Because if the penalties and the interest charges and everything is compounded and compounded and people cannot afford it, they caan mek blood out of stone. What is going to happen? You're going to have to open up the prisons because they just ain't going to be able to pay.

(MISS OLIVIA ATAVIA GRANGE, (JLP), St. Catherine, Central, entered and took her seat.)

So, I think that my major comment in relation to this Harmonization Act is that I believe you have to take a wider look - you have to take a wider look at the total picture of interest and penalties and to see how they can be brought into a more manageable situation.

Now, to get back to the Tax Collection Act and to the issue as I mention awhile ago, of interest and penalties, because it's not unrelated to the point I was making a while ago.

In the Bill in section 2A, the Minister is proposing, Mr. Speaker, that....

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. SHAW: No, it's not 2A in 22A the Applications of Payments, that's on page 13 of the draft that I have, it relates to the application of payments. And, I know that some time ago, a decision was taken to apply the payments to principal first and then to subsequently apply the payments to outstanding interests and penalties. And the reason for that was that, if you continually apply the payment to interest and penalties, depending on the pace of that application, it's a problem that will never be solved because the interest and penalties will simply continue

to grow and grow and grow. So there was a decision to put the payments first to the principal and subsequently to interest and penalties. But now, it is proposed that the tax debtor must first pay. The payment will first apply to any interest that is payable, they are reversing that position.

Secondly, penalty that is payable. Thirdly, any surcharge that is payable. And finally, any principal amount that is payable.

Now, if this is being instituted in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, let me say to you, that this is a problem that is likely to continue to persist in terms of uncollectible money, that's simply what is likely to happen.

And, let's not forget that this change was implemented to avoid the growth in interest, penalties and surcharge, which we saw was heavily compounded as occurred for debtors under the FINSAC crisis. In the FINSAC crisis, one of the major problems with the compounding of this debt was that the interest was applied first - the payment was applied to the interest and penalties, rather than to the principal. And it was changed and now we are proposing to bring it back.

Mr. CHUCK: You never touched the principal.

Mr. SHAW: And it was changed and now, we are proposing to bring it back. We are proposing to bring it back. So the problem of dealing with uncollectibles is never going to be solved under this scenario, Mr. Speaker, it's going to make things worse. And the timing is particularly bad, as many businesses are on the brink right now. Interest should be levied, Mr. Speaker, on a simple interest basis and be in line with new reduced market rates of interest that we have. There are lower rates of interest in the country, why aren't we reflecting that in our interest charges as well for taxes that are owed, which reflects, of course, the time value of money.

The penalty regime, in my view, should factor in the nature of the breach, its materiality and the number of breaches so that a low rate or no penalties on those generally compliant can be applied with heavier penalties for those that are repeat offenders, ongoing breaches.

So, I think that that needs to be looked at definitely with the problem that the Minister already has with uncollectible money in the system, for which he has had to put in a whole bureaucracy to now deal with that, including a special committee that is supposed to be looking at the write-off of uncollectible debt.

I want to point out as well, Mr. Speaker, that - and I would seek clarification from the Minister in relation to the payment of the 2½%. Is the replacement of the GCT interest of 2½% per month is in principle a good concept, but we need to know what is the rate that is now being prescribed. The Minister mentioned it in the House yesterday, but he has not told us what is the new rate that is going to be prescribed. In the GCT Act, he has mentioned that the new rate is 1/4%. But, in the other areas that this relates to, I mean, the actual clause - it's close to the front - in section - the first clause - in section 46(6), delete the words, *"interest at a rate of* 2½% *per month or part thereof"* and substitute *"interest at the rate prescribe by order made*

under section 2A of the Tax Collection Acts". So by order, what is this going to be, an arbitrary figure? One day it could be 2%, another day it could be 1%, 1½%, what is it? If there is a new rate why don't you just state it? Why don't you just put it in the Bill and say this is the rate that will now apply? I'm putting that to you, Minister, for your comment and clarification.

Because if that is so, the question must be asked, is the new rate to be charged for all forms of tax liabilities, not just General Consumption Tax? And if that's the case and you want - that's your plan, then tell us what the new rate is. Will it be consistent with the GCT lower rate of 1½% or is there another rate being contemplated?

And, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned it before but I think it's worth repetition. That the rationalization of all interest rates and penalties to be generally lower and, therefore, increases the payability, so to speak, to coin a word. Because, you know, this takes us now - and I want to talk just briefly about another point related to the disclosure of information to credit bureaus.

Now, the Minister mentioned it yesterday, but I'm not convinced and I think the Parliament needs to be assured that the tax delinquents will only be reported after all efforts, including appeals to the Commissioner and the process including the Courts, have been exhausted. The provision as outlined is not very clear on this matter. For instance, we are told that a taxpayer can appeal within 30 days after getting an assessment. Suppose for any reason that that taxpayer didn't get that assessment, suppose, whatever. There are cases right now in the system where taxpayers have not gotten their assessment, didn't get it and were, therefore, not able to respond within the stipulated 30 day period. So what happens after that? Their names turn up at the Credit Bureau. If that were so that would not be - that is not natural justice at all.

So, the process, I believe, has to be clear, exhaustive and gives the taxpayer - it must be concluded then, in a way, right, the matter is now clear and concluded and it can therefore go to the Credit Bureau.

So, once an appeal or litigation is underway, this liability should not be reported to the Bureau. A process is underway, litigation is underway, can't be reported to the Bureau.

Also, in circumstances where the Government may also owe money to a taxpayer who is reported to owe the Government. Will the taxpayer have a right of set-off from the Government's own liability to the taxpayer?

Opposition MEMBER: Good point.

Mr. SHAW: It's a point I'll return to because - it's a point I'll return to because there is an issue. In fact, I'll just deal with it now, the set-off. Because in this Bill, the Tax Administration, in a bid to recover taxes owed can set-off and deduct other amounts due to that person by the Government of Jamaica, but unfairly, does not empower the taxpayer to demand such a set-off from the TAJ. It does not refer to the period of time such an amount

remains outstanding in relation to principal tax remaining. If the Government set-off is not used to pay principal, but instead used....

Now, this is the other point now. If the Government set-off is not used to pay principal but instead, used to first settle interest, penalties and surcharge, the effect is, the tax balance continue to grow due to interest, penalties and surcharge. That will be iniquitous, iniquitous and unacceptable, Mr. Speaker!

Mr. DALLEY: Stop shouting! Stop shouting!

(Laughter)

Mr. SHAW: So that equally, on the tax issue of the reciprocity that should be imposed and set-off by the Government for what is owed by them to the taxpayer. GCT owed, for instance, by the Government right now to taxpayers runs into billions of dollars, runs into billions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, of General Consumption Tax Refunds that the Government of Jamaica owes to taxpayers of this country. So it's not taxpayers one that owe money!

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) The Member's time for speaking has expired.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Member's time for speaking be extended to allow him to complete his presentation.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Member's time for speaking be extended sufficiently for him to complete his presentation?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the Honourable Members.

Mr. Speaker, on a matter that I intend to come back to but I will raise it now as well. That under the proposed section 40B of the Tax Collection Act, which will require the Commissioner General to - will allow the Commissioner General to require third parties suspected, without proof, of holding money belonging to an unrelated tax debtor to immediately pay such amounts over to the TAJ, and the TAJ can penalize a suspected third party if he doesn't pay over that money. A very serious, very serious issue and I am obliged to come back to that issue, but it is, Mr. Speaker, a very serious issue.

Now - so let us get now to those points in 40B, 40C and 40D of the Tax Collection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014. I want to speak in more detail on each of these clauses that is proposed in this Act.

Mr. Speaker, I recognized that the Minister is taking advice, but I'm hoping that I can be engaged, because I consider these matters to be, not just something - not something to be whimsical about, it's a very serious matter and we must give it the treatment that it requires.

Now under 40B of the Tax Collection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 40B, Mr. Speaker, refers specifically to the issue of garnishment and the Minister was quick to remind us yesterday that garnishment already exists in the system and indeed it does. But I want to remind the Honourable Minister that the circumstances under which garnishment exists, Mr. Speaker, the present circumstances,

perhaps with some exceptions, he mentioned the Auditor General Act yesterday, but in the larger, and that would relate to public sector workers, but in the broader sphere where it relates to the private sector, Mr. Speaker - Mr. Speaker in the broader sphere where it refers to garnishment I want to remind the Honourable House and I would like - would you stop distracting the Minister and let me talk to him. (Referring to Mikael Phillips) - I want to remind the Honourable House and the Honourable Minister of Finance, but garnishment does exist I agree but it must first in the usual circumstances be adjudicated in the Court before it can be taken out and practised against the offending taxpayer.

Under the present system it must first be adjudicated by the courts and it adjudicated in various court jurisdictions. In the Supreme Court it requires a Court Order under the Civil Procedure Rules in the Supreme Court of Jamaica in order for a tax officer to go to garnish people's money or assets. So the intermediation of the Court, the intermediation of the Court is there. It exists also in the realm of the Resident Magistrate's Act. You must get an Order of the Court and, of course, the Supreme Court, the Resident Magistrate's Court; these Courts are the independent party that intermediates between the tax authority and the taxpayer. So, Mr. Speaker, there is a third party to which - it's called the Court of the land and that is the basis on which garnishment is approved and effected by the tax authorities.

What is it now that is being proposed, Mr. Speaker? The proposal here under section 40B amounts to nothing more than a barefaced attempt to bypass the intermediation of the courts of the land by allowing the Commissioner General to directly without any reference to the courts garnish, get involved in garnishment.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Not at all.

Mr. SHAW: Okay. What does the Bill say? "*Where the Commissioner General knows or suspect*", suspect, don't have to just know as a matter of fact, him can suspect.

Mr. WARMINGTON: This is not Russia!

Mr. CHUCK: Or Cuba.

Mr. SHAW: "*That a person (a) owes, controls or has custody of monies belonging to a tax debtor or (b) is or will be within one year liable to make a payment to a tax debtor*". That is not only in the present now, it's in the future - within a year. "*The Commissioner General*", I continue to read, "*may in writing require the person to pay forthwith*". What does forthwith mean again, Mr. Speaker, now, that's what forthwith means. Where the monies are immediately payable and in any other case as and when the monies become payable, the monies otherwise payable to the tax debtor in whole or in part to the Commissioner General an account of an amount owed by the tax debtor to the Commissioner General. Mr. Speaker, there is no reference in this section to the Courts.

Mr. McKENZIE: I wonder who make that recommendation.

Mr. SHAW: So the Commissioner General will now arrogate onto himself the power of garnishment without any reference

to the court. What kind of gestapo tactics are we trying to introduce in our taxation system in this country.

Mr. WARMINTON: Russia!

Mr. SHAW: Commissioner is in effect saying that up to a year I am ordering that all the money due to the debtor from now up to a year, I want that money, no argument and the Court not involved.

Mr. McKENZIE: A wonder *a who mek dat* recommendation. The Prime Minister *shuda* fire *di* person who *mek* that recommendation.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, if this Clause is allowed to stand it is an unmitigated violation of the constitutional right of individuals to the due process of law. And to say - for the Minister to get up today and to reply that all the taxpayer has to do, Mr. Speaker, is to go to Court, go seek an injunction, everybody can go to court, business people who are on the brink, some of them deciding whether they should close their business or not, you think they have any money to get big time lawyer to go to court, Mr. Speaker. Don't come with that. Don't take away the rights of the court system that should be in and should remain in the taxation business, don't come and take it away and then arbitrarily tell *mi* that you can go to court. (Applause) You are depriving the rights of the citizens to due process.

Mr. SILVERA: Thank God for CCJ.

Mr. SHAW: You stay out of this; you don't even understand what we are talking about.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Warmington)

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I put it to the Honourable Minister this evening that the requirement for the protection...

(The Speaker gavels)

...the requirement for the protection of the rights of the citizens of this country is not to first take away the right by removing the court and then saying to them but if you don't like the decision of the tax authority you can go to court. The obligation of the Government is to protect the rights of the citizens of Jamaica, (Applause) not to take it away and after you take it away you say you can go to lawyer and go to court. No, no, and that is what this is proposing to do, Mr. Speaker, it is bad law; it is abusive legislation that infringes on the constitutional rights of the citizens.

Mr. CHARLES: And they would not put up with it.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner of Taxation must be obliged to get a court order as now exists in order for garnishing proceedings, he must get what you call in the legal fraternity a garnishee order. If you don't understand a garnishee order it means a *tek weh* order but it is a *tek weh* order as instituted by the Court of the land. This takes us now to 40C.

Mr. CHARLES: Bwoy, we are in trouble, big trouble.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, it takes us now to 40C.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by government Member)

Mr. SHAW: Listen to your water resources authority man, move the water from the north coast where it is and bring it come to

the south coast where we are. I know you would want me to run along from there.

Dr. BAUGH: Rain dance.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, in relation to section 40C...

Mr. CHUCK: Bobby, Clovis looking for you.

Mr. SHAW: And 40C, Mr. Speaker, I feel obliged to read into the record what 40C(1) and (2) says. And I want to read it into the record because it is so profound and important. It says, this relates to lien, "*The Commissioner General may issue a certificate*", in this section refers to as a certificate, "*certifying the amount owed by a tax debtor to the Commissioner General that has not been paid or anv part of an amount of tax owed by a tax debtor that has not been paid as an amount payable by the tax debtor*", so he can issue a certificate of an amount payable. That's what he is proposing. "*On production by the Commissioner General of a certificate in respect of a tax debtor to the Supreme Court*", in this section referred to as the Court, "*the certificate shall be registered in the Court and when so registered has the same effect and all proceedings may be taken thereon as if the certificate were a judgment obtained in the Court against the tax debtor for debt in the amount certified and the rules of the court, including those providing for accrual of interest shall apply accordingly*". So, Mr. Speaker, here we have it again now just like the garnishment this one is much more explicit. This one takes it another step.

Mr. CHUCK: The Court must accept what you say.

Mr. SHAW: Yes, this is now making the Tax Commissioner higher than the Judge because the Tax Commissioner has no obligation to ask the Judge to adjudicate in this matter anymore. The Tax Commissioner doesn't say, Your Honour, I need a Court Order to issue a lien, him just write up a certificate that says this is owed by the debtor, he registers that certificate with the Supreme Court and snap your fingers, no judge has been asked to look it even to bat his finger and say a thing, no Judge is asked to look at the certificate, once the certificate is registered according to this bad piece of legislation it shall be deemed to be a judgment of the Supreme Court. What kind of absolute rubbish is this?

Mr. WARMINGTON: Kangaroo Court!

Mr. CHARLES: The right gone now.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, if this is allowed to stand then the Commissioner of Tax Administration is now taking on the role of a prosecutor, a judge, the jury and the executioner or the implementer of garnishment and lien and everything else.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Atkinson)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Patrick, shut your mouth, did you read it?

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

Mr. SHAW: So, Mr. Speaker, the revenue or what we called the tax authority in these circumstances has accorded itself the role of, as I said prosecutor, judge, jury and executioner. If this passes in this House today we can forget about the constitutional rights of the citizens to the due process of law.

(Applause) And what we have been told is that this particular piece of legislation was drawn from the Canadian Tax Law.

Mr. DALLEY: Absolutely nonsense, nonsense you are talking about.

Mr. WARMINGTON: You don't understand it. Shut your mouth down there.

Mr. SHAW: What is context of the Canadian Tax Law? We have the Jamaican Tax Law here.

Mr. CHARLES: You are not qualified to tell him nonsense, you don't do Economics 101.

(The Speaker gavels)

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. CHARLES: You don't do Economics 101.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Charles and Mr. Dalley!

Mr. CHARLES: You don't do Economics 101.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles and Mr. Dalley!

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I know and I am coming to 40D, because we are told in 40D what the remedies the taxpayer has, but that is questionable because if you are now going to put these powers into the hands of the Tax Commissioner, take it out of the court, take away due process and now leave the taxpayer at the mercy of the Tax Commissioner and the revenue at the mercy of the revenue, otherwise him can go to court go get injunction - can't afford to go to court to get injunction, him can't even afford him business nowadays.

What of the taxpayer now that might have a dispute on the assessment, but because he never fulfilled the 30 day requirement, what happen to him is that he is at the mercy of the tax administrator, what happen to the one that is almost bankrupt if not bankrupt what happen to him, rush to Bankruptcy Court? What about fraud in the revenue we know that that exists, I was Minister, I know. What about the potential for malice and witch-hunt what about the potential for political victimization, for bad faith, where is the safeguard for the taxpayer, Mr. Speaker, where is the safeguard. We are taking it away and if this is allowed to stand it will be nothing less than a rape of the taxpayer's rights to natural justice and to the Constitution of this country. (Applause)

And I have this final question under this Section. Is the Supreme Court aware, is the Supreme Court of Jamaica aware of this proposal that is going to take away, that is going to use them first of all, they don't have a tax registry down there, but you are going to go down there and you are going to register you are going to register with the Supreme Court right, and by merely registering the Lord and Master, the Tax Commissioner have registered my name into the Registry at the Supreme Court. No Judge looks at it, no Judge is an intermediary between the tax authority and the aggrieved taxpayer, but it is registered and automatically deemed to be a judgement of the Supreme Court upon which now action can take place against the debtor.

Mr. CHARLES: The Attorney General said is him advise him.

Mr. WARMINGTON: But that is bad advice.

Mr. SHAW: This is a clear usurping of the authority of the Supreme Court. How can the Supreme Court receive and sanction such an egregious proposal, no doubt sanctioned by the Attorney General himself. This is an abuse of the inherent powers of the Supreme Court; but worse an abuse and a trampling upon the rights of citizens of this country including taxpayers.

And now we come to 40(D) when the Minister of Finance proudly proclaimed yesterday that there is protection under 40(D) let's look at that, and let us look at what promise of protection. Not so, there is no protection, Mr. Minister, and I am going tell you why.

Under Section 40(D), Mr. Speaker, under Section 40(D) Mr. Speaker, we are told the following, that the Commissioner General may not take any action under Section 40 (B) or 40 (C) in respect to an amount owed by the tax debtor unless, let's go through them one by one;

a. A notice of assessment signed by the taxpayer does not deny him - well, sorry (a) the tax debtor has acknowledged the amount owed including by way of filing a return of tax and has not paid the amount.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point that a notice of assessment which is oftentimes signed by the taxpayer does not deny the taxpayer the right of objection and appeal just because him sign the assessment does not deny his right of appeal and objection. So, in these circumstances, what does acknowledge mean? What does its law says that the taxpayer has acknowledged what does acknowledge mean? When him sign - when him sign the assessment, does it mean he has agreed with the assessment, no, no, and it does not mean that he has waived his right to the appeal process, does not. So that is not a remedy there.

The second one says the time for making any objection or appeal in respect of the amount owed has expired and the amount has not been paid. That one is a big one, Mr. Speaker, that one is a big one, because there are more than adequate numbers of cases in this country, where assessments are said to have been made and presented to taxpayers and they don't get it. They don't get it. But the time has expired, so because the tax authority said that the assessment has been waived, the taxpayer don't get it, but the time has expired guess what time for me to go and send the certificate to the Supreme Court and get out a judgement without a Judge looking at it. There is not a remedy here, indeed, Mr. Speaker, there is no remedy here; this is not a remedy at all, but because we know that in this country many people have been assessed and they don't get the assessment, but they hear many moons later you owe this and that and you never object and this and that dog '*nyam yu suppa*' now because under the old system you go to the Court. Under this new proposed system you don't have the right of going to the Court.

Dr. PHILLIPS: That is not true. A Point of Order.

Mr. SHAW: No, let me correct that. As I said before, you always have the right to go to the Court, and I am just repeating myself but, I don't have to go back to the point that you take away my right that I had before and now you are telling me but you have a right to go to the Court. And I am saying it is wrong you must not take away the right in the first place that is the point I am making.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. Pickersgill)

Mr. SHAW: Don't argue with him because when last him practice law, don't argue with him about it.

(Heckling by Members)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Members, let us not descend into personal recrimination. Mr. Warmington, Mr. Pickersgill please.

The Minister will have an opportunity to reply at which time the matters can be further elucidated.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members:

The Deputy SPEAKER: You are in Parliament and you are expected to behave as if you are in Parliament.

Continue, Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, you know, and I think the Minister must make himself aware of the fact that up to now, you know, most taxpayers in this country are unaware of the time that they have to object, you know, most of them are unaware of it. Some of them will never know. The law - the tax laws in this country are so complex and convoluted in some cases so unreadable so incomprehensible, that not even with the most erudite tax lawyers can make through all of these things. This has to be part of tax reform; this is going to have to be part of tax reform the whole complexity of this thing.

So, Mr. Speaker, we come now to (c) in the event of an objection or an appeal in respect of the amount owed the objection or appeal has been finally determined in accordance with the enactment. Listen to this now, listen this is number (c) for protection you know for the taxpayer that the appeal has been finally determined in accordance with the enactment under which the tax was imposed and the amount has not been paid. How is finally determined defined?

Dr. PHILLIPS: That is a term of law.

Mr. SHAW: Yes, but my understanding of final determination is that the Court would be involved; up to the Privy Council can be involved that is final determination. But you are going to make a - a tax authority is going to make a final determination in the middle of the process, and going to go, going to carry a certificate to the Supreme Court, and register the certificate and it now is deemed as a judgement against the tax debtor and the Court has not adjudicated on the matter.

Mr. Speaker, finally now, the deception, the deception deepens, the deception in this Act deepens because the Minister yesterday summarized the four benefits and protection to the taxpayer I mentioned (a (b) and (c) already. I mention (d) now when the Minister was mentioning (d) he mentioned this as if it was another layer of protection 1, 2, 3 and 4, there is a little problem with that, Mr. Speaker, (d) when it gets to that after the tax authority

mentioned - after the Bill mentioned (a), (b) and (c) the word, '*or*' is now inserted, '*or*' the amount owed has been finally determined by a Court. So the final determination that is in (c) is obviously a different form of final determination than the one under '*a Court'* which comes in (d) now but (d) is '*or',* now what is significant about that. It means that the Commissioner can use (a), (b) and (c) to go to file the certificate or there is the question of the Court. Now if you wanted to impose the Court upon the system here now you would have to say '*and',* you would have to say '*and so'* you would have to include the Court by removing the word '*or'* and substituting therein the word '*and',* because in putting the word '*and',* you will be obliged to bring in the Court into and satisfy the constitutional right of the people. (Applause) But putting the word or there is giving the Tax Commissioner the right to act under (a) (b) and (c) depending on how he or she has defined the so-called final determination.

'And Mr. Speaker, I must tell you that even this amendments of '*and',* I have to tell the Minister, even if the amendment he was to accept and put '*and'* there, to me it would not be enough of a remedy, you know why it would not be enough of a remedy. It is still bad law, it is not cohesive, it is not readable, narrative on taxpayer's obligations, it is ambiguous, it needs coherence and what must be paramount in tax law, Mr. Speaker, is simplicity taxpayer awareness, and, the pre-eminence of the Court in protecting the rights of the taxpayers.

(Applause)

The Government must not sanction anything as proposed in 40(B) and 40(D) the Government should take no action including the filing of the certificate until a court has ruled upon the particular issue.

I rest my case Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Chuck, just a moment, please.

I want to remind this Honourable House that, in the Standing Orders, Section 35, contents of speeches.

35: No Member shall impute improper motives to any other Member of either Chamber.

I just want to remind you all of that.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Mr. D. Smith)

The Deputy SPEAKER: I did not say anybody did, I am just giving the warning. Because we are getting close to that and I am warning. Mr. Chuck.

Mr. Smith, you ought to know better than to address the Speaker in that reclining position, sir. Mr. Chuck.

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, I am really concerned about the Bills before us, and I would certainly want to give support to what the spokesperson on Finance has said on this side, because this piece of legislation is frightening in the extreme, because the penalties imposed, the seemingly exclusion of the courts will frighten taxpayers who now exist, and, Mr. Speaker, investors who may want to open business here will think twice when they see this piece of legislation.

Mr. CHARLES: Three times, not twice.

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, I spoke in this House about Jamaica being a business friendly type society if we are ever going to lift our people out of poverty.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHUCK: And unless, Mr. Speaker, we become more friendly to business and to doing business in this country, we are going to remain poor forever. And, Mr. Speaker, you have a situation when I spoke in the Sectoral Debate, that the ease of paying taxes, or put it differently, the ease of doing business we are 94 out of 189, and one of the reasons why we are 94 out of 189 in the ease of doing business, is that the ease of paying taxes we are 169 or 164 out of 189. In other words, in this part of the hemisphere, Mr. Speaker, paying taxes in Jamaica is the most difficult thing of all the countries in this hemisphere, and now you have made it so difficult to pay taxes and you saying, if you don't pay we going lick you now with some penalties. In other words, Mr. Speaker, before you hit the taxpayers with some penalties make it easy for them to pay the taxes nuh. In other words, many taxpayers are so frustrated in paying their taxes that it's easier to avoid it until the Tax Commissioner come and assesses you, and when the Tax Commissioner assesses you it is overwhelming and you try to discuss and debate with the Tax Commissioner, before you know it it is better to close the business than to continue to operate.

And, indeed, Mr. Speaker, this Parliament now has a sub-committee dealing with the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, it seems to me we better pass that Act very quickly because a lot of taxpayers will need relief under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act if these things go through.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot make it difficult for business people to do business in this country, and what this is now going to do, Mr. Speaker, is to put higher hurdles for taxes to be paid and even to ensure that you collect the tax, Minister, because when you put these penalties in, when you put these provisions in what is going to happen, you know, is that you are going to have people doing business here but registering their companies abroad, and it is happening, it is happening, and believe me, if you think the authorities are smarter than many of these business people you have to think again because these business people know how to get around some of these tax laws. There is no doubt about it, they know. Although you know, Mr. Speaker, it makes sense and every business, every citizen of a country must pay their fair and reasonable share of taxes. But you cannot, Mr. Speaker, burden them so much that it is better to avoid doing business here.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I see in a letter that the Minister and the Governor sent to Ms. Lagarde and the IMF, and one of the provisions they put in it, is to employ 50 more auditors. Not to get more people to pay taxes, you know, but to go after the big taxpayers. Read that letter. Not to make sure that those who are not paying taxes come into the system, which is what we hope should happen. These 50 auditors are going to be employed to go after those who are paying, and you know, Mr. Speaker, it is very sad that the people who

are paying taxes in this country are being burdened more and more and these penalties are intended to frighten them even more, because they are being threatened that we are going to audit you and if we find out that you didn't pay up extra couple hundred thousand or millions of dollars, we are going to lock you up. No, Mr. Speaker, we have to be careful how we send the wrong signal.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, the Member from North East Manchester pointed out Section 40(B) and 40(C). They are frightening in their provisions, because you know, Mr. Speaker, you or I may employ a contractor to say, do work on our house, the contractor cannot pay his taxes but he says to the Tax Commissioner is Mr. X or Mr. Y who owes me some money, as soon as Mr. X or Mr. Y pay me, I will pay my taxes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. X, being me, owes the contractor but I am not going to pay him until he fixes my house or whatever I have employed him to do properly, but he is not doing it, the contractor, and he is telling the Tax Commissioner I owe him money, and now, Mr. Speaker, a simple privity of contract between the contractor and myself, under this law the Tax Commissioner can now say, come to me to pay the contractor's taxes -

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Davies)

Mr. CHUCK: Well what it mean?

Dr. DAVIES: You talking rubbish.

Dr. PHILLIPS: You are going to lose all the business if you keep talking.

A MEMBER: You talking rubbish.

Mr. CHUCK: But, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker…

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Where you get that from?

(Heckling/The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. CHUCK: Mr. Speaker, if anyone understands English, where the Commissioner General knows or suspects that a person holds controls or has custody of money belonging to a tax debtor, you understand, Mr. Speaker? Now the contractor who has employed is a tax debtor.

(Heckling)

He says to the Commissioner that I owe him money and I am not denying that I owe him money, but he is to do my work properly before I pay him. Under this garnishee order-provision, the Tax Commissioner might ask me to pay the amount, I am forced to pay it and I am not satisfied with the work that the contractor has done.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

Mr. CHUCK: You know, Mr. Speaker, what this is doing is to invade a time-honoured principle of contract law, privity of contract.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHUCK: Privity of contract. So all I am saying, Mr. Speaker, before that is done, before that is done go to the court…

(Heckling)

….go to the court, go to the court and let me who the garnishment order has been put on, explain to the court why I have not paid him.

(Heckling)

Now, Mr. Speaker…

(Heckling/The Deputy Speaker gavels)

It seems so simple, Mr. Speaker, that if the Tax Commissioner wants to collect his or her

taxes for the nation which is needed, apply to the court for the garnishee order. Why should the Tax Commissioner be empowered because he or she suspects that the person owes money to the tax debtor, he doesn't know why the person owes money to the tax debtor and the basis on which he is refusing to pay the tax debtor and just put a demand on the tax debtor, lender or whoever who owes the money? That can't make sense. Let it be a court matter.

(Heckling)

And, Mr. Speaker, when you look at 40(C), Mr. Speaker, it's a simple situation and here again, where the Tax Commissioner, on whatever basis, has imposed an assessment on the taxpayer, the taxpayer has not challenged it, maybe has not had the opportunity to challenge it, yet a certificate is given to the court and that certificate when given to the court is like a court judgement. How does that make sense, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. CHARLES: Tax judgement.

Mr. CHUCK: Well it's like a court judgement and under this Act there is no provision for the taxpayer to challenge this assessment done by the Tax Commissioner because the certificate, Attorney General, is what the section says is similar to a court judgement. That is what this section is saying and, Mr. Speaker…

Mr. ATKINSON: (Inaudible comment) …one and two lines, read the whole thing. You can't interpret it well.

Mr. CHUCK: Well, you know, Attorney General, it is obvious to me that if it doesn't make sense in English it needs revision.

Mr. ATKINSON: If you read the whole thing you will understand.

Mr. CHUCK: If it doesn't make sense in English it needs revision.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I ask you, Minister, and the Opposition spokesperson on Finance, this is a matter that needs further examination before it is passed in this House.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Attorney General.

Mr. ATKINSON: May it please you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to support the amendments...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Warmington)

Mr. ATKINSON: ...to, and to -

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Kindly allow Mr. Atkinson to speak.

Thank you.

Mr. ATKINSON: - and to remind this Honourable House that the purpose of these pieces of legislation is to facilitate the collection of taxes and to make it easier for persons to pay taxes.

I note, Mr. Speaker that both Members on the Opposition speak and affirm their belief that people should pay their taxes, and also that tax evasion is a major issue, but none of this, these provisions are not geared to interfere with people who pay their taxes, it is pointed at tax evaders.

Mr. CHARLES: All of oonu over there evade tax. So we gwaan see how much of oonu a go a prison.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles, be careful.

(Heckling/Laughter)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: You remember why they lock down your bank?

(Heckling)

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker, we have heard a number of catchphrases that have been pieced together like an imperfect piece of quilt work. But when one looks at the sum total of the arguments one recognizes that they are inherently unpersuasive.

If we look at 40(B)

Mr. WARMINGTON: What about the rights you are taking away from the citizens here? That's what you spoke about.

Mr. ATKINSON: Mr. Speaker, no constitutional right of anybody is impacted in any way by these two pieces of legislation. We hear talk about due process.

Due process is given in a contentious situation, the other side notice, an opportunity to be heard and an opportunity to call refuting evidence. I don't know how that applies to legislation in this House when it has been properly tabled, it has been debated and the other side has been given an opportunity to put their arguments.

Just yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we passed a piece of legislation that has been lingering in this House from 2002. And we now hear complaints...

Mr. WARMINGTON: That's not what we are talking about! We are not talking about that!

Mr. ATKINSON: We now hear complaints and catchphrases about the rushing through of legislation.

Mr. SHAW: Then nuh true!

Mr. ATKINSON: It is not true!

Mr. SHAW: It is true!

Mr. ATKINSON: It is not true!

Mr. WARMINGTON: You rushed through the back door come here! Don't bother with that in here!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. ATKINSON: When important issues come before this House, important matters that impact this nation, it behoves all of us in here to exercise some diligence and to read the documents as they are put on, and not to talk about one week is not enough.

(Government Members applaud)

Read it and read all of it!

This country is tired of this House delaying important pieces of legislation. We must read them. It was tabled a week ago, the documents are here and you can go and research the existing Act, don't wait for it to be presented to you. Be diligent! That's what you must do!

(*Sotto voce* comments from Mr. Warmington)

Mr. SHAW: Why did you get up to Speak? You have made no sense so far!

Mr. ATKINSON: I got up to speak that what you said was absolute nonsense! It was loud but it was nonsense!

(Government Members applaud)

(Cross talk)

We hear about this garnishment, this garnishment. What 40B says, if the Commissioner knows or suspects that a person:

a) holds, controls...custody of monies belonging to a tax debtor;

b) is or will be within a year liable to make a payment to a tax debtor,

the Commissioner may require that the monies be paid to discharge a tax debt forthwith.

Mr. CHARLES: How you going know that? Suss?

(HON. PETER MURCOTT BUNTING, (PNP), Manchester Central, Minister of National Security, entered and took his seat.)

Mr. ATKINSON: When you stop and think that anybody who pays PAYE taxes, it is money owing to you, and the Collector of Taxes says, take out my taxes out of it before you give him his salary. What is unconstitutional about it? Where is the unconstitutionality about it in requiring that taxes be paid out of funds that are coming to the tax debtor?

Mr. SHAW: You talking rubbish!

Mr. CHARLES: I authorize my employer to take that! I authorize PAYE!

(Cross talk)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. ATKINSON: I would like any one of you to instruct your employers not to deduct the PAYE.

Mr. WARMINGTON: You see, Patrick, that's why you lose the case for the Minister down there!

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington! Stick to what is being discussed. What you are saying does not apply here.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The Deputy SPEAKER: It's not germane here, okay.

Mr. ATKINSON: With regard to 40C, if the whole section is read as one - Section 40C(2) says:

"*On production by the Commissioner General of a certificate in respect of a tax debtor to the Supreme Court (in this section referred to as the "Court"), the certificate shall be registered in the Court and when so registered has the same effect, and all proceedings may be taken thereon, as if the certificate were a judgement obtained in the Court..."*

Where is that taking away the jurisdiction of the Court, when it mandates that you must go to the Court and register the document?

Mr. SHAW: And a Judge looked at it and adjudicated on it! You are being dishonest!

Mr. CHARLES: And you are one of the better lawyers.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I don't think so!

Mr. CHARLES: You would have defended that!

Mr. ATKINSON: 40C(3) says:

"For greater certainty, for the purpose of any proceedings under this section -

i) the rules of the Court relating to judgement debts apply;"

Meaning, the rules of the Supreme Court.

Mr. CHUCK: The certificate is unchallenged!

(Cross talk)

Mr. ATKINSON: But to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in every case where the Commissioner seeks to recover a debt, he must take it to Court, so the Supreme Court will be over-laden with every single tax debtor

that exists in this country. Can you imagine the chaos that that would cause?

Mr. CHARLES: How has it been for the past 60 years? That's rubbish you talking 'bout! You are under-rating, disrespecting the Judges!

Mr. ATKINSON: Tax evasion, Mr. Speaker, is a major issue, I agree.

Mr. CHARLES: In the world.

Mr. ATKINSON: In the world. And regardless of where people register their businesses, they will have to pay taxes. And there are certain countries that will not allow people to register their business in the so-called tax havens anymore. The world has changed, we better change with it.

Mr. WARMINGTON: You know, some lawyers...

(Cross talk)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington! Mr. Warmington!

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. ATKINSON: We hear, Mr. Speaker, this talk about voluntary compliance.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Me going leave now.

Mr. ATKINSON: Voluntary compliance exists, and those who voluntarily comply by paying their taxes, the taxes that are due, don't have to worry about these two pieces of legislation. So to suggest that voluntary compliance is an alternative to do with these two pieces of legislation, is a non-argument.

Mr. CHARLES: Boy, if is you we are depending on, we in trouble! If is you them depending on to defend them we inna trouble! (Laughter) We inna trouble!

Mr. ATKINSON: What the statute - what the legislation allows is to facilitate the collection of taxes by persons who are bent and are as clever as those that the Member from North East, St. Andrew speaks of.

Mr. CHARLES: My son just come back from law school, and if him go on so, me run him out a de house! If is him you depending on you inna trouble, serious trouble! Me a tell yu! Me will come look fe yu all the same.

Mr. ATKINSON: The amendment allows for the electronic communication system to be used in the paying of taxes, including filing of returns, payment of taxes, receiving notices. So people don't have that excuse anymore of there being long lines so therefore, I don't pay my taxes.

Mr. CHUCK: You go down to any tax collection agency at the end of the month.

Mr. ATKINSON: I would rather go down to my computer and pay.

Mr. Hugh BUCHANAN: Go on line!

(Heckling)

Mr. ATKINSON: So, what this legislation does is to encourage the use of these alternate measures.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when the necessity arises and taxes are imposed, we get a long lecture from over there that you ought not to put in any new taxes, you are to improve the collection system. When you try to improve the collection system you get a big argument, oh, but this is draconian and it is taking away people's constitutional rights...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Rubbish! Rubbish! That's not improving it!

Mr. ATKINSON: ...and people who

evade taxes are more clever than the Government.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Rubbish!

Mr. ATKINSON: The time has come when we, as a nation, must understand that we owe a duty to pay our taxes.

Mr. CHARLES: We know that!

Mr. ATKINSON: And we must understand that those who do not pay taxes are committing a criminal offence and they will be punished like any other criminal.

(Cross talk)

Criminal penalties should not just be reserved for poor people for picking pockets. People who don't pay their taxes must be punished like any other person, because it is a crime.

Mr. CHARLES: You assaulting the poor, now.

Mr. ATKINSON: No, you are not one of those. When we speak of poor people we are not talking about you, so you don't put yourself there.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. ATKINSON: So, Mr. Speaker, I wish to support the proposed amendments...

Mr. WARMINGTON: But you have said that six times!

Mr. ATKINSON: ...and ask the House to support it because it is a necessary piece of legislation, and we must seek to improve on our tax collection procedures. (Applause)

A Government MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

(Dr. Phillips rose)

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: No, no, just a moment, Mr. Charles. Sit, please.

Are you yielding to Mr. Charles?

Mr. CHARLES: No, no, no. Mr. Speaker, I don't think he has that authority to yield.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Eh?

Mr. CHARLES: I don't think he has the authority to yield.

The Deputy SPEAKER: No, but he was on his feet.

Mr. CHARLES: You have the authority to recognize me or don't recognize me, if you so please.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, but he was on his feet when you rose.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: No, no, no, he hasn't opened his mouth yet.

The Deputy SPEAKER: All right, I know. Mr. Charles, go ahead. You have opened your mouth, so go ahead. (Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: Thank you very much.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHARLES: Even if I didn't learn it in school I am here long enough...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles, go ahead and make your point.

Mr. CHARLES: ...to learn it. I am here six terms. Some a ounoo young bud just nuh know hurricane.

(Heckling)

Mr. Speaker, I want to present to you that we have a problem. We have a problem in this House today with these two Bills.

It seems as if everybody over that side is comfortable. That means, all the Members who have been elected on the Government side are comfortable with these Bills,

understand them and are in full support of them. If it is not so I will yield for anyone to say it's not so. Okay, it means all of you are satisfied.

The people over this side are concerned, and our spokesman has made a presentation emphasizing our concern on behalf of the people of this country.

The Attorney General has been called on to give some explanation to us...

Mr. WARMINGTON: No, he wasn't called on, he got up and volunteered.

Mr. CHARLES: ...on certain areas in the Bill.

With the greatest of respect to you, Attorney...

Mr. SHAW: He has not been helpful.

Mr. CHARLES: ...and you know I respect you as a lawyer.

Mr. D. SMITH: As a what?

Mr. CHARLES: Lawyer - Attorney-at-law, not a politician because him just come - I am not satisfied with your presentation. I am not satisfied that the guide you have given the Ministry of Finance is right.

And I am going to summon the public to advise us - even if you pass it tonight - I am depending on the communication media to get information from others as to whether the Leader, the...

(Appearing to point to Mr. Shaw)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yeah, yu right!

Government MEMBERS: You right, man. Leader! Leader! (Applause)

Mr. CHARLES: I am going to depend...

A Government MEMBER: You neva vote fe him!

(Heckling from Government Members)

Mr. CHARLES: You can see how trivial you are. You see the trivia?

I am going to defend as to whether the Leader's appointment...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: That what?

Mr. CHARLES: The Leader of the Opposition's appointment is correct or not.

(Laughter/Heckling)

The Leader has appointed the Member from Manchester to guide us in financial matters, and he has done research and made a presentation, and we are satisfied.

(Cross talk)

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I think that justice...

(Cross talks/Laughter)

Taking this thing as a laughing matter is not in our interest.

I am one of those who is not opposed to paying taxes, but I believe that taxes should be paid in a way how people see it as an incentive to pay tax. When you pay tax and your garbage is taken up, your roads are fixed, security is good, your health service is good, your civil servants are happy, you have an incentive to pay, but when you are threatened, as these Bills are threatening to do, those who are hiding find deeper tunnels to go. And I am warning you, I'm advising you, based on my experience, that this is not the proper way to collect taxes.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. CHARLES: And so, Minister of Finance, I would suggest that you take some advice from the Leader's appointment of Mr. Shaw as Opposition spokesman on Finance.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, if they were over this side it couldn't happen? If that Member, who is Minister of Finance was in this chair where he used to sit, this Member, being Minister of Finance, couldn't pass that in this House.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Dalley)

Mr. WARMINGTON: Oh shut yuh mouth!

Mr. CHARLES: Couldn't pass it! They would not only walk out, they would gather at the Bank of Jamaica; they would come back here in holiday to open the House...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes.

Mr. CHARLES: ...open the House without a Speaker to tell us what to do.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes.

Mr. CHARLES: You know, Mr. Speaker, I'm telling you, I'm gonna make a call; I'm gonna make a call and this is not one that divine intervention needs to come in.

(Heckling)

I'm gonna make a call to the people of this country to start examine what is coming on us. I've seen papa tax, I've seen the big axe tax, I've seen them chop off head; we don't get no way, Minister; I've seen it in that direction since I've been here. I'm on my sixth term here, two terms in the Senate and six down here is eight, I've seen it and I'm telling you, Minister, it is not the proper road to go on.

(Cross talk)

Taxes must have some consensus. Taxes must give some incentive for people to work and do business. Taxes must give people a chance to invest that others work and pay taxes. The fear that is being created by these things - and as you say, guided by the Attorney General, who get up and forcefully advise, you proceed, Minister, no heavy wind and sea fly. You have the majority, Minister, to say yes, but I want to tell you something, I've seen it happened already and it doesn't work.

So I want to close by saying, it surprises me that the Member from this side has convinced us over this side, that there's cause for concern. Support from this side, told the rest of us there's cause for concern and that none over that side, three, six, nine, twelve.

A MEMBER: Soh yuh caan count?

(Heckling)

Mr. CHARLES: Three, six and two make eight, twelve and eight is how much twenty?

MEMBERS: Twenty-one.

Mr. CHARLES: Twenty-one of you and none a yuh concern! As far as you're concern you tell the Press it is good, go Minister! We're saying, Minister, we're concerned, we're not satisfied, we're concerned of the presentation made by the Member here; it caused us some concern, we're asking you to consult, look, don't wait on tomorrow morning for the radio show to say yuh wrong, you've a chance now to take a look at it again and make some amendment if you feel that it is not the correct way.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. CHARLES: So, Minister, the Member from - the Attorney General has said these things here been here for years; been here under the other PNP Government yuh sey

for five years? Under the JLP Government for four years, under you for another two years; and because of your speed, you're able to now get the Minister to full speed ahead. Minister, I think if you send this to Committee.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Why?

Mr. CHARLES: I think you are to send this Bill to be examined at a Joint Select Committee or even a Committee of the House where we can look at it as to whether or not the presentation by the former Minister of Finance is correct or even something; we would get a chance to make a presentation there, right. People outside who when the Press make their presentation to them they will get a chance to come and say full speed ahead, go ahead. But if you want to laugh at us don't say I didn't tell yuh. If you want to call us basic school boys and you are graduates of big school so you know, go ahead.

I will confess I only did Economics 101 and therefore I'm being influenced by those who I have confidence can influence me. But a tell you, experience teaches wisdom! I have seen this road already, Minister, and it doesn't increase taxes! It doesn't improve taxes! And I hate to say, Minister, but it is in my mind and a gwine tell yuh, a gwine tell yuh and a don't want yuh feel insulted, a respect yuh, a like the strength of character, but I just have a feeling that you are being instructed.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Everybody go sey IMF tell him wha fi duh.

Mr. CHARLES: I just have a feeling that you're taking instructions from outside.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Everybody know sey a IMF a tell him wha fi duh.

(Cross talks)

Mr. CHARLES: I say it's a feeling and the Minister...

(Heckling)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Go tek a Phensic or something.

(Cross talks)

Mr. CHARLES: ...and I must express it to him because I'm a Member of the House and it concerns my constituency!

(Heckling)

The Minister can say is not the IMF tell him to do it yuh nuh, but me feel soh. So it may not be so, but why would every Member of the Government side feel so comfortable with these Bills? Not one have one iota of objection and we over here have been influenced otherwise.

Minister, if it pleases his Excellency...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Who that?

Mr. CHARLES: You.

(Cross talks)

...you may decide to say all right, let us look...

Mr. PICKERSGILL: He move from leader's appointment to his Excellency. Such crap.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Why don't you be quiet? Go duh some rain dance and mek mi get some water nuh man and stop the rubbish over there. (Laughter)

Mr. CHARLES: Don't worry about the waterman. I'm not going to say anything about him because I need some water.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles.

(Heckling/laughter)

(Gavels) Mr. Charles...

Mr. CHARLES: You had already promised us that you'd be pothole free in 2003...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Him not hearing me?

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes.

Mr. CHARLES: ...and it's a lot now.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Charles!

(Cross talks)

Mr. CHARLES: I'm not saying anything.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Charles!

Mr. CHARLES: But, Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, conclude.

Mr. CHARLES: ...let me close by saying, I think that as one of the people's representatives who have been appointed to this House - elected to the House - I have a right to tell you I am uncomfortable with the presentations, the exposures and I feel that the public will share some of my discomfort. And we should not rush through these Bills, we should put it to the Committee where they have the chance to look at them themselves and a few more days will not kill you!

Mr. WARMINGTON: But dem caan wait.

A MEMBER: Don't procrastinate.

Mr. CHARLES: But my job is to advise you freely without any cost, right, if you feel to proceed I have nothing to do but to follow.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Phillips.

(Cross talks)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: All right, Mr. Phillips.

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I seek permission to speak from a seat other than my own.

Mr. SHAW: No, go back to yuh seat!

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: This is not Christiana.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Permission granted.

Mr. SHAW: Permission is not granted!

(Cross talks)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw, Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: I'm just trying to help; I'm just trying to help.

The Deputy SPEAKER: But you're from the same parish I would expect...

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: Do not be surprised.

(Cross talks)

But, Mr. Speaker, the Members over there are talking.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Go ahead, Mr. Phillips.

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: The Members over there say that they're surprised that we are supporting this Bill. But I'm a little bit taken back and surprised that they have not read the amendments in its entirety.

A MEMBER: No, no, we've read it, we've read it, don't say that.

(Cross talks)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: And speaker after speaker have stood up and made their contributions...

A MEMBER: Here are my copies, I've read them.

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: ...misleading the House.

We are in section 40B, if the Member or Members look at section 40B where we speak about the garnishments, and I heard one Member mentioned and just taking one section: '*The Commissioner General may in writing require the person to pay forthwith*,' and then starting to make reference to contractors. But if he had read further on...

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Warmington)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: ...read further on in Section 40B (2) where it stipulates what it is that can be garnished...

Mr. CHARLES: I think it's a bad thing for you to...

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: ...payable by persons to the tax debtor as interest, rent, remuneration and dividend and annuity or other periodic payments.

Mr. CHARLES: No.

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: No, so it is incorrect to say that if someone or a contractor owes money to a taxpayer, or your gardener owe you for the little contribution that you - it is incorrect to state that the tax authority or the Commissioner can then come to that third party to garnish any monies that is owed by a debtor.

Mr. SHAW: What is the next non-point you're going to make?

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: No, it is a point and a point that missed you.

Mr. SHAW: What is the next non-point you have to make?

(Heckling/Laughter)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: If the Members read it properly, Mr. Speaker, they would realize that the penalties that are now in this new Bill or the amendments being made in the Principal Bill, the penalties are not with reality. And, Mr. Speaker, anyone who pays taxes do not have to worry about these penalties. Those who evade taxes are the ones who have to worry. And the Member from North East...

Mr. SHAW: Ah right baby tax.

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: ...the Member from North East Manchester, in his own budget presentation...

Mr. SHAW: Baby tax.

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: ...the Member from North East Manchester in his own budget presentation, Mr. Speaker...

Mr. WARNINGTON: On a point of order.

(Cross talks)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: There is no point of order.

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: ...he was the one who said to the Minister of Finance in his presentation, or to the Government, that we need to go and collect those taxes that are out there that persons are not paying.

Mr. SHAW: Not with new taxes.

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: No man, listen...

Mr. SHAW: Listen baby tax.

(Laughter)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: Now when I hear the Member standing up asking about safeguards, safeguards for taxpayers, what safeguard should be given is the safeguard to be given to those who do not pay taxes.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes.

Mr.M. PHILLIPS: That is the question that I would like the Member himself to answer at another time. If one feels that he is dealt with unjust there is recourse with the courts, right.

Mr. ATKINSON: Of course.

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: So for the Members to be standing up and not reading - as a first timer since you say I'm a first timer, I realize that the Members have not read either the Principal Act or read this.

Mr. SHAW: Proper tax time now baby tax.

(Heckling)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the only thing that I would say to the Minister...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Warmington)

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: No, no.

...is that after we pass this, the amendments, is that the Ministry in its good judgement should have a exercise, a public education exercise so that the public themselves can understand the changes that are made with the penalties...

Mr. CHARLES: But you agree on the public already.

Mr. M. PHILLIPS: ...and a special session for the Members over on that side as they do not understand what is in this Bill.

(Applause)

So, Mr. Speaker, as I end in support of this Bill, I thank you.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Phillips.

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I think I can honestly say that it has been a lively debate. The degree of enlightenment brought to the debate has varied. We have seen glimpses of a sober approach to the discussion, at some points.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Over this side.

(Cross talk)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, but there has been those few glimpses of sobriety and reason have been overwhelmed (Laughter) by the desire for dramatics and overstatement...

Mr. ATKINSON: And sound bites.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...and shrill misrepresentations.

A Government MEMBER: Ahhhh. Shame!

Mr. ATKINSON: And self-interest.

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, the context in which this legislation has been brought needs to be restated. I made the point yesterday that there is a widespread indeed, an endemic culture of tax evasion and tax avoidance that has afflicted the country. And I dare say, Mr. Speaker, if we are to be honest it is that failure to support the revenues on the path of so many persons that is at least in part accountable for the extent of the debt that has been built up over the years. In the absence of adequate revenues to meet the expenditure properly expected by the population; there has

been an easy recourse to borrowing. But beyond that what is the extent of the tax compliant behaviour in the country? We have some 82,000 companies listed at the Companies Office of Jamaica; filing returns at to the Companies Office some 62,000. So we assume that those are functioning. Only 18,500 companies are registered for Corporate Income Tax with the Tax Administration filed out of 62,000 functioning or 82,000 registered, 18,000 with Tax Administration; 15,000 filed for GCT. That's the environment, Mr. Speaker, in which we are operating. Among large taxpayers, which we're talking about sales of $1 Billion or more; 27 per cent don't file at all; 21 per cent don't pay anything. When you look at companies where you have of - sales of $150 Million or more, you have not filing...

Mr. CHARLES: Out of business.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Not filing, close to 56 per cent on individual income tax returns. You have failure - similar levels of failure to file with $10 Million and more, 57 per cent not filing in that category. So this is the nature of the reality which we face. We need to - what the legislation seeks to do is to create an environment in which companies, specified corporate entities and other specified groups, including professionals are required to file. It makes provisions for penalties to apply where there is a failure to file. It enables the tax authorities to set up electronic systems to facilitate filing. But don't forget, Mr. Speaker, this set of amendments have to be read in conjunction not only with the principal Acts, but also with other measures that have been taken previously to improve the dynamics of tax collection. The Member from North -

Mr. WARMINGTON: Central.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...Central Clarendon made much about the burden of taxation, but the ultimate objective of this Administration is to lower rates by not having the burden of taxation being borne by just a few but to spread the obligation and to create the environment of compliance where rates are not onerous and being borne by a few but where there is a generalized acceptance of the obligation by all citizens.

Mr. CHARLES: I agree with that.

Dr. PHILLIPS: All of you inside here, not only me I am certain...

Mr. CHARLES: I agree with that.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...know of the situations that exist today where many professionals are offering services say bring cash only $500,000, $600,000. It is wrong. It is dishonest and you know it's a sad commentary because some of these are the most privileged citizens of this country, benefiting from the best that this country has to offer, but still not believing they should pay their fair share.

Mr. WARMINGTON: The lawyers, [engineers and architects]. The lawyers.

Dr. PHILLIPS: A not throwing no stone on any specific category. Not today. But some of these same people who hold dual citizenship or others go over themselves to file. Many of them are residents of other jurisdictions and apply and meet their obligations in those jurisdictions zealously. And you know why they do it, Mr. Speaker, because the penalties are there and certain

(Applause) and because they know that the tax authorities are serious authorities. What the numbers that I cited earlier show is that too many think that the obligations here are a joke and what is sad despite the proclamations of a commitment to taxpaying every time any measures are introduced, you can rely on one thing for certain that they will be opposed by that side. And I think I would urge them...

Mr. CHARLES: You were a principal opposer. You were a principal opposer.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...I did not - you noticed how I listened studiously to what you are saying, because I expected...

(Cross talk)

All right, good. Thank you. You know I don't want to get into a cass cass because up to two weeks I heard - I wasn't here, I didn't hear it myself - but I heard that ...somebody oh when we were on the road show there was somebody on a podium, somebody on a podium who I'm told by the reports is here today, now who said we couldn't get money and if we didn't get the money the whole world was going to fall down and Jamaica's economy was going to crash. Every time something happen they seem to expect the worse things to happen in Jamaica. They expect the worse things to happen with the tax authorities. They expect the lowest behaviour from tax authorities. When we were passing the SARA amendments we were told that these were draconian powers that were going to be exercised. The law was passed and nothing has happened and the world goes on. All we do is we have a more efficient institution being built bit by bit. (Applause) What have you done?

(Cross talk)

You want to ask me some more questions?

(Chuckles)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: You remember how dem jump down your throat, Peter?

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, in 2013 we passed the Tax Administration Act to establish the Tax Administration of Jamaica as a semi-autonomous revenue administration, to give it independence from interference. Set up a Board with statutorily prescribed advisory members so that we would eliminate the prospect of political direction being given to tax authorities. We don't need that. We just need tax authorities to exercise their responsibilities without hindrance, without direction from political authorities and allow them to build on their reputation for reasonableness. There is Board oversight.

Somebody made a point about the requirements for the appointment of tax auditors. Yes, we have made a commitment to appoint tax auditors because that is one of the techniques used by tax authorities to audit the people who have filed returns and they do it on the basis of where they believe there may be false returns or on the basis of random checks. But for the obvious reasons that if you, you know, have no ability to investigate the veracity of the returns filed then you will never know how much you are owed, how much the public purse is owed. That is part of the administrative upgrade that in one of his more sober moments the Opposition

spokesman on Finance referred to as being necessary. What he did not seem to grasp that we were in fact undertaking these particular measures.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Warmington)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Last year we also passed the Tax Collection Act, the debt write-off regulations, because the purpose is not to be onerous, far from it, far from any effort to be draconian. What the Tax write-off regulation did was to provide a framework where tax that is not collectible can be written off. So you are not either tying up resources of the tax department in trying to run down debt, which cannot be run down, but you are also removing a burden from the shoulders of the taxpayer who can't pay, will never be able to pay, but who believes they are in danger of some sort of legal action being brought against them. That's not the actions of draconian authority; those are the actions of enlightened tax administration in the 21st Century.

Mr. D. SMITH: Use the carrots.

(Inaudible)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I know that you give your horses carrots, but you also use stick. Good. Whip.

Mr. D. SMITH: I give them the carrots first.

Dr. PHILLIPS: All right. Well, that's what we did last year; we move the regulations in relation to tax write-off.

(Laughter)

The Revenue Administration Act was passed. This was the one that they opposed access to third party information. We were told that it was going to result, it was unconstitutional and it was going to result in all kinds of mayhem and infringement of the rights of citizens. Absolute poppycock and nonsense! Nothing has happened of the kind and, in fact, what you have is a better basis for doing the investigative work that will be non-intrusive. So you can forget this blunderbuss approach where you kind of just pressure everyone, but you can do the forensic work to identify where there are the gaps and the deficiencies, that is what modern Tax Administration is about.

Now, in this year we have brought these particular bits of legislation.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. CHARLES: Minister, you haven't answered the question that he asked of you. I want some answers.

Dr. PHILLIPS: I want you to get the full picture, be patient. You say you have been here six terms. The seventh won't elapse before I finish.

Mr. SAMUDA: But, you have been here a long time too.

Dr. PHILLIPS: And I have enjoyed those, I have enjoyed those fleeting occasions when you have come through.

Mr. CHARLES: Yes man, I am sitting where you sit, you remember?

Dr. PHILLIPS: (Chuckles) Is true. Now - I appreciate it, I appreciate your guidance, but there are some issues, let me deal with a couple specific questions that were raised.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: No bother deal with the fool-fool example from Chuck though, you know.

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, no, we can't, no! That has been already answered by my representative here.

(Dr. Phillips turns in the direction of his son, Mr. Mikael Phillips)

(Mr. Mikael Phillips gave the thumbs up in gesture)

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: The question on the interest rates. The provision, the provision in relation to interest rates, what the Act provides for, is that there will be a stipulation of the rate twice per year by Ministerial Order, in order to allow market rates to apply. Those Orders have to be published in the Gazette and be brought to the House.

So, quite apart from there being a fixed rate, the intention is to lower the rates to be reasonable rates, to have them at market determined levels and to have them flexible in relation to the market movements. That is certainly a more, not only transparent process than what exists currently, which again belies the point of draconian intention, and it is also a process which has parliamentary oversight. So that is the particular provision then.

As far as the question of the penalties in the tax harmonization's provision, I think that what we have are penalties that are not only reasonable, but I want to emphasize that these are penalties that are applied by the Courts. You can have a charge up to $2 Million, a Court could fine $100 if it deems the offence to be negligible or it could impose the maximum, but it can't exceed that amount. In particularly egregious cases, it may be contemplated that the matter belongs in the Circuit Court, and at that point, a wider, more severe penalties are possible.

In relation to the issue of garnishment, Mr. Speaker, again, I think it is important to make the following points. First of all, we must recognize that these mechanisms garnishment, publication, credit reporting, lien, *et cetera*, are tools of last resort, used only where tax is no longer in dispute. Even so, there is protection for the taxpayer as is evident in 40D. There has to be an acknowledgement of the amount owed by the taxpayer. The time for objection or appeal has expired and remember, remember, it is not the Commissioner General acting as Prosecutor and Judge - where there is the case there is the Taxpayer Appeal's Division, which is entitled to have hearings, entitled to make determinations. There are other Acts existing now, now, and that's what the reference is in 40D subparagraph (c). There are provisions now and it was in place when the Member opposite sat where I sit, where in some instances, the final determination in Customs, for example, rests with the Commissioner of Customs. It wasn't unconstitutional when he was exercising it, it's not unconstitutional now, it's not an infringement on the rights of the taxpayer now, nor was it then.

In any event, if you go to the Taxpayer Appeals Division you still have the possibility of going to the Supreme Court, and you still can get judicial review, and you can still appeal even from the Supreme Court should you choose to. But it is not possible with this level of non-compliance. For every act of non-compliance to be 20,000 to be brought before

a Court before any action can be taken to enforce, it's impractical.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: It's administrative law. It's administrative law.

Dr. PHILLIPS: So, Mr. Speaker, we must also recognize that tax is a civil debt and is always recoverable by the Government under the civil procedure rules as a civil debt pursuant to judicial proceedings.

The Tax Laws provide for an expedited process, which allows for due process, objections to be filed and appeals, always has been so, will continue to be so with these provisions.

A point was made about the fact of the word, '*or*' at the end of 40D, subparagraph (c) preceding subparagraph (d). All it seeks to do is to indicate that (d) is an addition and an alternative. In some instances, the law provides for final determination under this specific Act in a particular prescribed manner. But, even where that has been exhausted, there is (D), which can be relied on by the taxpayer if there is a dispute.

Now, in relation to that same clause, the point was made that...

(Inaudible comment)

Dr. PHILLIPS: In relation to (a), that the tax which reads as follows:

(a) The tax debtor has acknowledged the amount owed, including by way of filing a return of tax, and has not paid the amount.

And the Opposition spokesman made a lot about the tax authorities relying on an assessment. I just want to be clear. We are not talking here about an assessment, that's not what is being referred to in subparagraph (a). It's talking about a return where the taxpayer acknowledges that this is the amount of taxes that he acknowledged should be paid, and has signed to it, but, has not paid, that is what it is referring to. And it's...

(Inaudible comment by Opposition Member)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Let me say, Mr. Speaker, that I am willing to give the benefit of the doubt that it is not that there was a deliberate attempt to confuse, but rather they read but did not understand. I can forgive the latter and I refuse to believe that they would be guilty of the former.

(*Sotto voce* comment)

(Laughter)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Never weary in well-doing. That's the injunction of the Good Book. All right.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a final point in relation to this issue of garnishment, it exists in the law. In the GCT Act, it covers monies owed or held in connection with any business. And it is proposed to retain that power monies owed to or held for the tax debtor by any person, including deposit-taking institutions. It already exists in the Tax Collection Act, covering money owed to the tax debtor by the Government of Jamaica. We propose to keep that provision.

There is provision in the GCT Act for garnishment for the discharge of third party's debt to the tax debtor and in a number of provisions. What this does, in effect, is to not only preserve and extend the power to cover different elements of debt, tax debt owed but

to ensure that it is included not just in the GCT Act, but in respect of all of these other areas in the Tax Collection Act generally as well. So it's partly - although it finds its way in the Miscellaneous Provisions Act - it is partly a regularizing, a procedure to regularize.

Mr. Speaker, there will be other measures over time that will be brought here to enhance the ability to collect tax. I indicated earlier that our priorities going forward are not so much to impose taxes but to strengthen the administrative powers and the procedures that are utilized. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about creating the circumstances for economic growth it can't be simply a matter of enabling private wealth to accumulate and then force the poverty of the public purse. It requires, especially if we are to do justice by those citizens who continue to rely primarily for their livelihood and well-being on public services, health care, education, roads, drain cleaning, garbage collection, water systems, all of those things have to be satisfied by the public purse. We don't need a country anymore scarred by the example of private wealth in great abundance providing their own private water systems, providing their own private electricity systems.

Mr. SHAW: Sound like a real old socialist.

Dr. PHILLIPS: No, we are not opposed to wealth. We are not opposed to wealth. What we are for is equity in the society. (Applause) And so, Mr. Speaker, I commend these - I commend the Tax Collection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014 for second reading and I commend to this House second reading of the Tax Penalties (Harmonization) Act, 2014.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Mr. CHUCK: Sheer poverty.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Bill be read a second time.

Put to the House and agreed to.

In fact, we have two Bills so both are taken.

Bill entitled:

AN ACT to increase and harmonize penalties...

(Cross talk)

(The Speaker gavels)

Bill entitled:

AN ACT to increase and harmonize penalties in the Education Tax Act and the Income Tax Act; and for connected matters;

read a second time.

Bill entitled:

AN ACT to Enhance the collection of taxes by amending various enactments that provide for the collection of taxes; and for connected matters

read a second time.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The House will now resolve itself into a committee of the whole House to consider the Bills clause by clause.

COMMITTEE STAGE

The CHAIRMAN: Members, we will take the Harmonization Act first, The Tax Penalties (Harmonization) Act, 2014.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 1 put to the Committee and agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Schedule put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Title and Enacting Clause put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage without amendments.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Chairman...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...just to indicate that I will at the appropriate point be moving two amendments in relation to the Miscellaneous Provisions Act at Item 3(b) amending section 17 (g)(b) of the Revenue Administration Act, proposing to delete the words in subsections (2) and (3) and substitute the words in subsection (2) to correct an error in the reference and on page 11 at Item 2 inserting a new section 2(a) In the Tax Collection Act to delete from subsection (1) the word, '*negative*' and substitute therefor the words, '*affirmative resolution will follow*'.

The CHAIRMAN: We are now dealing with the Tax Collection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014.

Clause 1 put to the Committee and agreed to.

Clause 2 put to the Committee and agreed to.

Clause 3 put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Schedule put to the Committee and agreed to.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Chairman, in relation to the Schedule...

The first amendment put to the Committee and agreed to.

The second amendment put to the Committee and agreed to.

The Title and Enacting Clause put to the Committee and agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that I do report the Bills as having passed Committee Stage with two (2) amendments.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

RESUMPTION

The Deputy SPEAKER: I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage with two (2) amendments.

With respect to the first Bill, "AN ACT to increase and harmonize penalties in the Education Tax Act and the Income Tax Act", I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage without amendments.

With respect to the second Bill, I do report the Bill as having passed Committee Stage with two (2) amendments.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I move third reading of the Tax Collection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2014 and the Tax Penalties (Harmonization) Act, 2014.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the Bills be read a third time.

Put to the Committee and agreed to.

Bill entitled:

AN ACT to Enhance the collection of

taxes by amending various enactments that provide for the collection of taxes; and for connected matters

read a third time and passed.

Bill entitled:

AN ACT to Increase and harmonize penalties in the Education Tax Act and Income Tax Act; and for connected matters

read a third time and passed.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Minister Guy.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, I now ask for a recommittal of Notices of Motions given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Dr. GUY: And also Announcements, Mr. Speaker.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Clerk laid on the Table of the House a copy of the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 118**
  Assumption of outstanding loans of approximately US$237 Million due from Clarendon Alumina Production Limited to the PetroCaribé Development Fund by the Government of Jamaica.
- **Ministry Paper No. 119**
  Assumption of the Financial Obligations of Wallenford Coffee Company by the Government of Jamaica.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, there are two, Ministry Papers 118 and 119 which I would like particularly the Opposition Spokesman...

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move:

Be It Resolved that with reference to Ministry Paper No. 118 of 2014 dated 23 July 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 23rd day of July 2014, that this Honourable House of Representatives approve the assumption by Central Government of the outstanding balance of US$237,070,296.61 on loans to Clarendon Alumina Production Limited from the PetroCaribé Development Fund.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move the following resolution:

Be It Resolved that with reference to Ministry Paper No. 119 of 2014 dated 23 July 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 23rd day of July 2014, that this Honourable House of Representatives approve the assumption by Central Government of approximately J$2.89 Billion in liabilities owed to the Wallenford Coffee Company to the PetroCaribé Development Fund, National Export Import Bank of Jamaica and the European Investment Bank.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, under Public Business the Minister of Finance will now do the items on the Order Paper at 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister Phillip.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, with your permission I propose to debate - and that of the House - I propose to debate these as companion pieces.

The House would recall that Section 2 of the Financial Investigation Division Act was amended in July 2013 to clarify the definition of Competent Authority. The new definition states that and I quote;

a) "A competent authority is the entity authorized by the Minister from time to time to monitor compliance with the obligations imposed by law for the prevention of financial crimes by business in the regulated sector, and;
b) Issue guideline to businesses in the regulated sector regarding measures to prevent financial crimes."

The definition of the regulated sector in the Act includes both financial institutions and designated non-financial institutions. Therefore, in designating the supervisors of non-financial businesses and professions as competent authority it is also necessary for the Minister to designate the institutions that fall under their remit as non-financial institutions by order subject to affirmative resolution under Section 2 of the Act. This will contribute, Mr. Speaker, to strengthening Jamaica's Anti-money Laundering and Counter-terrorism Financing Framework in keeping with international standards which recognize that certain non-financial businesses and professions pose high risk for money laundering and hence need to be included within the regulated sector. A definition of non-financial institution is required by law to put certain policies in place.

The Orders that have been signed, Mr. Speaker, provide for reporting by - to the competent authority in this instance, the Financial Investigations Division of public accountants, real estate dealers, attorneys-at-Law, casino operators and operators of gaming machines.

Mr. Speaker, I think the fact that these categories of persons are critical points for transactions of large sums including cash transactions and the implications and possibilities with respect to Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing are self-evident.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move that the resolutions be adopted by this Honourable House.

Put to House and greed to.

Dr. GUY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour and Social Security with the oversight responsibility for Agriculture, the Honourable Derrick Kellier will now move - for the item at No. 12 on the Order Paper.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister Kellier.

Mr. KELLIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Item 12, Mr. Speaker, is the Resolution, to which I seek approval of this House in respect of the Conch (Export Levy) (Rate of Levy) Order, in the Resolution which I had moved yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, before the House is The Conch (Export Levy) (Rate of Levy) Order, 2014 Resolution and the Conch (Export Levy) (Rate of Levy) Order, 2014.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker that the Conch (Export Levy) Act was passed in 2009. The purpose of which is to impose a levy on each pound of conch exported during each conch season pursuant to Section 3 of the Act. All proceeds of the levy are by law allocated to the Fisheries Management and Development Fund which is used to facilitate the sustainable management and development of the fisheries sector pursuant to Section 9 of the Act.

The last levy, Mr. Speaker, was US$1 Dollar per pound. However, the industry had made representations last year about the hardship that its members were experiencing in exporting their conch and the difficulty in paying the levy. After consultations, Mr. Speaker, as such it was determined; arrangements were made to give them time to do so against the background of that. It is recommended that the levy for 2014 conch season be set at US$0.75s per pound and that Mr. Speaker, I am sure will be make life much easier for those persons, within the conch business.

As a consequence of that, Mr. Speaker, I ask that the House do approve the Resolution.

Mr. CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, you have to look across here, sometimes.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Charles.

Mr. CHARLES: The Opposition wishes to associate with the resolution, and express pleasure that the Government has seen it fit to reduce the duty because the exporters were complaining seriously.

The Member handling this matter has asked me to advise that we at this time have no objection to the reduction and, would give our support. But to advise the Government that there is still complaint, to ask the Government to watch the export and to, advise the House as to whether or not in their opinion more can be done to go forward.

Thank you.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Thank you Mr. Charles.

Mr. KELLIER: Thank the Member for the input, Mr. Speaker, and indeed it is something that will be kept under active monitoring and there is close collaboration between the industry and the ministry and as such at the end of the season we will do an evaluation and see exactly whether or not there need to be more adjustments. We sincerely hope that things will be bright for the persons within the industry and hence, there may not be any need. But if that is so after the collaboration has taken place and the evaluation, we will make the necessary adjustments if there needs to be a future adjustment to the price.

I so move.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Acting House Leader.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. GUY: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the House may wish to note the passing of a staff member, Miss Simone Simpson who passed after a period of illness. And Mr. Speaker it is not intended to do any further business this evening. I therefore move that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, July the 29th at 2:00 p.m.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this House adjourns until next Tuesday, July 29, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House accordingly adjourned its sitting at 7:10 pm until Tuesday, July 29, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 2014 – 2015

TUESDAY, July 29, 2014

PURSUANT to Notice of Adjournment the Honourable House of Representatives resumed its sitting at Gordon House, Kingston at 2.38 p.m.

PRESENT

THE SPEAKER

MR. LLOYD BARNES SMITH, (PNP), St. James, Central, Deputy Speaker

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

THE HONOURABLES:

HON. PHILLIP FEANNY PAULWELL, (PNP), Eastern Kingston & Port Royal, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining and Leader of the House

DR. THE HON. PETER DAVID PHILLIPS, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Central, Minister of Finance and Planning

DR. THE HON. OMAR LLOYD DAVIES, (PNP), St. Andrew, Southern, Minister of Transport, Works and Housing

HON. ROBERT DIXON PICKERSGILL, (PNP), St. Catherine, North Western, Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change

HON. ANTHONY GEORGE HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Western, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce

REV. THE HON. RONALD GEORGE THWAITES, (PNP), Kingston, Central, Minister of Education

HON. HORACE WASHINGTON DALLEY, (PNP), Clarendon, Northern, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning with responsibility for the Public Service

DR. THE HON. MORAIS VALENTINE GUY, (PNP), St. Mary, Central, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing with responsibility for Housing

HON. EVON PATRICK CULLITON ATKINSON, QC, (PNP), Trelawny, Northern, Attorney General

MINISTERS OF STATE

HON. IAN DAVE HAYLES, (PNP), Hanover, Western, Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

HON. COLIN ALFRED A. FAGAN, (PNP), St. Catherine, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development

HON. DAMION ORANDY CRAWFORD, (PNP), St. Andrew, East Rural, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment

HON. ARNALDO ALPHONSO BROWN, (PNP), St. Catherine, East Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

OTHER MEMBERS

MR. EDMUND CURTIS BARTLETT, CD, (JLP), St. James, East Central

DR. KENNETH LEIGH O'NEIL BAUGH, (JLP), St. Catherine, West Central

DR. LYNVALE GEORGE BLOOMFIELD, (PNP), Portland, Eastern

DR. HORACE ANTHONY CHANG, (JLP), St. James, North Western

HON. DELROY HAWMIN CHUCK, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Eastern

MRS. MARISA COLLEEN DALRYMPLE-PHILIBERT, (JLP), Trelawny, Southern

DR. WINSTON LLOYD GREEN, (PNP), St. Mary, South Eastern

MR. LESTER MICHAEL HENRY, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, Central

MR. DESMOND GREGORY MAIR, (JLP), St. Catherine, North Eastern

MR. DESMOND ANTHONY AUGUSTUS MCKENZIE, (JLP), Kingston, Western

MR. RICHARD ANTHONIO PARCHMENT, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Eastern

MR. AUDLEY FITZ ALBERT SHAW, (JLP), Manchester, North Eastern

MR. JOYLAN CRAIG IAN SILVERA, (PNP), St. Mary, Western

MR. DERRICK CHARLES SMITH, CD, (JLP), St. Andrew, North Western

MR. DARYL WESLEY PHILLIP VAZ, (JLP), Portland, Western

MR. CLIFFORD EVERALD ERROL WARMINGTON, (JLP), St. Catherine, South Western

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Dr. Winston Green.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) You may be seated.

This Honourable House now resumes its sitting.

CALL OF THE ROLL
(See Listing)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister Without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance will be doing a Statement.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister Dalley.

Mr. DALLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is established that public sector procurement systems function best when they are transparent and well organized, foster credibility of the democratic political system and rely on efficient mechanism within the market. The new external context created by globalization and States increasing commitment to a liberalized marketplace for trade has added new challenges to public procurement which impose strict discipline on this area of governance.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the opening up of markets within and beyond our borders necessitates the general convergence and

acceptance of norms and best practices. These dynamics, in combination with diminishing resources, have mobilized the State in the recognition of the fact that the procurement processes must be part and parcel of an integrated procurement system with alignment to sound financial management principles. This, Mr. Speaker, will allow for greater accountability, transparency and a more efficient use of scarce resources. It is this understanding of public procurement that is of critical importance in a developing economy such as Jamaica, that the Government has placed maximum priority on reforming the procurement landscape. If for no other reason it is important because government is not only the single largest purchaser of goods and services, but most of the major projects and infrastructural works are carried out by government or involved the government as a partner, which accounts for approximately 30% of GDP.

In a small economy such as ours, private enterprises depend significantly on public procurement, but even most significantly public procurement is the vehicle through which government deliver services to its citizens. Public procurement is therefore a very sensitive matter of national importance of this Administration and all administrations.

Mr. Speaker, upon taking office this Administration has dedicated resource to the streamlining and transformation of the present public procurement regime, including the legal and regulatory framework. Therefore the promulgation of Jamaica's first standalone public procurement law, which will be tabled later on this afternoon, will seek to modernize the law relating to public procurement by replacing the existing, outdated and fragmented legislative framework with an updated comprehensive law containing provisions that reflect new policy thinking and international best practice in the area of public procurement.

(Applause)

The new law will provide for the general requirements in relation to procurement pursuant to public procurement policy to establish the Public Procurement Office, the Public Procurement Commission and strengthen and expand the function of the Procurement Review Board that will regulate and harmonize public procurement processes. It will also promote economic development by ensuring value for money in public expenditure and the participation in public procurement by qualified providers of goods, works and services to provide for other related matters.

In the area of institutional strengthening, the public procurement law, the new law which will be tabled later, establishes a framework for the administration of public procurement comprising the following: The Public Procurement Office, the expanding role of the Public Procurement and Asset Policy, Asset Policy in the Ministry of Finance and Planning, which will be mainly responsible for making recommendations to the Government with respect to the policies to be adopted for public procurement, and for supporting persons and MDAs who participate in the public procurement process.

The Public Procurement Commission, which is the renaming of the National Contracts Commission, the NCC, and expanding its role which has as its main objectives the promotion of efficiency in the public procurement proceedings and the implementation of procurement contracts, as well as the promotion of transparency and equity in the award of procurement contracts. The Public Procurement Commission will also be responsible for the registration and classification of contractors and is authorized to hear appeals by contractors from the decisions of procuring entities. Sector committees will be established by the Commission to assist in its revision of procurement contracts award /recommendations. These will become specialist committees that are technically competent to review the related subjects, insurance placements, civil engineering and works, goods and general services, information and communication and technology and consultancy services.

Procuring entities are required - will be required under the new law to observe the prescriptions of the Act with respect to public procurement, and among their functions is the duty to monitor the execution of all public procurement contracts to which it is a party. Procuring entities are also obliged to prepare a procurement plan for each financial year and to ensure that the estimates of the cost of any planned procurement is committed in their annual budget. The head of the procuring entity will have overall responsibility for the procurement activities of the entity, and is required to establish internal procurement units and committees to manage the entity's procurement process.

The methods of procurement have been expanded that must be used by procuring entities to procure goods, works and services. The circumstances in which bidding may occur have also been expanded to include two stages: open and closed framework agreements, as well as, electronic government procurement. The public procurement law, also, makes provisions for the various stages of the bidding process from the invitation to bid or to prequalify through the award of the procurement contract. Provision is made for a contractor who claims that he has suffered or likely to suffer loss or injury due to the breach of a duty imposed on a procuring entity under the PTL to lodge a complaint at the seat of review of the procurement procedures.

An appeal against a decision of the procuring entity may be made to the Procurement Commission which is empowered to make such decisions as it thinks fit. A person aggrieved by the decision of the Commission may appeal to the Procurement Appeals Board which is established under the new head.

This new move towards a new comprehensive law governing public procurement is intended to simplify and streamline the legislative framework and create enforceable and binding obligations for persons involved in procurement. It will also provide for criminal sanctions for a person found guilty of benefitting through corrupt means from public procurement.

Amendment to the related laws. The public procurement law further seeks to amend the enactments which govern the existing system of public procurement. Accordingly, it proposed among other things, the deletion from the Contractor General's Act of all provisions relating to the National Contracts Commission which will be replaced by the Public Procurement Commission which, as indicated above, the PPL will seek to establish. The relevant provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act are also amended to make it clear that public procurement is to be governed by the provision of the PPL and the regulations. By the inclusion in the PPL of the appropriate savings and transitional provisions care is taken to ensure that procurement proceedings that are in progress at the time of coming into effect of the new law should continue to completion without disruption.

Mr. Speaker, the promulgation of this public procurement law will significantly advance the Government's reform agenda and transform the public procurement landscape in Jamaica and make it Vision 2030 ready.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, this process started a long time ago, and it is here because of the effort of many. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Ministry of Finance and Planning who have worked relentlessly on this proposed new law. I also want to thank and extend my appreciation to our development partners: the IDB, the Master Builders Association, the University of Technology and the University of the West Indies who have given us much support in this effort and particularly, Mr. Speaker, on the Government side I would like to mention the Minister of Transport, Works and Housing who has led in many ways - help us to reform this public procurement system.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that after the Bill is tabled today a Joint Select Committee of both Houses will be able to examine this new piece of legislation and complete its work in time to have the passage of this revolutionary Bill by the end of December - by the end of September.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

(HON. JULIAN JAY ROBINSON, (PNP), St. Andrew, South Eastern, Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. HUGH CARL BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, South Western, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. ANDRÉ MARIO HYLTON, (PNP), St. Andrew, Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. FITZ ARTHUR JACKSON, (PNP), St. Catherine, Southern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. RAYMOND FRANKLYN PRYCE, (PNP), St. Elizabeth, North Eastern, entered and took his seat.)

(MR. MIKAEL ASHER PHILLIPS, (PNP), Manchester, North Western, entered and took his seat.)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT: In reference to the Statement made by the Minister with regard to this new procurement procedure which will go, in fact, far beyond a procedure, because what it is, is part of correctly what he is saying harmonizing critical global requirements and (procedure) to trade and other kinds of activities on a rule-based system where there is policy coherence which is available to all the world so that the destination Jamaica, the location Jamaica, the country Jamaica will be able to access actors on the international scene on the same basis as local actors are to be accepted.

Now, therein lies the situation, Mr. Speaker. Because in all of the Statements so far, I have not heard the Minister speak about the vulnerabilities of small States, such as Jamaica, which lack the capacity in terms of the technology as well as the resources and the capital to compete effectively with other actors globally. Nor have I heard any provision to build that capacity on the part of some of our local actors, some of our contractors and engineers, and some of our service providers who are going to have to compete on the same global platform as the large multinationals of the world. And, when offers are made, and when contracts are put out to tender, we will have to tender, the local contractors, the Jamaican contractors will have to tender on the same basis, the same platform. Now, that's the power of - and the goodness of the globalized world that we are in.

But, the fact is that we recognize that in order for us to protect our own local situation here, and in order for us to enable - in the same way that in some trade negotiations, Mr. Speaker, we look at exceptions, we look, for example, on a list of exceptions of goods that will not require duty-free application or provide MFNs, as the case might be - so, we want to hear that there will be some provision that will enable the protection of some of our local actors, as well as the building of the capacity of our local actors to be able to compete.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Bartlett, you will recall that the Minister did indicate that it will go to a Select Committee - yes, a Joint Select Committee

Mr. BARTLETT: I made the comment in relation to the Statement.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I think it would just be important to - I take note that there will be a Joint Select Committee to look at it, and it's certainly a refreshing departure from recent...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. SHAW: ...a refreshing departure from recent tendencies. So, we look forward to the deliberations at that level.

But, I think, Mr. Speaker - and I know it would have been maybe just an oversight on the part of the Minister to point out that the programme and the plan for the separation of the National Contracts Committee from the

Office of the Contractor General, was made by Cabinet Decision in the previous Administration.

Mr. CHUCK: Hear! Hear!

Mr. SHAW: I want to make that absolutely clear, because we believe in the need for that separation.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Mr. CHUCK: You didn't know that, Dalley.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Clerk laid on the Table of the House the following:

- **Ministry Paper No. 120**
  Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Coffee Industry Board for the year ended 31st July, 2012.
- Office of the Children's Advocates Annual Reports and Audited Financial Statements for the Financial years 2010/2011 and 2012/2013
- Petrojam Limited
  Annual Reports and Audited Financial Statements for the years 2008/2009 and 2009/2010
- Fiscal Services Limited Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the year 2012/2013
- The Customs Tariff (Revision) (Amendment) No. 2 Resolution 2014 Under the Customs Act

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Mair.

Mr. MAIR: Mr. Speaker, I just would like to confirm if the Annual Report for Petrojam was announced as tabled, for 2008/2009?

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. MAIR: I would like to express a concern, Mr. Speaker.

I just find it unacceptable that a Government entity like Petrojam, that has a revenue close to Two Billion US Dollars (US$2B) a year - about 40 per cent of the country's revenue - is five years behind in tabling its Annual Report. I find it unacceptable, because it should be up-to-date so we can properly monitor how this entity is functioning.

I would appreciate if the Minister would encourage the Board to have the Reports brought up to date as quickly as possible.

Mr. CHUCK: This year.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Okay.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

The Deputy SPEAKER: Member Phillips, will you oblige?

Mr. Mikael PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House I will move the following motions:

Be it Resolved that the Report of the Joint Select Committee on Private Bills, on its deliberations on the Bill entitled:
AN ACT to Amend the Baptist Mid Mission in Jamaica Incorporated Act, so as to change the name of the Act and for

connected matters, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 23rd of July, 2014, be approved.

Be it Resolved the Report of the Joint Select Committee on Private Bills on its deliberations on the Bill entitled: AN ACT for the Incorporation of the Power of Faith Ministries International and the vesting of property in the body so incorporated, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 23rd day of July, 2014, be approved.

Mr. SHAW: All right, Baby Tax!

(MR. PAUL LENNOX BUCHANAN, (PNP), St. Andrew, West Rural, entered and took his seat.)

(DR. THE HON. FENTON RUDYARD FERGUSON, CD, (PNP), St. Thomas, Eastern, Minister of Health, entered and took his seat.)

(HON. SHARON FFOLKES-ABRAHAMS, (PNP), St. James, West Central, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, entered and took her seat.)

(MR. PEARNEL PATROE CHARLES, CD, (JLP), Clarendon, North Central, entered and took his seat.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of Questions to be answered, 9 and 10, but the Minister is not here as yet. So, we will take Question 13 at this time.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Dr. CHANG: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change, provide answers to Question 13 at this stage?

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister Pickersgill.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I rise to answer the questions asked, Question 13, posed by the Member from St. James.

Question 1:

Will the Minister confirm that a desilting exercise will be conducted at the Hermitage Dam?

Answer:

Yes. This is to confirm that the NWC has started the procurement process to desilt the Hermitage Dam.

Question 2:

Can the Minister advise of the estimated cost of the said desilting exercise?

Answer:

An engineer's estimate of the cost is presently being developed by the NWC.

Question 3:

Can the Minister advise as to where and how the silt removed from the Dam will be stored?

Answer:

The plan is to have the silt stored on the site at the designated storage area, which is to be confirmed as one of the deliverables under the Request for Proposal, referred to as the RFP.

Question 4:

Will the Minister advise as to the benefits

to be derived from the desilting exercise, in terms of the number of days of additional water capacity?

Answer:

We expect to have extra storage capacity of 120 million gallons to 180 million gallons, depending on final specification of the RFP and dam security. This amounts to an additional 30 to 60 days' worth of storage facility.

Question 5:

Is the Minister aware of the Bristol University Study, which made some observations and expressed certain opinion on the desilting of the Hermitage Dam?

Answer:

Yes. The Bristol University Study involved an inspection of the Dam to assess and report on the safety and stability of the structure and its appurtenances. The Study did not address the issue of the desilting of the Hermitage Dam, but, instead, made recommendations for the desilting of an adjacent reservoir on the upstream face of the Dam for safety reasons.

Question 6:

Can the Minister advise as to when the desilting exercise will commence and when it will be concluded?

Answer:

Desilting is scheduled to start during the last quarter of 2014/2015 Financial Year. It is expected that the work should be completed within 12 months after the start date.

Question 7:

Can the Minister confirm that the de-nitrification of wells in the Corporate Area is an activity to be undertaken shortly?

Answer:

Yes. This is an immediate action being carried out by the NWC. The Water Resources Authority has received a proposal from one consultant for evaluating the potential for de-nitrification, and this has been submitted to the NWC for review and action. Two wells are presently being tested for water quality, Devon House and Kings House. We already have water quality data for these wells. Also, a well at Ballater Avenue that uses a de-nitrification plant is presently in operation and the NWC is presently taking water from that source.

Question 8:

Will the Minister advise of the technology to be used in undertaking said de-nitrification?

Answer:

See answer to question 7. There are various technologies to remove nitrates from a raw water source.

However, the solution must remove nitrate contamination in line with the MoH and WHO standards.

Question 9:

Can the Minister point to any jurisdiction in which the technology identified in the response to Part 8 has been used in the production of potable water?

Answer:

We don't have to go far, this process is

presently being used in Jamaica.

Question 10:

Has the Minister made any attempts to activate wells in the Caymanas Plains?

Answer:

If the Member is referring to the wells at the Caymanas Estates, the following are the facts:

- The wells belong to the Urban Development Corporation and are slated for use by the UDC in the development of the Caymanas Industrial Estate/Hub.
- The wells are contaminated by salt water intrusion into the limestone aquifer in the Caymanas area. It will be necessary to redesign the well field to reduce interference between wells and to rehabilitate and replace the wells.
- One well has been rehabilitated for use as the water supply source to the New Era Homes 2000 Caymanas Housing Estate. This is the Top Ellis Well.
- Preliminary investigations and estimations suggest that it will be costly to produce potable water from these sources.

Question 11:

Will the Minister advise as to whether he has been briefed on hard rock drilling in the Blue Mountains that will generate potable water and, therefore, enhance the supply of water?

Answer:

Yes. This is being coordinated by the Water Resources Authority. The proposal submitted during your Administration was not accepted by the NWC, as:

a) they stated that the price of the water was too high; and
b) there was no pipeline to transmit the water from the selected sites in the east into the KMA. A new proposal is to be submitted by mid-August.

Dr. CHANG: Thank you, Minister.

A number of supplementary questions and a short comment (Inaudible). It will be implied that the current drought is really the cause for these questions and what we're looking for are solutions, both in the short term and in the long term, accepting that solving the drought problem cannot be done during the drought.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: What?

Dr. CHANG: Solving the drought problem cannot be done during the drought. It is a matter of planning and implementing infrastructure that will produce reliable water supply. Also, to point out that this particular drought is aggravated not by necessarily the lack of water, but, in fact, the temperature which is much higher than normal and the wind is causing significant loss of surface water. Although June was a very bad month, we have to look at the average. The reduction in rainfall for January to June is only 14 per cent, as published by your Metrological Office, with three parishes really having severe drought while El Niño and the high pressure system in the Eastern Caribbean has affected our rainfall, it is not as severe as would appear in terms of the current impact

and it's because we don't have the facilities in place.

The first facility I refer to is Hermitage, raises some questions: one, the cost is still not yet determined and, therefore, one will have to do cost benefit analysis to see if it is worth it.

Dr. PHILLIPS: So is this another question or is a debate?

Dr. CHANG: That is it, he should have answered to the question for the cost, and since I have not gotten the cost it's difficult to evaluate the benefit of the Hermitage Dam, because I was also advised that the cost benefit...

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Phillips)

Dr. CHANG: No, no, we're dealing with a critical national issue, Minister, and I know the Minister will not mind me extending. I think, Minister, we would like to get the actual cost at an early date, because my information is that the cost benefit is not worth it.

The second question is what - well, I can't question - you give a figure of 180 million gallon. The actual capacity of the Hermitage Dam is 393 million gallons and I would have questioned the study that gave you this figure, because I was told five to ten days additional water. You're suggesting here thirty to sixty days, which will certainly change the numbers; and from a purely layman's point of view the shape of the dam, which is a triangular-shaped dam, the narrow party is at the base, most of the water is in the upper half and, therefore, would be stored in the upper half of the height. So the answers you have given raised some questions and I would like to see the studies done to verify that these are accurate figures.

The question of the storage in the area. Again, how credible is this proposal to store that silt, which is considered almost toxic, in the region of the valley up there. The original proposal was to move that silt all the way to somewhere in the plains. Why has that changed? I really don't have any reason, because of the nature of it.

The question of denitrification. Cost benefit again is another issue. My understanding of denitrification is it's an expensive process. What is being done at Ballater Avenue is an industrial process, which is quite expensive, and cannot be used extensively for potable water. It's an industrial process and in an emergency as you know you can use supplement and, therefore, why is the NWC pursuing this process? The ion exchange system at Ballater Avenue includes replacing nitrate with sodium chloride and, therefore, it has to be mixed in fresh water to put in the system so you'll reach a very - its use is very limited and it's not in the best interest of public health. That's a mere facts. Why, therefore, you know, this is being proposed when, in fact, there are simple solutions to bring in additional water in the Corporate Area, including a planned $15 Million gallon plant on the [Myropoba] Line which should be pursued and it would be delivered more quickly and less costly and would be associated with the [Go West] line at Soapberry a plant, which cost some US$50 Million, has the capacity to produce quality

water for irrigation and these can be implemented much more quickly with less controversy and no risk at all and why are these not being pursued immediately as you could put a timeframe and a cost of all of these and pursue urgent procurement process to get these done.

Denitrification, Minister, is something you need to be looked at carefully, (sic) Denitrification for the production of potable water from the kind of wells that we have outside of Ballater Avenue is an expensive process and is not necessarily the safest means if you use the one at Ballater, I can't understand why is NWC pursuing this when there are simpler solutions to bring water into the Corporate Area. Sodium chloride even when diluted is not something you wish to add - sodium chloride is salt; it's not a chemical you wish to add to any water supply on a long term basis, especially a population like ours which has an endemic high level of hypertension.

The hard rock drilling, I'm satisfied - I'm happy you're looking at this again. It was not refused at the time, because of the cost. Certainly, the need to put a line in to connect with existing system is critical whether you go east to the Yallahs line or you come down the Hope River Valley. It was delayed at the time, because we were pursuing the 15 million gallon plant at the Rio Cobre and the [Go West] line which was much simpler and easier at the time and funding was in place for those. And again, I'd like to ask you why is this not being pursued as they would, in fact, more vigorously be a guaranteed supply of reliable water to the Corporate Area, which would relieve the pressures even in the time of drought?

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister Pickersgill.

(Inaudible comment by Mr. D. Smith)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: You know, your best option I tell you all the while is to shut your mouth and you don't hear. (Laughter)

Study, Smith Warner are the - rather is the consultant for the NWC with this project. I spoke about the deliverables that will come from that study. That is why it has been embarked upon, but we hope to get the results in a month's time. Divers have gone down, because the integrity of the dam is the first hurdle that we have to overcome, because if the integrity is not there it doesn't make sense. All right, good. So that's among the deliverables.

In terms of storage - the material - that material we no longer describe as waste; it's a valuable and expensive resource. I don't want to tell you the figure that we hear. That alone would cover the cost. In fact, we are told that the Riverton dump we could use that material to cover - Minister, is not listening to me.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Chang)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: One of the problems we heard was that people in the neighbourhood were complaining trucks delivering the desilted stuff elsewhere. We are thinking of a new system - what you call it the belts - conveyor belts to deal with that.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Chang)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: No, we don't know about expense. You keep saying that.

You spoke about the hard rock, the difference this time is we have a proposal. I'm advised by the President of WRA that a proposal is coming to deal with everything at the proposer's cost and well, you know the quality of water that comes from the hard rock. The technology has improved since your time, so we're quite optimistic about that.

You spoke about Soapberry in terms of an alternative for water. Yes, that is there, because as I've said before the quality of the water coming into Soapberry is better than Rio Cobre water and you only need to go a little stage further and it could be described as potable water. We haven't given up on the treatment plant to deal with the water coming from the Rio Cobre, but it's not the cheapest and you know the constraints of the fiscal space, yes, that's a problem we're facing, because - but we think we can do a PPL. I think we can and we're studying that very seriously.

About the denitrification, you're saying it's an industrial process. The fact is - and you know it - we have about fourteen, fifteen wells in the Corporate Area. They are contaminated and we have to do something and, yes, you might to put good water with the contaminated water, pump it on the aquifer, and very shortly I'll be signing a contract to recharge the aquifer - what's the cost; or it's a $150 Million…

Mr. MAIR: Whatever the figure.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Big, big - yes, and that contract has...

(Cross talk)

No, I think it would be the Innswood area, yes. M and M got the contract, yes.

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Chang)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Well, I'm looking forward to that process, because I didn't know that that would be…

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Chang)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: So, you're saying it's an industrial process that one is a little. I'm not too sure. You are talking about injecting salt...

(Inaudible comment by Dr. Chang)

Mr. PICKERSGILL: Yeah, we have started to buy some of that water already and nobody is complaining, so we going to... yeah.

Thank you.

Dr. CHANG: The question, Minister, I'm not saying that all these things are not possible but the time-frame, obviously, raise issues, for example Hermitage, you're still doing the study; the former study showed significant instability at the base, which is one of the concerns you have and, therefore, to announce you could start with the end of year. It's not exactly a very good response.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: No, the former study what?

Dr. CHANG: Showed significant instability - potential instability when you remove the silt.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: No, I -

Dr. CHANG: Therefore, to say it will start - I don't mean it can't be done but to start it will start in the last quarter in 2014 may be raising hopes beyond. Whereas you can start your treatment plant quickly either the Go

West line from Soapberry or the treatment plant can be started simultaneously and give you predictable time to bring relief. So too can the hard rock. I mean this desilting is dubious. The other thing with the - similar with denitrification, as I said the chemical process is tricky. We need to be given more information because it's not only costly some of the processes are not best suitable for potable water. And I am aware that the - you know, why would you pursue this while you could do the studies, but again it will take significant time and we need a time-frame on resolving the Corporate Area water supply at this time.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: As I said, we have about eight (8) contractors who have - in fact one came in before, did a study, but these contractors have to satisfy themselves before they respond to the request for proposal. So they are going to be sending their divers down into the Dam so as to be able to respond intelligently, because if they respond in a particular way, you know, consequences will flow so that has to be done.

The Soapberry proposal, the Soapberry proposal, we are dealing with all of those simultaneously.

Mr. VAZ: Bobby, you going down with the divers? You need to get a firsthand look yourself. (Laughter)

(Inaudible comment by Mr. Pickersgill)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Honourable Minister of Local Government to reply to the questions as tabled in my name. Your time!

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I am now responding to questions asked by the Member from Western Kingston.

Question 1:

Can the Minister of Local Government and Community Development state what Ministry, Department or Agency of Government is responsible for the granting of amusement licences?

Answer:

The Local Authorities have legal authority to grant, refuse or revoke a licence to operate a place of amusement. The Parish Councils pursuant to section 121(1)(N) of the Parish Councils Act, have the power to make regulations for the licensing for places of public amusement and the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation is so empowered by section 193(g) of the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation Act.

Question 2:

Can the Minister state whether a decision has been taken to reassign this authority from the Ministry, Department or Agency currently responsible to the Ministry of Tourism or any other Ministry, Apartment or Agency?

Answer:

No, there has been no decision taken to reassign the authorities to grant, refuse or revoke a licence to operate a place of amusement from the Local Authorities to the Ministry of Tourism, Entertainment or any other Ministry, Department or Agency.

Question 3:

If the answer to Question 2 is not in the

affirmative, can the Minister say on what basis the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment has publicly given July 31st as the deadline for individuals and organizations stating entertainment to register with that Ministry in order to be granted a permit to state these events?

Answer:

Following the approval of Cabinet, the Ministry of Tourism has proceeded with the establishment of a National Registry of Entertainment and Creative Industries Practitioners. The Registry is aimed at verifying the legitimacy of persons within the industry including artiste, service providers and sectors of support for entertainment. It is proposed that in order to effect this verification process, registration on aforementioned National Registry be a precondition for promoters seeking to obtain a Places of Amusement Licence.

The Member and Minister of State with responsibility for entertainment in a post-sectoral press briefing dated July 31, 2014, as the administrative deadline for practitioners to register under the National Registry. There is no sanction for registering after that date. The National Registry has been established since July 1, 2014 and the Registry resides in each Local Authority.

Question 4:

If the deadline stated in Question 3 is correct, can the Minister state whether there is a new process for obtaining these permits, what role the Local Authority, the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development and/or the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment will play in the organization of these events in the future?

Answer:

Cabinet by decision dated October 7, 2013, gave approval for the policy to give effect to these verification process and registration agreed to the recommendation for the registration on National Registry of Entertainment and Creative Industry's Practitioners to become a requirement for promoters seeking to obtain Places of Amusement Licence.

The Regulations are being amended and the Ministry is in receipt of the first draft of the "Amendment to the Places of Amusement Regulations" which will give effect to this proposal.

The role of the Parish Councils under their respective Places of Amusement Regulations to grant, refuse or revoke a licence to operate a place of amusement remain the same. It is envisaged by the proposal mentioned above that greater collaboration would exist between the Ministries mentioned and the Local Authorities.

Question 5:

Can the Minister assure the House whether or not any discussions are taking place or likely to take place prior to July 31st deadline and what stage these discussions have reached, if they are

already taking place?

Answer:

I would like to assure this Honourable House that discussions have been taking place with all Ministries and Local Authorities concerned. The Ministry of Local Government and Community Development and the Local Authorities have since 2013, been consulted on the Establishment of a National Registry of Entertainment and Creative Industries Practitioners.

Consultations are ongoing with the Ministry of Local Government, the Local Authorities, the Association of Local Government Authorities of Jamaica (ALGAJ).

Representatives of the Local Authorities convened a meeting last Thursday and finalized plans and decisions relating to the implementation. Each Local Authority will maintain their statutory role in receiving, processing and approving applications for Places of Amusement Licences.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. McKenzie.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, there seems to be some level of contradiction in regards to the answers you just gave. If the Regulations, Minister have not been amended, because the Places of Amusement licenses still remain as is, it has not been amended, I want to ask the Minister if the discussions as it relates to amending the Regulations is ongoing - and I'm going to come back to it - isn't it premature for the Minister of State then to have made a pronouncement which speaks to a deadline for the 31st of July, Minister? Respond to that quickly for me, please.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Member, the Minister was acting on the decision of Cabinet to proceed and the deadline, as I said to you earlier, there are no penalties associated but it is more administrative to ensure that we get this in place as quickly as possible just to tidy up the untidy nature of the situation in terms of the - just to organize the entire system, the promoters and so on, especially August being the time of the highest activity for the year.

Mr. McKENZIE: But Minister, it is the practice of this Administration to ignore the law because the places...

Government MEMBER: Which Administration?

Mr. McKENZIE: The Places of Amusement Regulations is Gazette there by law. No instruction from Cabinet can be given, Minister, to circumvent the law, the law has to be amended. It would have been more appropriate for the amendments to be made before the announcement. Because, what this is actually doing, Minister, is eroding the Authority and the Parish Councils where the Ministry of Entertainment seems to be now the main player in this new dispensation.

Government MEMBER: Join-up Government!

Mr. McKENZIE: Yu right is join-up Government! Join-up Government continue to break the law, tread the law the same way in which he abused the power he has in regards to the Portmore Municipal Bill.

(Heckling by Government Members)

Government MEMBERS: Don't go down that road because you are a loss!

Mr. McKENZIE: Minister, Minister, you said that discussions are presently taking place among stakeholders, is the Minister in a position to say to this Honourable House what are some of the responses that have come from the parish Councils in regards to this new proposal.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Let me say first of all that the Councils are fully on board with the Registry. All Authority will remain with them; to issue, grant or refuse licenses. So in effect, it will not shift nor change the Authority.

What this Bill seeks to do is to bring order to the industry. I am sure you are a man who would understand the importance of having order and, therefore, this is what this seeks to do.

The draft, as I said, is already at the CPC and it is, without debate necessary to regulate and bring some order to this industry. So there is no difficulty at all, Member, all Parish Councils are fully on board with this proposal.

Mr. McKENZIE: Minister, when you say order I am not fully understanding because there was no problem with the present system.

Mr. ARSCOTT: There is no system.

Mr. McKENZIE: You see, Minister, a man wants to keep a birthnight party for his daughter and he goes to the Parish Council to apply for Places of Amusement License, are you saying to me, Minister, based on what is being proposed that in order to get a Places and Amusement License for a birth-night party or even a set-up that that individual…. let us even go further than that. Let us take the Churches. A Church wants to keep a Convention, the requirements are that they need to get permission from the Parish Council or the KSAC, are you telling me that in order to have a Crusade, to drop a tent you need a TRN Number and you have to be registered, is that what you are saying? Is that what this new proposal is saying and why? Because this is not a matter about order, Minister.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Well, the process is the same, you know. The same time you go to register it's the same place you go, everything takes place at the same time.

One of the purpose of this proposal is to facilitate the rating system which is - will really serve to protect our children because you have to have a rating system. You have some places that lewd lyrics and this kind of entertainment take place. This is part and parcel trying to tidy up a very untidy arrangement. But, Member, I think in time you will come to realize the value of this proposal.

Mr. McKENZIE: Minister, that is not what the Places of Amusement Regulation speaks. The control of what is playing, provisions are there under the law. I just want to ask the Minister, is this requirement a part of any arrangement with the IMF as it relates to persons.

Minister, I see this as a means of imposing taxes on individuals, Minister. Is this a part of a wider scheme, Minister, for further taxation,

because when you have my TRN number - or is it that we will be placed on a system where we pay this wider business fee that has been imposed, the $60,000, is this a part of what the entertainment, the man who is keeping a nine-night or birthnight party is this what that individual is going to be exposed to because of this new proposed amendment to the Places of Amusement Licences?

Mr. ARSCOTT: The answer Member is definitely not. This is not any part of any revenue raising measure. But then, I don't want you to put ideas in the head of the Minister of Finance because sitting there he might think there is another source, but this is not intended in any way.

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. McKENZIE: No, I am not finished, you cannot tell me next question. Minister, you don't think that what is being proposed will allow persons to shy away? Is there any consideration being given to look at categories of the persons staging entertainment; the birth-night parties, the set-ups, *et cetera*, and take them out of that. If you want to introduce the system of registration and zoning, I think it ought to be set at a certain level and not to all persons who are applying for a Places of Amusement Licence to stage a certain events.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Well basically, Member, we don't see any challenges like those all we are seeking to do is to regularize and bring order to the industry. We don't anticipate that there should be any difficulty, and certainly, we as a government value the need for entertainment. We know how important it is, many of the councils earn a lot of revenues from the various activities. So we will do nothing at all certainly to hinder it, in fact this is designed to enhance the industry, to structure and streamline it.

Mr. McKENZIE: Last question on the matter, Minister. I still maintain that the regulations has not been amended, it is a proposal, that is being worked on and I would humbly suggest to you and to the Minister of State that the deadline of July 31. You stepped back on that because you have no powers under the existing regulations as the law presently stands, Minister, to get away with that, you have no such powers under the existing regulations of the Places of Amusement Regulations you have no such powers Minister. So to make that announcement and to say that the 31st of July, this is going to come into effect; it can't be, because it needs time all the necessary things and you can ask the opinion of the noted and the distinguished Attorney General.

Mr. ROBINSON: The distinguished?

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes, the distinguished and noted Attorney General, my friend from Trelawny. (Applause)

Mr. ROBINSON: Your, friend, your friend.

Mr. McKENZIE: So Minister, please. While the concept might be good you are going about it the wrong way, going about it the wrong way.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Okay, the only point I want to respond to that is saying, that is why there are no penalties. The Minister advised

me, I was trying for the 31st deadline, but they are no penalties for those who come in afterwards.

Mr. McKENZIE: Will the Minister...

(*Sotto voce* comments by a Member)

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes man, quite a few. Will the Minister respond to the questions on the National Solid Waste Management Authority standing in my name?

Mr. ARSCOTT: Mr. Speaker, Members, the question by the Member.

Question 1:

Can the Minister say what was the cause of the recent fire at the Riverton City Dump?

Answer:

The cause of the fire was not determined. However arson was suspected.

Question 2:

Can the Minister state if any private contractors were contracted to assist in putting out the blaze?

Answer:

Yes. Private contractors were contracted to assist as well as other corporate citizens who contributed the equipment.

Question 3:

If the answer to Question 2 is in the affirmative, can the Minister name the contractors and how much money was spent to undertake this operation?

Answer:

List of private contractors that assisted is as follows.

Mr. McKENZIE: I have the list.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Okay, he has the list, it is a long list.

The amount of money spent to undertake this operation was $75,896,000.

Question 4:

Can the Minister state the amount of fires that occurred at the dump since 2011?

Answer:

Since 2011, three fires have occurred at the Riverton disposal site.

Question 5:

Can the Minister also state how much was the cost to extinguish these fires?

Answer:

The amount $128 Million.

Mr. McKENZIE: Minister let me start with the last response.

You are saying that the overall cost since 2011, to extinguish the fires has been $128 Million, and $75 Million to extinguish the last one is that so?

One fire cost the Ministry $76 Million. What was the length of this fire Minister?

A MEMBER: Length?

(Heckling by Members)

Mr. McKENZIE: The duration of the fire.

Mr. ARSCOTT: I think the duration was nearly two weeks, Member, and this was the fire associated with the burning of the tore itself, and it really took quite a bit of effort to deal with that one.

Mr. McKENZIE: Minister, while I must - there is hardly much in terms of the questions. Just two concerns, Minister.

When you look at the amount spent on fighting fires at the dump, Minister, you don't think that this amount if you had say another $20 Million could put you in a better position

by building a perimeter fence that would help to secure the location? To prevent, you know, intruders, Minister because....

(S*otto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. McKENZIE: Must be, but there is a need, Minister, and you are aware of that, don't listen to the backbenchers. You aware of that Minister, that there is a need for proper fencing at the Riverton City Dump and to spend $128 Million over a two year period and $75 Million to fight one fire, Minister, that is a whole lot of money.

The next question I want to put to you, Minister, as it relates now to the existing conditions now, the drought that we are experiencing. Is there any provisions being made just in case, Minister, something happens? Is there any provision, Minister, being made to facilitate the Riverton City Dump at this time?

Mr. ARSCOTT: Member, it would be desirable to fence the property, but it is 100 acres or more, and the way the terrain is at this time, I think it's really a difficult proposition. We are examining a number of options and I am not at liberty to disclose them at the moment. But what I would like to say to you is, we are having discussions with the Ministry of Finance right now as we speak to try to provide additional cover material, so we will have not as much of the disposal site exposed as the last time. What seems to have happened is that, from time to time the nature of the fire seems to be deliberately lit to prevent easy access. So therefore, we intend to put proper cover and only have one cell open at any given time. And until we find an appropriate solution in terms of waste to energy or a new site, we will need to just manage it more efficiently. So we have a proposal right now to cover the entire site, with top soil leaving only one side exposed at any given time.

Mr. McKENZIE. The other question about....

Mr. ARSCOTT: Yes.

Mr. McKENZIE: The other question in response to the existing drought situation if provisions...

Mr. ARSCOTT: Well, this is what it is about. So although we are having the drought, we are making provisions now to cover the site so that we can have now just a smaller portion exposed to any kind of fire, that will give us a better capacity to fight it, and our work beefing up as well the fire service so that we can have a more robust capability from the fire brigade. And we have identified the water source to deal with any kind of emerging fire given the difficulty with the water situation in the corporate area.

Mr. McKENZIE: Minister, Mr. Speaker, if you would permit me while I am on my feet to ask the Minister if it is possible to just give a quick update as to the state of the fire service now as it relates...

(*Sotto voce* comments by Members)

Mr. McKENZIE: Just relax nuh, man, what is wrong with you?

In regards to the sequence of bush fires that we have been having; I know that the fire fighters in St. Elizabeth is going through some

rough times, you know, Minister, just a brief update as to what is happening especially in Jacks Hill and St. Elizabeth.

Mr. ARSCOTT: Let me just use the opportunity to...

(*Sotto voce* comment)

Mr. ARSCOTT: It's all right. The bush fires that we have been having, it is really unfortunate because we think they are being set by persons. And I will just use this opportunity to appeal to those lighting fires to desist; we cannot afford any more fires at this time. It is causing untold hardship on those who can least afford it. We have lost quite a bit of coffee in the hills of St. Andrew and going into the Blue Mountain area.

The sad thing about it, where these bush fires are, the fire brigade cannot go into the kind of terrain that we have. And from time to time we utilize the use of the JDF and the helicopter, but that itself is limited. And we know even in the United States has their fires in California and these places, they have a tremendous difficulty in containing fires. And with the wind as it is, and the place is as dry, it is a problem.

But, I must commend the firemen and women. They have done tremendous work.

(Applause)

A MEMBER: Hear, hear!

Mr. ARSCOTT: I was with them Sunday night in Jacks Hill, and they had to be dragging the hose through the bush and fighting to climb up the hills to try to extinguish the fire. Two houses were seared right in my presence, and indeed, I have to commend them.

So, we have additional units, and they are working hard, but we don't need to make their jobs as difficult as it is. And so, that is why I want to appeal to our fellow Jamaicans, that for the period until we get rain, which we expect soon, we hope that they will just be careful and don't do any stash and bum agriculture because that seems to be where - the main source.

In terms of St. Elizabeth, we have been able to send one of the - not a new fire brigade but a new - a more reliable truck has gone to Junction, and the new fire trucks have been deployed, and they have already been called into many, many actions since they have been deployed last week. We need some more units but we are sufficiently satisfied of their capability now to handle bush fires that we have. The terrains that we have, it is virtually impossible because the trucks can't get to all of them.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the recommittal of Item, Notices of Motions Given Orally.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that we recommit to Item, Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister Phillips.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House, I will move: The Customs Act - Custom Tariff (Revision) (Amendment) No. 2 Resolution, 2014.

Whereas by virtue of section 5 of the Customs Act, (hereinafter referred to as

"the Act"), the House of Representatives may, from time to time, by Resolution, impose customs duties upon goods imported into Jamaica, and revoke, reduce, increase or alter any duties so imposed, and may provide for the importation of any goods without payment of custom duties thereon;

And Whereas the House of Representatives, with effect from the 1st day of January, 1973, by Resolution entitled the Customs Tariff (Revision) Resolution, 1972, imposed the import duties set out in the First Schedule to the Resolution, and subsequently provided in the Second and Third Schedules lists of goods that are exempt from import duty thereon:

And Whereas it is desirable to amend the Second Schedule to the Customs Tariff Resolution, 1972, in the manner hereinafter appearing:

Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved by the House of Representatives as follows:

1. This Order may be cited as the Customs Tariff (Revision) (Amendment) (No. 2) Resolution, 2014, and shall be read and construed as one with the Customs Tariff (Revision) Resolution, 1972, (hereinafter referred to as "the Resolution") and all amendments thereto;
2. Part 6 of the Second Schedule of the Resolution is amended -
   i) Table 2, by inserting '*next'* after item 5, the following as items 6-

   "6. Animal feed for the live animals referred to in item 3"

   ii) By inserting '*next'* after Table 2 on paragraph (2) thereof, the following as Table 3:

Specified Motor Cars for Use in the Tourism Industry

1) Subject to paragraph 2, the motor vehicles listed in the first column of the Table below, which, to the satisfaction of the Commissioner may be imported by a taxpayer solely for the use listed in the second column of Table 3, shall be exempt from customs duty.

- A maximum of 1,000 motor cars *per annum*. Each motor car with a cc rating not exceeding 2,500 and a CIF value not exceeding US$35,000 - for use in the car rental sector;
- A maximum of 50 contract carriages per annum with a seating capacity of eight, or more, persons excluding the driver thereof, each contract carriage with a cc rating not exceeding 2,500 and a CIF value not exceeding – for use by a contract carriage operator.
- A maximum of 20 motor cars that are town cars or limousines *per annum*,

each town car or limousine with a cc rating of a maximum of 2,500 cc, and not exceeding a maximum of 3,500 and a CIF value, not exceeding US$35,000 – for use by tour operators, operating pursuant to a licence issued under the Tourist Board Act.

2) In Table 2 of paragraph (1) –

"Contract carriage" means a motor vehicle carrying passengers for hire or reward under contract expressed or implied for the use of the vehicle as a whole, for a fixed or agreed sum or rate;

"Invalid carriage" means a motor vehicle, the weight of which does not exceed five hundred weight and which is specially designed and constructed and not merely adapted for the use of a person suffering from a simple physical defect or disability and is solely used by such a person;

"Motor cars" means motor vehicles (not being a motor cycle or an invalid carriage) constructed solely for the carriage of passengers, exclusive of the driver and adapted to carry not more than seven passengers, exclusive of the driver;

"Motor cycle" means motor vehicle (not being an invalid carriage) with less than four wheels and the unladen weight of which does not exceed eight hundred weight."

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I beg to seek leave of the House in accordance with section 77(9)(b) of the Standing Orders, to allow the Select Committee considering an Act to Amend Road Traffic Act to meet during the months of August and September. And I beg to give notice that at a later stage today I will – I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, it is to enable the Committee to meet now while the House is sitting, to deal with the Act to Amend the Road Traffic Act. I will move in a moment for this to be adopted.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Just a moment, Mr. McKenzie, we are trying to resolve a matter here.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the recommittal of the item, Announcements, Reports from Committees and Notices of Motions Given Earlier.

Mr. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Are you rising under a point of Order?

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes, I just wanted some clarity on what the House Leader said before.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Re the leave to...

Mr. McKENZIE: Yes, yes.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, there is a Committee that wishes to meet while we are

sitting. The Standing Orders do not allow that and so, I am seeking leave to allow us to enable that Committee to meet while the House is sitting now. And that is what I am seeking to do, but I will take it under Public Business in a short while.

Mr. McKENZIE: Has that committee been named, Mr. Speaker? Because, that is also important.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. House Leader... What I would suggest, Mr. McKenzie, when he takes it at Public Business, you could then seek the clarification. Okay, Mr. McKenzie?

(*Sotto voce* comment by Mr. McKenzie)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Let's move on. The question is that there be a recommittal of Announcements, Reports from Committees and Notices of Motions Given Orally.

Put to the House and agreed to.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Clerk also laid on the Table of the House, a copy of the Report of the Regulations Committee of the House of Representatives on its deliberations on the Judiciary (Salaries) Order, 2014.

REPORT FROM COMMITTEES

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to law on the Table of the House, a copy of the Report of the Regulations Committee of the House of Representatives, on its deliberations on the Judiciary (Salaries) Order, 2014.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Mr. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that at the next meeting of the House, I will move:

> Be it Resolved that the Report of the Regulations Committee of the House of Representatives on its deliberations on the Judiciary (Salaries) Order, 2014, which was laid on the Table of the House on the 29th day of July, 2014, be approved.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will be dealing with items 12, 13, 14 and then 16, and 17, under Public Business.

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, I seek first, with the leave of the House Mr. Speaker to take the Resolutions at 12, 13, and 14, and to treat them, for purposes of the Debate, as companion measures, and a single debate. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the matter for consideration is the confirmation of three Customs Tariff Resolutions: namely the Customs Tariff (CARICOM/Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement) Resolution, 2014, the Customs Tariff (CARICOM Republic of Cuba Economic Cooperation Agreement) Resolution, 2014; and thirdly, the Customs Tariff (CARICOM/Costa Rica Free Trade Agreement) Resolution, 2014.

They are all required to give effect to an

agreement between CARICOM Member States and the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Costa Rica respectively.

Section 5 of the Customs Act provides for the House of Representatives, by Resolution, to impose duties, revoke, reduce, increase or alter any duties imposed, and may provide for the importation of any good without the payment of customs duties.

Subsequent to in depth and indeed lengthy consultations among the relevant Ministries, Government agencies, private sector bodies, CARICOM of which Jamaica is a member, negotiated and signed free trade agreements with the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Costa Rica beginning in 1998 and then again in 2001 and 2004, respectively.

Mr. Speaker, these agreements have been observed by Jamaica over the years, and in fact, we have adhered to them usually by way of the grant of ministerial discretion when imports have been - have sought entry to Jamaica under these arrangements. As you know, Mr. Speaker, as is well known, the subsequent decision of this House and of the Government has curtailed extensively that ministerial discretion, and indeed it is felt that it is an untidy way to approach the whole question of the implementation of these Acts, hence .this resolution is here.

But I should point out, although my colleague, the Minister of Industry, Investments and Commerce may speak more extensively on this. That there is cause for concern on the part of the Jamaican authorities regarding the implementation of these agreements in relation to some of the countries concerned, and certainly, this is a matter which we intend to take up but we do not consider it to be appropriate to, so to speak, withdraw or alter the terms on which we have observed these agreements by stealth or subterfuge simply by failing to make provision for the provisions of the agreements to be recognized.

For one thing it involves a CARICOM wide agreement. For another thing, there are provisions in the agreement for redress to be sought under the terms of the agreement, and for another, such as we may choose to seek alteration we want to do it upfront, directly and on the basis of negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, as a consequence of those considerations the resolutions have been brought before this House to provide for the elimination on customs duties on certain tariff lines which were committed to liberalization in accordance with Jamaica's obligations under these agreements.

Jamaica thus far is the only one of the CARICOM NBCs that has not formally put in place arrangement such as we are doing now by way of resolution to formally and fully implement the agreements. It is important to note that the agreements take account of the fact that there are particularly sensitive industries within the agricultural and manufacturing centres, and these items of sensitivity are excluded from liberalization in the context of these agreements and will therefore continue to attract a rate of duty, and that is to say there is an exclusion list that is provided for in the agreement, and that those duties that are currently being applied will

remain in effect for those tariff lines that have been excluded from these commitments.

The fiscal impact of this will be limited. I mean, in other words, we are not giving up anything that was not given up before. So that there is no main fiscal - major fiscal implication of implementing this because all this does is to put a different mechanism in place for meeting obligations which we have met going as far back as 1998 when the first of these agreements was formed.

Mr. Speaker, as a consequence of this, I put to this Honourable House the approval of the Customs Tariff (CARICOM/Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement) Resolution, 2014; secondly, the Customs Tariff CARICOM/Republic of Cuba Economic Cooperation Agreement) Resolution, 2014; and the Customs Tariff CARICOM Costa Rica Free Trade Agreement) Resolution 2014, and I submit them to this House for confirmation, Mr. Speaker.

The Schedules are attached to the Resolution. They remain the same schedules that applied; there is no change to the composition of the Schedules that were negotiated.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Shaw, do you wish to - or Mr. Bartlett. Okay.

Mr. BARTLETT: Mr. Speaker, we on this side in essence have no objection, of course, to these resolutions which have been laid before us because it does bring finally compliance to a very important aspect of the trade arrangements that we signed some 16 years ago in one instance, and then in another instance in 2001 which would be 13 years ago and another instance in 2003.

The real point, however, Mr. Speaker, is not so much our compliance at this very late stage and the fact that we are the last of the developed countries within the CARICOM group to so complete our arrangements. But the issue really is, how are we going to continue to sign these major agreements with trading partners without developing the capacity to deliver and to be able to benefit in the full from these agreements?

The issue of having large derogations, if you will, a list of exceptions as some would call it, of products, is something which we all know is anathema to the WTO rules and in many cases we have to fight and keep fighting in order to have it.

The truth is that, in not being able to comply in full and to enable the rules of liberalization to have its course, we are also losing out. It is not just a matter of protecting local manufacturers here or protecting local agriculturalists, but it's also about not being able to benefit from inflows, investments from other jurisdictions that could come in to strengthen our own capacity to deliver and to be able to provide the well-being of our people.

The issue of having customs duties and also the issues of dealing with the matter of making sure that we are always trying to use trade as a means of generating revenue for the budget or elsewhere, is something that is becoming anathema in the business and investors are getting less and less anxious to respond and participate in arrangements such

as those. So, what we must do, Mr. Speaker, is to look at what are the critical trade facilitation issues that are at stake here; how we are going to make sure that we settle these quickly, that we deal with the business of building capacity, of using technology to enable us to be able to compete and to put ourselves in a position where we are not only at risk when we make arrangements but immediately on signing agreements we can become full partners in those agreements.

I make that point against the background, Mr. Speaker, of the need for all of us. Not your side or my side, because we recognize that these agreements have been coming from the 90s, and these are not the only ones. The Columbia agreement is there, Mr. Speaker, the Venezuela agreement is there, and we also have other agreements. The EPA is there that speaks loudly to us the capacity that we must build, and I believe that we must make a resolve not only in terms of deciding that we want to participate in global community, we must make a resolve to create the capacity so to do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Minister Hylton.

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, I want to in rising to support the resolution moved by my colleague, Minister of Finance, for the removal of duty in accordance with these underlying three agreements namely the CARICOM Cuba Agreement, CARICOM Dominican Republic Agreement, and the CARICOM Costa Rica Agreement. But as pointed out by my colleague, the Government in doing this is simply tidying up what was an untidy arrangement where these agreements though negotiated and signed, sometime ago, were never really formally taken fully on board although these were being applied provisionally.

One of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition, the Member opposite speaking just now mentioned a few reasons as to why he thought that these agreements were not implemented. But one of the reason they were not implemented fully was, because from as early as 2001 and before, when the Dominican agreement, the CARICOM Dominican agreement was negotiated, and when the CARICOM Costa Rica agreement was negotiated Jamaica took the position, within CARICOM, that some development subsequent to the signing of the agreement with Costa Rica ought to be taken fully on board because Costa Rica then subsequently, subsequent to the signing signed the CAFTA agreement with the United States. That agreement Jamaica noted, represented a clear and present danger if some of the rules particularly the rules of origin were not addressed because it created the risk of a pass through of goods from the US to Costa Rica finding its way into CARICOM markets. Jamaica expressed the concern then and continue to express a concern and a need for there to be some amendment to the protocol, to the administrative rules affecting the rules of origin.

Sadly this has not been done up until today, notwithstanding the various efforts made by the Government certainly before I

left that position and since I returned to Government, we have sought to have this matter addressed.

It is true that we made some progress in the final stages in the course of this year, earlier this year when we had some discussion with the Costa Rican Minister of Trade to have this matter addressed.

It is acknowledged that these matters need to be addressed. Indeed we made good progress in discussion with the Costa Rican Minister of Trade who sadly had to demit office consequent upon the elections just recently -

Mr. DALLEY: Sadly?

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Yes, sadly because we wanted to conclude.

So, what that that reaffirms though is that there is the need and the opportunity certainly with Costa Rica to make progress and we will endeavour to complete that once the new government is fully in place.

In the case of the Dominican Republic that situation remains very concerning, very concerning, and even though we passed the resolution today, formally adopt the agreements, there are outstanding issues with Dominica that has to be addressed, specifically their Law 173 which militates against industry and Jamaican enterprise wanting to do business in Dominica. But I would say to you, Member, that in addition to all of that there is the need - you quite rightly point to the implication of these trade agreements for investment.

You quite rightly point to the need for us to continue to build capacity to be able to take advantage of that. We are doing that and I believe that the agreements now and the arrangements which have been put in place by this Administration will ensure that Jamaica can take advantage, better advantage of these trade agreements, but there still is the need to ensure that the terms of trade, a sale trade, that the rules, whatever our capacity to trade the rules themselves have failed, because they put our businesses at a disadvantage that we want to ensure that there is a level playing field. Because however much we have a capacity, if we allow the rules to be so drawn as to be unfair we would be always at a disadvantage. So we intend to continue to raise these issues on behalf of our industry, even as we ensure that we take better advantage from the point of view of investment as well of these agreements.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I support the resolution.

Mr. A. BROWN: Mr. Speaker, my intervention in this matter is going to be very brief.

Mr. SHAW: How comforting!

Mr. A. BROWN: I want to support the confirmation of the resolution that is before the Honourable House, and I want to make three points. I want to underscore the point that despite the lack of formal implementation up to this point, that these agreements have, in fact, been implemented on a provisional basis since the time that they were, in fact, agreed by the Government of Jamaica and the respective counterparts, but that the formalization this afternoon is an important step in terms of reinforcing Jamaica's

commitment to meeting agreements that we have signed and to implement those agreements.

The second point I would want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that the formalization of these agreements and the finalization of these agreements will allow for the triggering of mechanisms within the agreements themselves, full mechanisms to resolve some of the issues - and Minister Hylton spoke to some of them - and that there are in fact systems in place where these issues can be addressed and addressed more formally. And I think that's an important point to make, particularly as the partners on the other side will take, I believe, the commitment more seriously since we are putting this now into our legislation.

The final point I wish to make in relation to this is that I think we have to continue to encourage our private sector to explore these agreements, and to look at the opportunities that they present, and not to be too defensive in relation to the fact that we are now in a more open-competitive environment, because this is the nature of the beast that we are engaged in this globalized and competitive arrangement.

Now, I want to indicate as well that there is the business of the joint commissions to which these agreements speak, and this is another important mechanism for dialogue and also for amendments that may need to be made to the various agreements based on the issues which may arise and which may negatively affect persons or companies here in Jamaica or players here in Jamaica.

So it is very important. I want to commend the Minister and indeed, I want to commend the Government because these decisions were taken earlier - last year March 2013 by the Cabinet to formalize it. In whole these agreements represent opportunities for Jamaican private sector and entrepreneurs because they open access to greater market. And I think that we have to be bold in terms of taking on the opportunities that they present and not being afraid of the challenges that come along with them.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I fully endorse and support the confirmation of these Resolutions.

Thank you.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Baugh.

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

I too will try my best to be as brief as possible on this issue. But as former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade we were involved in discussions with Costa Rica, Costa Rican delegation and the Dominican Republic, not so much Cuba, in the implementation of these outstanding agreements. There was always greater enthusiasm on the side of Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic, and that's understandable because they are way ahead, way ahead of us in terms of their productivity and their productive capacity. And there was always the fear in CARICOM that there were some economies that were too small to compete and could be inundated or flooded with cheap products from these countries. So we were always the reluctant parties to this Agreement.

But I am very supportive as our Spokesman on Foreign Affairs has said; we on this side are very supportive of the progressive implementation. But as the Minister of Finance said there is need for caution in terms of implementation. And what the Minister has presented us today with is a list, an exclusion list which exists in all the agreements that we have undertaken so far, including the Economic Partnership Agreement, the EPA, with the United Kingdom and Europe, which the current Minister of Industry has said repeatedly, even though some of it is *sotto voce* comments in the House, that he warned us not to sign the Economic Partnership Agreement.

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Shaw)

Dr. BAUGH: Exactly. So I am very pleased today to see that he is very supportive of the effort to enter into more agreements. And I want to remind him especially with his dissertation on CAFTA, the Central America Free Trade Agreement that Costa Rica is a part of and the Dominican Republic is a part of, that under the EPA - the agreement between CARIFORUM, which includes Cuba and the Dominican Republic, along with CARICOM, with Cuba, and it was the understanding that the Dominican Republic having signed CAFTA and was now a part of the CARIFORUM Agreement with Europe, that Europe indicated that the same terms offered by the Dominican Republic to the United States of America would have to be offered to Europe as well.

In other words, since the terms were better with America in that CAFTA allowed all total trade to be liberalized, Europe insisted that with the Dominican Republic the total trade was liberalized for Europe as well. But us in the Caribbean, we maintained an exclusion list and it would take 25 years for us to liberate their trade, although Europe immediately liberated all their trade for CAICOM in services as well as trade. They gave us time, 25 years to systematically and progressively liberalize our trade. In other words, give them access to our markets. And they had baskets over the years, a 5-year basket, a 10-year basket, a 15-year basket and a 25-year basket. In other words, we had 25 years in CARICOM to liberate our market, whereas Cuba - not Cuba, sorry, Europe made their total market available to us.

But the clause that seemed to have concerned the Minister of Industry, the clause that seemed to have worried the Minister of Industry is the Most Favoured Nation Clause, the MFN Clause which again he has been involved, and I see he has written to a newspaper about it and I am about to respond as well. But that MFN Clause states very clearly that if countries A and B enter into such an agreement, a trading agreement, a liberalization agreement and then country B decides to enter into another agreement with country C, then if country B offers better term to country C, then A is automatically entitled to those terms as well.

What has happened within the EPA is that the terms we have offered Europe, we would not intend to offer any better to any country. But there is also a provision. As far as Europe is concerned they are willing to understand

that if Jamaica or CARICOM wants to enter into trade with any southern country, south-south agreements or any developing countries, they would not insist on that clause because they would insist on it only in respect of major trading partners to Europe. And they went further to define a major trading company as a company - as a country that controls one per cent of commercial trade in the world, in other words, developed countries. And I would imagine now that would apply to the emerging economies like China and India since they control a significant amount of trade.

But I believe that that MFN Clause is very fair. As a matter of fact, it existed before EPA, it existed in WTO, World Trade Organization arrangements and even preceded WTO. So it is a well established clause. The Minister of Industry continues to be concerned about it and I personally don't understand why. As a matter of fact, I am a bit confused as to why you keep on saying that we should not have signed the EPA with Europe because it is a very good agreement.

And I want to come back to the point…

Mr. SHAW: He is more confused than you are.

Dr. BAUGH: Thank you.

I want to come back to the point that our spokesman on this side made that in all of this we can be at a disadvantage if we do not pay attention to other aspects of the agreement, especially in the building of capacity in our countries because the problem with our countries...

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I wish to clarify just so you don't write misleadingly again. I have said very clearly that my *sotto voce* remarks to what you have said spoke to the fact that I argued that you should not have signed it when you did, not that it has not utility now.

Dr. BAUGH: You would sign it now then?

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: No. I have said in what I have said that we will take advantage of it - the logistics hub will take advantage of this. So it's not about - and our position was never against signing an agreement. We were negotiating with them to sign an agreement. There was the need for an EPA. What our position was...

Mr. SHAW: A point of order - why did you sign a WTO when you did?

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Shaw, contain yourself please. Minister Hylton.

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker, it's not a point of order.

The Deputy SPEAKER: There was no point of order.

Dr. BAUGH: I want to finish now. I have one point to make.

I have one point to make, Mr. Speaker. I am supporting the point made on this side by our Spokesman on Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, in that the most important issue for countries like us, developing countries, is to build capacity. And within the context of these agreements, especially the EPA agreement, there is a chapter built-in to give assistance to these countries to build up legal institutional human and technological capacities in our countries to be able to take

advantage of the access we have gained, the full access we have gained to the markets in Europe and especially also to our neighbouring Dominican Republic and Costa Rica. Because if we do not build these capacities we will be at a disadvantage: capacities for products, for manufacturing; but also in the EPA the opportunity for us to take advantage of services which our entertainers are now taking advantage of. But we need to build those capacities, Mr. Speaker...

(*Sotto voce* remarks by Mr. Anthony Hylton)

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Dr. BAUGH: Mr. Speaker, I don't know why he keeps interrupting. I am trying to finish.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Dr. Baugh, I would suggest you conclude hastily.

(Cross talk)

Dr. BAUGH: No, no. I am going to put the question after this.

(Heckling)

Mr. Anthony HYLTON: Mr. Speaker...

The Deputy SPEAKER: Minister Hylton, please. We can't have two people on their - we can't have two people standing, sir. Please sit.

Dr. BAUGH: If he wants to state a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I will allow him. But if it's not a point of order he can't be interrupting so...

(*Sotto voce* comments)

The Deputy SPEAKER: Finish what you were saying.

Mr. SHAW: Yes, but he does it all the while, too! I would have put an end to it!

(Laughter/Heckling)

Dr. BAUGH: The last point, Mr. Speaker, is the issue of building our standards. We need a system to build those capacities to meet international standards, such as the SPF standards and the HACCP Standards, so that we can fully take part in this new dimension of global trade, but especially trading with our partners with whom we have signed these agreements.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the resolution...

Government MEMBERS: No! No!

The Deputy SPEAKER: I want to move with some amount of alacrity, okay.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: Mr. Speaker, despite the diverse comments I think everyone is agreed that the resolution should be approved.

Mr. SHAW: Despite some fool-fool comments made.

(*Sotto voce* comments)

Dr. PHILLIPS: I believe, also, Mr. Speaker, that everyone...

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Dr. PHILLIPS: ...is also agreed that we need to create the economic conditions and the policy conditions in our country, that facilitate our exporters taking full advantage of the openings that are created.

Thirdly, we are serving notice to our partners that where there are non-tariff barriers or other unfair rules affecting Jamaica's exporters, we intend to enter into negotiations in order to deal with those matters.

Mr. Speaker, other things have been said, I don't think there is any - there is nothing in these Agreements that is non-compliant with WTO, and I think there is nothing in the list of Exceptions that is not compliant, these were negotiated. But, save and except for that, I don't think we should emphasize any differences, because we are all agreed that the resolution should be carried.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the resolution be approved.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, we will defer Items 16 and 17.

And, I wish to deal with Item 18, notice of which was given last week, which was a Notice to enable the meeting of the Standing Orders Committee to consider some additional matters, in relation to the Sectoral Debate.

Mr. Speaker, last week we gave notice, and I now move that this motion be approved.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be approved.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, earlier I gave notice of a motion I wish to move to enable the Committee, that is, the Select Committee dealing with the amendments to the Road Traffic Act, to meet, in accordance with 77(9)(b), at the time when this House is sitting.

I so move.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be approved.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not - I am sorry. Mr. Speaker, the Member from South West St. Catherine wishes to remove two of the Private Members' Motion, and to deal with another two quickly.

So, I am going to move for the suspension of the Standing Orders to allow him to take Private Members' Motion.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that there be a suspension of the Standing Orders to allow the Member to take the motion.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, I seek permission to withdraw Items Number 9 and Number 11.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Permission granted.

Mr. WARMINGTON: You should put it to the House.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that Items 9 and 11 be withdrawn. You are withdrawing those?

Mr. WARMINGTON: Yes.

The Deputy SPEAKER: All right. The question is that Items 9 and 11 be withdrawn.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, Items 8, 10 and 11 are similar items, they are companion items, so I wish to take all three together, as such.

Item 8 asks for the amendment to section 33 subsection (3) of ROPA. And it says:

"Whereas section 33 subsection (3) of the Representation of the People Act..."

The Act states that the elector shall forthwith enter one of the polling compartments and there make his mark - mark his ballot paper by making a cross with a black lead pencil within the space containing the name of the candidate for whom he intends to vote.

I am asking, Mr. Speaker, that this be amended to read that any item that the elector wishes to use should be possible.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: You wa'an bogus election!

Mr. WARMINGTON: The reason for this, Mr. Speaker, is once the - I am saying, once the elector's intent is known, that should be enough. And, there are cases where people might use pen, and there are people who might leave pen behind the polling - the thing, and people go and use the pen unconsciously.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: That won't help you to win the next election!

Mr. WARMINGTON: This - can I ask you for protection from the truck driver, Mr. Speaker?

(The Deputy Speaker gavels)

Mr. WARMINGTON: This particular Private Members' Motion, Mr. Speaker, was passed in 2007, February. It was again passed I think in 2011, but actions were not taken then, because it's required that after such amendments are approved here – or resolution - it ought to be sent directly to Cabinet. It was not sent to Cabinet then for the necessary action to be taken. So, this is the reason why I am bringing back these three Private Members' Motions. But they were passed unanimously twice by this House, but the action was not taken. It was for the staff of Parliament to do the necessary, but this was not done. And, it's on that basis on which I am bringing back these three amendments to the ROPA. So, I ask for any implement that the elector uses and from the intent of the elector can be discerned, it should be a valid ballot. Because sometimes it is marked at the front of the person's name or somewhere else, or you have only a tick or one stroke. But from the intent of the elector can be discerned, we are saying it should be a valid ballot. Because a lot of what they call spoilt ballots can be stated exactly for whom that ballot is marked. And, it shouldn't be limited to a black lead pencil.

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: It should be!

Mr. WARMINGTON: It shouldn't be limited to a black lead pencil. But from the elector's intent is discerned we should call it a valid ballot, and that's all we are asking for. But any implement - if he even wants to use charcoal, but you can see he made a mark for his candidate, we are asking that that be termed...

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: A marked ballot you want come inside here?

Mr. WARMINGTON: You don't understand what I am saying anyhow. You don't understand, that's why you are saying that rubbish across there!

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Members!

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Buchanan

from South East Westmoreland, Mr. Speaker, can you protect me from the truck driver across there?

The SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Buchanan, will you desist! And, Mr. Warmington, continue without...

Mr. WARMINGTON: Yes, thank you, because he doesn't understand what I am saying, that's why.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Do not keep responding to him, just continue.

Mr. WARMINGTON: I have to forgive him because he doesn't understand.

Mr. DALLEY: We are not going to change using pencil.

Mr. WARMINGTON: You vote for it before!

Then, the other one, Mr. Speaker, is to ask for amendment to section 44 subsection (3) of the Representation of the People Act. It states, if in the course of counting the ballots:

> *"Any ballot paper is found with the counterfoil still attached thereto, the presiding officer shall carefully concealing the numbers thereon from all persons present (and without examining them himself) remove and destroy such counterfoil. He shall not reject the ballot merely by reason of his former failure to remove the counterfoil."*

So, I am asking that in not removing the 'counterfile', and, if the 'counterfile' is removed and is torn above or below...

Mr. DALLEY: Counterfile! Use the word properly.

Mr. WARMINGTON: The counterfoil.

Government MEMBERS: Aaahhh!

Mr. WARMINGTON: And, if he removes the counterfoil and it's removed above or below the perforated line...

(Heckling)

Why don't you shut up across there!

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. Warmington!

(*Sotto voce* comments from Mr. Dalley)

Mr. WARMINGTON: I need to continue, but the Brigadista who is a teacher is behaving like a hooligan down there!

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that if the counterfoil is removed above or below the perforated line, we are saying that this should be counted as a valid ballot, because it is not the fault of the elector why the Presiding Officer tore the ballot incorrectly. So, we are asking for amendment to section 44 subsection (3), that regardless where the counterfoil is removed that should be a valid ballot.

Mr. DALLEY: I agree with that.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Twelve -

Whereas section 41(a) subsection (1) of the Representation of the People Act specify that every candidate in an election may appoint such persons as he thinks fit to be outdoor agents, and shall issue to any such outdoor agents appointed by him, a certificate of appointment in the prescribed form specifying the polling station in respect of which the agents are appointed;

And Whereas in many cases Returning Officers, election-day workers, auxiliary or one-day police and members of the security forces, have prevented

these said agents from effectively carrying out the functions for which they were appointed;

And Whereas the reason given is that these agents cannot be on the compound where the poll is being conducted, and in other cases, these agents must be hundreds of meters away from the polling stations;

And Whereas section 77 subsection (1) of the Act does not apply to outdoor agents;

And Whereas section 41A subsection (3) of the Act specifies the distance for the outdoor agents to be not less than twenty yards from the polling station;

. And Whereas no agent can carry out the function for which he or she was appointed, being such distance from where the poll is being conducted;

Be it Resolved that section 41A subsection (1) of the Act be amended to allow the person appointed by the candidate and his agent to be within the precinct of, and closer than twenty yards to the police station, as now specified, so that agents will be able to carry out the duties for which they were appointed.

An agent that is all the way down the street, appointed by law by a candidate, cannot effectively carry out that function when they are all the way down the street.

So, we are asking that this section be amended to allow the agent to be within the precinct or the area of the polling station, so they can carry out the function for which they were appointed. If they are appointed by law there is no reason why they should be excluded from the compound. But, we are asking here for section 41A subsection (1) be amended to allow the outdoor agent to be within the area of the polling station so that they can effectively carry out the functions of the candidate appointed by law.

And, number 22 here:

Whereas paragraph 1 subsection (1) of the First Schedule of the Electoral Commission Interim Act, referred to as the Act, states:

The Commission shall consist of nine members which includes the Director of Elections;

And Whereas paragraph 1 subsection (l)(c) makes the Director of Election eligible to vote at meetings of the Commission;

And Whereas in its Report dated October 1, 2008, submitted to Parliament, the Electoral Commission appears to suggest that the Director of Election should not be eligible to vote at meetings of the Commission;

Be it Resolved that Parliament take immediate action to amend paragraph 1 subsection (1) of the First Schedule of the Act so that the Director of Election will no longer be able to vote at meetings of the Commission.

This was asked for by the Commissioner himself, because the Director of Election is an employee of the Commissioners and this was an error when the Act came here before and the Commissioners in their Report in 2008, on October 1, referred to this where they really asked for a correction of the error that was

made, because you can't have an employee having the same role as the employer in a meeting; and they asked for it and the action was not taken by Parliament to amend this section so that he will appear there to give advice to the Commissioners instead of sitting as a Commissioner. This was asked for, so we're asking for the amendment to be done that his role will be as an adviser to the Commissioners than participating in the whole stuff. The Commissioners asked for this amendment in 2008. So I'm asking the amendment be done that these be sent to Cabinet for the necessary amendments to be done, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker -

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I noted with interest some of the early comments from first-time Members of Parliament in the House and I attribute that primarily to lack of experience, because any individual in this House would have contested and won multiple elections would be in as position to appreciate how practical these matters to the electoral process. Number eight that speaks to giving a clear intent as to exactly how you want your vote to be cast. We have had many issues. In fact, I think in 2007 there was a particular election which was decided because of Magistrate's interpretation of the intent of voters and it really ought not to be just the intent of any one Magistrate, because as we all know different Magistrates at times have come to different conclusions. But it is to my mind, Mr. Speaker, most practical that as long as there's a clear intent whether X, tick, pen, pencil that we should give serious consideration to accepting the proposal from the Member.

The other one that I would like to just give some support to is in relation to the placement of our accredited agents; right, placement of accredited agents. As the Member said, if they are not safely within the compound and outside of the noises and the distractions and the quarrelling and the arguments they can be effective and if they can't be effective then they will not assist the respective candidates. We'll not get maximum .... from them and that again is a most practical proposal. All in all, Mr. Speaker, I support the suggestions from the Member, because to my mind over time it would lend to less controversial elections and less quarrels and less rejections and will help to have results at the end of the day which cannot be contested. Those are my few words, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Robinson.

Mr. ROBINSON: Mr. Speaker, in just want to speak on two points. The first point raised by the Member from South West St. Catherine re the pencils. I understand the mischief that the resolution intends to correct. However, you could give rise to another mischief. If you are allowing anybody with any instrument to mark let's say somebody marks with a pencil and for whatever nefarious reasons somebody else happens to get that ballot before it's recounted and uses a pen you are opening yourself to other types of fraudulent activity. So I think the emphasis should be on ensuring we, through public education, inform the electors that there is a

specific implement, which is required for that. And, in fact, I mean certainly in all of our educations we indicate to voters that you use the pencil. I think you will open yourself up to another host of issues if you are allowing persons to use any implement to mark the ballot. I think that is -

The second issue, and I agree with other points - the issue of whether the Director has a vote. It's something we have to look at in terms of corporate governance. I mean you have Boards of companies where CEOs sit on the Board and they have full rights as a member and if you look at good corporate governance that practice tends to obtain and I'm not conclusive on the position, right, but I think it is something we should examine. I'm not clear as to why the CEO, in this case the Director who is on the Board and we call it a Commission should not have the right to vote in a matter. I don't buy the argument that he's an employee and as such he's employed by the Board. Good corporate governance allows a CEO to exercise all the rights as a normal Board member. So in summary I think that that one requires some more consultation. But certainly on the first one I'm not in favour of any implement being used to mark a ballot.

Mr. PRYCE: Mr. Speaker, if I could.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Pryce.

Mr. PRYCE: Some brief remarks on the matters raised by the Member from South West St. Catherine. I think generally speaking it's important that we keep reviewing the Representation of the People's Act. It is, after all, one of the pillars on which our democracy is supported. I am suggesting as well, while it is not contained in the Member's resolution, which he has bundled together, that in recent years it is in the issue of the mark or the implement which makes the mark that has - or the intent of the voter that has caused any consternation to our practice of democracy. Instead it is some other issues, including that of citizenship and nativity and I wonder if, at any point, we will contemplate the amendments to the nominating form that causes candidates to declare that they are, in fact, citizens of Jamaica and of no other country simultaneously. I think that those issues in recent vintage have had more of an impact certainly at the expense of a serial set of bi-elections in the life of a previous Parliament rather than whether or not it is a pencil, or pen or another implement that records the intent of the elector.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Shaw.

Mr. SHAW: Mr. Speaker, I want to say I'm generally in agreement with the proposals by the Member. And I anticipate that the House Leader will be responding on this in this Debate. And I wanted to embrace the opportunity to express a concern. During the Standing Finance Committee meeting held earlier this year in Parliament. A question was asked of the Minister with Responsibility for Electoral Affairs as to whether or not a re-verification exercise of the existing voters' list was not now due. His response to us on the advice of the Director of Elections was that, no, a re-verification exercise is not due until 2016.

As it turns out, Mr. Speaker, the Parliament was misled, because the last time a

re-verification exercise was carried out commenced in 2004, ended in 2006 and on that basis, w were told, another one would be due in 2016. It is supposed to be ten years by convention or by informal arrangement. Whatever the system, it's supposed to be every ten years. So it commenced in 2004 and it ended in 2006 and therefore, Mr. Speaker, I wish for the Minister to comment as to whether or not it would not be accurate that the new verification should commence in 2014, which is ten years after the commencement in 2004. To carry out a comprehensive programme of re-verification of the voters' list with proper consistent rules as to which names remain on the list and which names are removed from the list, consistent and predictable and reasonable rules for the re-verification of the voters' list.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's a very important matter, because we have seen in elections since the continuous registration commenced of voters. We have seen where the voters' list is getting larger and larger but the number of people who voting is relatively the same more or less under one million still vote, but the list keeps getting from 1.2 million, 1.3 million, 1.4 million, 1.5, 1.6 million, over 1.7 million now. I don't under the consternation of some Members, because it has been determined, Mr. Speaker, that there are a lot of people that have migrated that they no intention of coming back Jamaica. In one case one constituency was recently analyzed and they found sixty-nine (69) persons' name on the voters' list who died abroad and buried abroad and their names are still on the voters' list.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the purpose of a re-verification exercise is to clean up the voters' list and it is one of two things is either we have a re-verification exercise or we have a brand new enumeration exercise. In the same way that every ten years we have a new census, we need to have - and it is a ROPA Legislation that it gives the Minister the power to require and to order a new enquiry, that is to say, a new enumeration exercise. So I would like for the Honourable Minister this evening to comment on the options that are before us. Either you have:

a) A brand new enumeration exercise to clean up the voters' list; or
b) The re-verification exercise to start ten years from when it started in 2004, which would be 2014.

The voters' list needs to be cleaned up, Mr. Speaker, as there are many, many on that list name that will offer an opportunity for the corruption of the electoral process and that must be dealt with.

Mr. DALLEY: Sit down!

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Shut 'yu' 'mout' and sit down!

(Disturbance)

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Mr. House Leader, go ahead.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, as House Leader I do have carriage over this matter and portfolio. And I think I would start in this debate by saying, especially in light of the very last mentioned by the Member from North East...

Mr. DALLEY: Mischievous!

Mr. PAULWELL: Manchester.

Mr. DALLEY: Mischievous!

Mr. PAULWELL: ...that Jamaica stands proud as a country that is a model for the conduct of elections due to the reform... (Applause) ...of voter…. (Applause)

A MEMBER: And you know that!

Mr. DALLEY: Voter turnout has nothing to do with... (Inaudible)

Mr. PAULWELL: Secondly, Mr. Speaker, as the member mentioned during this and in Finance Committee Meeting when the question was asked of me, I took Counsel and I took Counsel from the Director of Elections. As it is raised now, and really it is so tangential to the four (4) Motions, I can't respond as you are urging, I have to seek Counsel. And so, that matter, that matter cannot, cannot be dealt with today. But, I understand the passion of the Member and I will undertake to do the research, to do the research.

There are going to be some cost implications, but there's no cost too great for the preservation of our democracy, so I'll do that research.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the four (4) Motions, I am aware that the matters were brought here before, I think twice before and at various times received approvals from the Parliament. (*Sotto voce* comments) I'm going to recommend because these affect, (*Sotto voce* comments) ...all of these matters affect...

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) Members, Mr. Charles, we would like to hear the Speaker. So would I. (Laughter) The House Leader.

Mr. PAULWELL: All of these matters affect the Representation of the People's Act and will necessarily have to receive the attention of the Cabinet before they are brought back here. And the usual practice, the tradition is that, as a Cabinet we will make sure that the views of the ECJ are taken into account before even the Cabinet considers it. And so, therefore, I have no difficulty in the matters being referred to the Cabinet and for us to - for the Cabinet to take a decision and for it to be brought back here. And if I can put that as the amendment to the Resolutions then I will have no difficulty in them going forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Mr. Warmington.

Mr. WARMINGTON: Mr. Speaker, let me thank the Leader of the House. Before I ask for the amendment as such, because.... was asking for it to go to Cabinet, we would have done the amendment at the close. What I find is that the new Members to this House had a problem with the Petition that I have here. But may I inform them that when it was brought here in February 2007, they were passed unanimously.

The current Prime Minister was Prime Minister then spoke on these very same amendment that I asked for and supported them wholeheartedly in February 2007. When I brought them back in 2011, the current Prime Minister, who was Leader of the Opposition then, supported them wholeheartedly and all of these amendments I

asked for were passed in this House unanimously.

If you realize the... (Inaudible comments) If you realize the senior Members are not in that brood except the brigadister (Laughter) because the senior Members, they are aware.

Mr. DALLEY: Please withdraw your comment.

Mr. WARMINGTON: They are aware...

Mr. DALLEY: No, no! Please withdraw your comment.

Mr. WARMINGTON: ...that the Prime Minister supports these amendments.

(Inaudible comments)

Mr. L. BUCHANAN: Or fix it up!

Mr. WARMINGTON: The general.

Mr. DALLEY: Okay.

Mr. WARMINGTON: She spoke on it on that side.... (Mr. Warmington points to the Government side) She spoke on it on this side. (Mr. Warmington points to Opposition side) She voted for it. She supported it. So, those who are wet up behind the ears, those who are wet behind the ears are the only ones who now will be raising some objection to it.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask for an amendment to amend 8, 9 - No, 8, 10, 12 and 22 to ask for it to be sent to Cabinet for the necessary attention to be given.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy SPEAKER: I put the amendment.

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: I put the Motion as amended.

Put to the House and agreed to.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the recommittal of Item, Notice 3 of Motions Given Orally.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that there be a recommittal to Item, Notices of Motions Given Orally?

Put to the House and agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS GIVEN ORALLY

Mr. DALLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice - and I'm very happy in doing so today - that at the next meeting of the House I will move to introduce and have read a first time a Bill entitled: "The Public Procurement Act, 2014".

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, it is not intended for us to do any further business this afternoon. As you know, the House will take a very short break during the month of August. We will return in early September, a date to be fixed and I want to intreat Members to try to recharge their batteries as when we return we do have a battery of other legislation that we have to consider and approve during the course of this remaining financial year. So, I wish Members a restful break and that we return sometime in September.

The Deputy SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Smith.

Mr. D. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to be associated with the comments of the House Leader to wish all Members, my colleagues on

both sides an enjoyable summer break. Mr. Speaker, this is the time of year that parliamentarians like to grab an opportunity to spend some time with their close family Members and indeed the wider family in their respective constituencies. And all of us I know, sir, will be facing certain specific challenges in terms of dealing with our back-to-school. That has always been a challenge ever since and I don't think it will be any less this year. So, on behalf of all of us on this side of the House I will like to just say, enjoy the work that you would be doing, enjoy the holiday. We'll be back recharged. The Opposition will be back recharged to keep you all on your toes.

(Laughter)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. PAULWELL: Mr. Speaker, I move for the adjournment of the Parliament for a date to be fixed.

The Deputy SPEAKER: The question is that this Honourable House now adjourn to a date to be fixed?

Put to the House and agreed to.

The Deputy SPEAKER: (Gavels) This Honourable House now stands adjourned.

The House adjourned at approximately 5:19 p.m.