

**No. 5**

**Thursday**

**Fourth Session**

**14<sup>th</sup> May, 2009**

**Eighth Parliament**

**SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

**THE**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**ADVANCE COPY**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

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**THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIFTH MEETING, FOURTH SESSION OF THE  
EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES CONSTITUTED AS SET  
OUT IN SCHEDULE 2 TO THE SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES ORDER, 1979.**

**TENTH SITTING**

**14<sup>th</sup> May, 2009**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

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

**PRAYERS**

**MR. SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR**

Honourable Hendrick Alexander

**Present**

**MEMBERS OF CABINET**

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

Member for North Central Windward

Attorney General  
Honourable Judith Jones-Morgan

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign  
Affairs, Commerce and Trade  
Honourable Louis Straker

Member for Central Leeward

Minister of Education  
Honourable Girlyn Miguel

Member for Marriaqua

Minister of Urban Development, Culture,  
Labour and Electoral Matters  
Rene Baptiste

Member for West Kingstown

Minister of Agriculture,  
Forestry and Fisheries  
Honourable Montgomery Daniel

Member for North Windward

Minister of Telecommunications, Science  
Technology and Industry  
Honourable Dr. Jerrol Thompson

Member for North Leeward

Minister of Tourism  
Honourable Glen Beache

Member for South Windward

Minister of the State in the Prime Minister's  
Office with Responsibility for the Public Service  
Honourable Conrad Sayers

Member for Central Kingstown

Honourable Rochelle Forde

Government Senator/ Deputy Speaker

Honourable Richard Williams

Government Senator

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

Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday

Member for Northern Grenadines

Honourable Major St. Claire Leacock

Opposition Senator

#### **ABSENT**

Minister of National Mobilisation, Social  
Development, Gender Affairs,  
Non-Governmental Organisations,  
Local Government, Persons with Disabilities,  
Youths and Sports  
Honourable Michael Browne

Member for West St. George

Minister of Rural Transformation, Information,  
Postal Service and Ecclesiastical Affairs  
Honourable Selmon Walters

Member for Central South Windward

Minister of Health and the Environment  
Honourable Dr. Douglas Slater

Minister of Transport and Works,  
Honourable Clayton Burgin

Minister of Housing, Informal Human,  
Settlements, Physical Planning, Lands  
and Survey and Local Government  
Honourable Julian Francis

Honourable Arnhim Eustace

Honourable Terrence Ollivierre

Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture,  
Forestry and Fisheries, Parliamentary Secretary  
Honourable Saboto Caesar

Honourable Daniel Cummings

Member for South Leeward

Member for West East St. George

Government Senator

Leader of the Opposition  
Member for East Kingstown

Member for Southern Grenadines

Government Senator

Opposition Senator

# ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

THURSDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2009

### PRAYER

The Honourable Speaker Hendrick Alexander read the Prayer of the House.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay, thank you: this is better.

### APOLOGIES

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** The Honourable Minister of Health who is away on a personal business, Mr. Speaker, we have given him leave for a few days. His son is graduating and I think that is understandable, he is attending his son's graduation at the university. And the Honourable Minister of Housing he is overseas on Government's business. And in keeping, Mr. Speaker, with the ongoing improvement of our Members on this Honourable side of the House, we encourage everyone to study and learn something new on an ongoing basis and advance their own education that three university graduates are doing further work. The Honourable Senator Saboto Caesar is doing exams for his Masters degree in Banking and Finance Law and the two educators who have degrees in Education: the Honourable Minister of Rural Development; Rural Transformation, Honourable Selmon Walters and the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works, Honourable Clayton Burgin, Mr. Speaker, they are writing their first year Law exams. They are graduates as you know, in one case one has a Masters degree in Education; but both of them are graduates in education and they are furthering their education in another field.

It pleases me very much, Mr. Speaker that we have so many of our Members ... There are others who are embarking upon courses of one kind or another, although they are not writing exams they are doing it for their own edification as part and parcel of their further training and we have set ourselves those kinds of task: I myself doing work in a particular area, Mr. Speaker. So, that is where we are the three in relation to their exams; they have their exams today, Mr. Speaker and therefore cannot be here. So, I apologise for their absence; but we do have otherwise a very full team and we are equipped to do deal with all the matters which are on the Order Paper today. So the People's business will not suffer.

### OBITUARIES

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Minister of Culture, Member for West Kingstown.

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to pay tribute to E. Philmore Hull, formerly of New Montrose. Mr. Hull known as, Phil Hull passed away on the 19<sup>th</sup> of last month and was interred on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Phil Hull as he was known worked for several years in many capacities in the Private Sector

at Supervisory/Manager level. He is more known for being associated with the St Vincent Philatelic Services in the 1970s and '80s. He was retired and at home with his wife Misses Peggy Innis Hull, who was a former National Netball player, Captain, Shooter and Center of the National Netball team and we are very [inaudible] to stand by her side. She was pleased to see brothers and sisters coming to her in her hour of need.

Mr. Hull is also known in other circles in the Preston Unity Mechanics as an Order Secretary, Grand Order Officer and High Priest of the Mechanics Lodge and he will be sadly missed in the Montrose area. People would miss seeing him walking coming down or across by Ace Home Center where he sometimes enjoy a game of domino with the boys. On behalf of us on this side; I wish to let his family know, we have them in our prayers and we are sure that God will comfort them in these hours and months ahead when they will surely miss his wonderful presence. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HONOURABLE CONRAD SAYERS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to at this moment express [inaudible] condolences to the family and relatives of the late Mr. Alwayne Jack of Palls Avenue, who passed away and was buried on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May this year; at the age of 81. Mr. Jack is one whom I knew from childhood and has always been a very discipline and descent gentleman and it is little wonder that he was able to raise children with similar qualities. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Jack had worked in the Private Sector before entering the Public Service in the Inland Revenue Department and I recalled that there was some confusion as to whether he should go up to 60 or 55 and we thought he had a very strong case for going up to 60 and figured that he was victimised then for not being allowed to do so. We looked into his case and we tried to deal with the case as much as we can; but there was a delay in arriving at the decision that he would have liked; so he joined the Private Sector of Coreas and provided human services to that department where he worked: so much so that a representative of Coreas came to the service and lauded his contribution to that institution.

Mr. Speaker; he has always been a man to give sound advice: and always congratulated the Government on areas where he sees progress. From what was said of him I am sure that he will be deeply missed by his family and I want to wish them God's comfort at this time.

I would also like to express my support for the sentiments by the Honourable Member for West Kingstown; for the passing of Mr. Phil Hull a man of the same ilk, I would say of Mr. Jack: men who have a certain level of dignity and discipline and would be deeply missed in this society. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR SPEAKER:** Let me take the Honourable Senator Leacock.

**HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK:** Speaker Honourable Members, I want to identify with the condolences expressed by Honourable Conrad Sayers and Ms. Baptiste with respect to Mr. Hull and Mr. Jack. I just simply want to add in terms of their service record that both gentlemen also distinguished themselves in the St Vincent Auxiliary Police Force where they gave very many years of service: very, very valuable service. In fact, just about the time that I came into service with that force they were just taking their leave: but they are

truly people who gave of service to this country, Mr. Speaker. May they rest in peace and the hearts and souls of their families and relatives be consoled. Much obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Sir Louis.

**HONOURABLE SIR LOUIS STRAKER:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute to a man of quiet dignity in my community in Layou; his name is Norville Hannaway, he passed away on the 4<sup>th</sup> May at 7.00 p.m. Mr. Hannaway is truly a community minded man, a man who has worked over the years in the area there as the what we now call the Town Clerk, I believe it was referred to as the Town Warden in Layou for a number of years and emigrated to the United Kingdom. He worked for 22 years with the British Overseas Development. Also he has been very instrumental in establishing, supporting and maintaining scouting in Layou. He has been one who has kept the scout movement going, motivated a lot of young people, instilled discipline in them and of course, he was an outstanding Methodist, a Lay Preacher in the Methodist Church who conducted services and assisted particularly on her return Reverend Murtlyn Dennis. He actually drove her around and assisted her in the various churches from Kingstown to Chateaubelair.

I wish to express my deep condolence to his family; bereaved family: they have asked me to do the Eulogy at the funeral this afternoon and consequently I would not be able to be here for the latter part of the sitting of today's House; since I must pay my respect because he has worked with me in order to develop plans for the upliftment and the progress of the Layou Community. I will miss him very dearly as a good friend; as a very community minded man one who has contributed a lot to the community in the Social and Culture life, in scouting and in the religious life of the community and I wish his family my great comfort in the Lord and certainly, may he rest in peace.

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

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** Yes.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Do not understanding you.

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** Let the Clerk ...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay, okay.

### **CONGRATULATORY REMARKS**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable.

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the SVG National Gospel Festival Committee of 17 persons managed and organised under the Ministry of Culture for the recently held Gospel Festival, which covered eight zones throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines over 300 churches and over 1300 participants. And I am very pleased that we had children as young as five years old participating

and for the first time father and daughter. One is a Pastor and the other the assistant in the church. I want to thank the Pastors and Members of the public as well as the sponsors who have so willingly continued to offer their financial and other assistances to the Ministry of Culture to carry out this very special programme that we call: 'Increasing Public Awareness of Gospel Activities', as well as exposing a number of persons with gospel expressions and developing the standard of performance among them while adding to the diversity of cultural activities in St Vincent and the Grenadines. Especially, to Mr. Fidel Taylor who is the Coordinator Chairman and Mr. Michael Peters, from the Ministry of Culture. Much obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines; Honourable Godwin Friday.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I join with the Honourable Minister of Culture in congratulating the Gospel Fest Committee for their outstanding working in hosting another successful event this year. I trust that they will continue to give dedicated service and build on a festival that seems to be growing in popularity from year to year. I also wish, Mr. Speaker, more particularly to congratulate the Bequia Sailing Club and all those persons volunteers, businesses, organisations, individuals who worked so hard to put on the Bequia Easter Regatta last month and did so very successfully. It was a truly successful event this year in times when people did not know what to expect because of the economic turmoil in the world, it really surprised everyone that the effort paid dividends and there were more yachts' registered this year than ever before.

There were three new double ender boats that came into the competition this year and as you know, Mr. Speaker the expense in building these what use to be referred to the traditional boats; but are really hi-tech tradition has become pretty expensive and now becomes a community evident and particularly the boat called Bequia Pride, which was built by the members of the Paget Farm Community. These are things, Mr. Speaker that are very hopeful signs in our community that there is that spirit there of volunteerism and commitment to ensuring that things that are good in our community continue.

And I also would like to thank all of those persons who participated in the races themselves. We had a lot of people who came from the French Islands in particular and it really was a truly memorable event this year and you know as usual a lot of people came down from St Vincent on Sunday and Monday and I think they had a wonderful time. So it was a good event, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

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

**HONOURABLE GLEN BEACHE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate the Bequia Committee on a successful event during the Easter weekend, The Ministry of Tourism has continued to sponsor and government has continued to lend its support to it. I also want to congratulate the Union Island Easterval Committee, Mr. Speaker; Union's activities during the Easter Weekend every year seemed to improve more and more and continue to grow. As a matter of fact, I see a very good rivalry coming up between Bequia and Union Island for visitors and guest during that weekend. I think this past weekend both islands saw a great improvement Bequia always use to dominate quite a bit; but I think Union Island is growing by leaps and

bounds and I want to congratulate both committees on a job well done and as good as both sets of activities are and as we continue; as the government continues to sponsor and support these events there is always room for improvement and we will continue to support them and give any assistance where we can. Much oblige, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. Speaker, I rise to recognise and to pay respects to the Starlift Steel Orchestra. A few years ago in their fortieth year they had an awards event at the Red Cross Hut, in which they recognised a number of outstanding contributors, supporters and players but principle among those was Junior Sutherland, virtually the father of that steel band who got his recognition on that day; he has quiet silently over the years made tremendous contribution financially, materially and personally is a player himself of that steel band and it is good that they took time out to recognise him. Mr. Speaker, forty eight years may not look like a long time; but I think after the St Vincent Cadet Force, they are perhaps the longest serving cultural organisation in St Vincent [interjection] and I am told the Chorale but forty eight years is a long time and we look forward to their fiftieth.

Mr. Speaker, if on the number of years you will allow me to say it: sometimes in another forum, I make mention of things that are lasting very long and one that always comes to mind is New Haven. Many years ago the older ones of us here would know that there was a Hotel called New Haven Hotel in St Vincent and the Grenadines; twenty five years after there is a New Haven Funeral Home. They are both places of rest but for completely different and voluntary reasons; but it is interesting to know how people could have the same names but different concepts.

In speaking about steel bands, Mr. Speaker, which is one of the subjects while I am on my feet I want to recognise the Carnival Men Committee on their effort last week with the launching of the Pan Launch at the car park. I saw a present or very much present, Minister Rene Baptiste as Minister of Culture. I am not going to speak about the bag of popcorns that I bought for her that is a private conversation nor the fact that Minister Sayers declined the original beverage that I offered to him and had a good; cold malt which he enjoyed himself. I think the people who were present looking on that day were pleased to see that even though as public officials we may have policy differences we do not allow them to descend to personality conflicts and could see the lighter side of us.

Mr. Speaker, let me wish this Carnival 2009 all the success and to implore all Vincentians to give Pan their support. I mean you look at some of the younger players today in the Pan Movement they are really coming of age and deserve all the support we can give to them in St Vincent and the Grenadines. Much oblige Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you very much Honourable Prime Minister.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, perhaps as the only former panist in this Parliament it behooves me to [interjection] Comrade also? (I apologise to the sitting

member for Central Kingstown) to congratulate the Eula Pan Movement on the launch. Mr. Speaker, though the playing of steel band at Carnival or particular functions does not have the same popular resonance these days as 'Jump and Wave' and '1, 2' or '2, 3, 4 show your flag and wine'; while it may not be as popular as the beauty shows, the fact remains that this instrument is the only one fashioned in the twentieth century and it has come out of the Caribbean people.

And as part of the policy of this Government of historical reclamation; historical and cultural reclamation, we have sought to put measures in place to assist in rescuing the Pan Movement; and this from the Panarama being abundant before we arrived; to one where now within two years of coming to office it had been revised and we contribute financially to the various Pan Sides and in a number of other ways. And then of course, the Pan against crime initiative; which has caused the springing up of Pan Sides throughout and I am very heartened that Senator Leacock recognises this growth and I am hoping that universally in the country, we can begin to give all of us: Pan a bigger and better hearing. Those young men and women, teenagers and slightly older and those very older ones who are helping with the training, I want to congratulate them all and to praise the Youlou Pan Movement for their fine work and the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of National Security in respect of Pan against crime for supporting pan so fully so that we are having a revival. I am obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Minister of Culture; yes.

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** Mr. Speaker, Members will notice that on their table is a book marked Handbook of Calypso; this is the first time that the Ministry of Culture has produced such a book and I trust that Mr. Speaker, the Clerk and the Library here will find it very useful and as a document of history to have. Others members who are present have received theirs this morning along with those who did not get cards for the festival; upcoming festival. And I want to congratulate the collaborators who helped to put it together. It took quite a long time even we got the first draft of it in October of last year the Government's printery was just able to bring it. So, I wish to congratulate the members of staff led by Mr. Peters and members from the Calypsonian Association and the CDC that worked to put it together along with some people from the Music Association and the Judges. Thank you.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Are we getting a CD, so that we can learn the tunes and so? [Laughter]

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** [Inaudible] Senator Leacock approached the Honourable Minister of Culture, the warm way in which he did at the Pan Launch that perhaps he may wish to join her in a duel. I want to advice him that anytime he talks to any of my ladies on this side that I get a first hand report at the next best available opportunity. So, I want him when he is talking about what happened between them kept between them. When you speak to my ladies, any of my ladies on this side they report forthwith to me. So, I just put you on notice in that regard [laughter].

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** Actually [interjection] [inaudible] we tried to work on a project through the instruments that we have in the Ministry, which is Cultural Research Department, by Mr. Peters and the National Cultural Foundation. We are fortunate to have Mr. Junior Sutherland who has a Music Studio and in helping the young persons at secondary school level what he normally would do is get the young people to do

the scores and to teach them how to do the scores. So we were able to produce the Folk Song Book and the Patriotic Songs. We are hoping to have a second volume of each of them again and they had CDS attached: one had CD attached. [Inaudible] a number of people who can actually do this; but Mr. Peters has assured me that he will try to get some of the recordings. We actually had to play back some old recordings because some of the older calypsonians did not have their work written ...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Right, okay.

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** So we had to try and sing them back ...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay.

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** ... to get back some of the words. So that is also another part that we are trying to retrieve and just by the way to say that the Ministry of Culture has a project called National Sound Archives and we are trying to take those old reels from NBC Radio. You know the old reels that go reel to reel?

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Yes.

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** And put it on CD's and some on DVD's and also to collect as much as possible of all the different footage. So we have a library, a sound archive and library of these recorded materials. We have lost so much in the last couple of years, it is remarkable what happens; but I believe there will be a CD but not right away.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Alright, thank you.

### **CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members I beg to move that the Minutes of this Honourable House, the sittings held on 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2009 be confirmed. Minutes passed and confirmed accordingly.

### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to make this morning, statements on four subject matters. Two of them are very brief and two are little more involved. I would like to address briefly where we are with the CLICO British American Insurance Company issue; bring up to date what is the Summary Fiscal situation accumulative to the end of April; and an issue attendant there under the fiscal issue namely: the exogenous shock facility and our application for funding there from and a statement on Freedom of Movement in Caricom and an update on the International Airport.

Mr. Speaker, I am wondering whether I can have the Sergeant of Arms help me with this.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Yes.

*(Sergeant of Arms assisted the Prime Minister with the positioning of the Desk Podium)*

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, first the issue of CLICO and British American Insurance Company. The update is that in so far as CLICO Trinidad is concerned there is no challenge which has arisen in respect of policyholders' resident in St Vincent and the Grenadines or indeed anywhere in the Diaspora because adequate provision has been made by Trinidad and Tobago to the sum of TT\$1.3 billion from which the relevant payments are being made. In relation to CLICO Barbados the assurances of the Government of Barbados still stand and in any event there is an ongoing policy framework by the Government of Barbados for a long term strategic solution to any challenges by way of seeking to have a purchaser or group of purchasers for the entity. We know however that the International Insurance Company Corporation of Barbados has dropped out but there are other prospective equity participants in the mix and that is an ongoing exercise.

The more challenging entity concerns British American because of the nature of its legal structure and some of the decisions, which were taken by CL Financial, the ultimate parent company. Mr. Speaker, consequent upon the meeting which I chaired in Antigua just over three weeks ago at which it was decided that we will have US \$80 million to put towards immediate claims that a Memorandum was prepared and that Memorandum has now been finalised and that the monies from Trinidad and Tobago the US \$50 million being transferred to our Central Bank, \$5 million from Barbados, US \$5 million also from the Eastern Caribbean Country Union Countries in respect of an immediate contribution made from the Fiscal Trans at the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, a further \$5 million which would be addressed by way of rollovers and a further \$15 million, which the Governor of the Central Bank in Trinidad and Tobago is assisting in raising through a number of different institutions.

Mr. Speaker that is the immediate matter; challenges do remain in the medium term and last week I had a teleconference with the Governor of the Central Bank; Eastern Caribbean Central Bank and the Ministers of Finance of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union Member States; and we arrived at certain conclusions in going forward. This morning I sent off a letter to Prime Minister Manning and there is going to be a meeting in Trinidad on the 24<sup>th</sup>, chaired by Prime Minister Manning on the economy of the region and that this is one of the issues on the table. I am suggesting also that we have a prior meeting between all the Ministers of Finance of the region to have an update on the bundle of CLICO British American Insurance Company issues.

I make this statement, Mr. Speaker, so that policyholders and investors would know that it is still very much high on the agenda of this Government in seeking both immediate solutions to the challenges and longer term resolutions strategically and that the central purpose in all of this is to protect the shareholders and depositors and to make certain that the enterprises continue on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Speaker, as regards the fiscal condition of the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines, as at the end of April accumulatively for 2009 the basic data are as follows:-

1. **Current Revenue \$158.1 million up from \$151.2 million for the comparable period last year that is to say the first four months; an increase of 4.6%. Mr. Speaker, the number would indicate that though the Current Revenue is still growing the growth is slower compare to last year and to 2007. The rate of growth that is even though the absolute number is higher and this is reflective of the down turn in the economy internationally.**
2. **In respect of Capital Revenue approximately \$1 million but there are several items in relation to Grants which have not come into account. So that is not a figure which is reflective of the actual position at the moment.**
3. **Total expenditure has gone up from \$154.8 million from last year of the first four months to just over \$163 million or an increase 5.3%, which means that the total expenditure is moving slightly at a higher rate of growth than the growth in Current Revenue.**
4. **In so far as Recurrent Expenditure is concern, it is from \$136.4 million in 2008 to \$148.6 million in 2009 an increase approximately of 9%. So you will see that Current Expenditure is moving in terms of the rate of growth not in its absolute figures; it is moving at a faster rate than Current Revenue; but you will notice that there is a difference between Current Expenditure and Current Revenue it is \$9.5 million. So there is a Current Account balance of \$9.5 million down from \$14 million for the comparable period last year but of course, higher than 2007 at this time, which is just about \$6 million  
So I gave a longer time series.**
5. **The Capital expenditure ...**

And I want to indicate that this particular sum in relation to the Capital Expenditure of \$14.5 million which is down from \$18 million is not really an accurate reflection because there are several items which have not come into account for the period because there has been far more Grants spent; but it takes some time, there is a time lag in some projects for you to have an actual reportage.

**... Yes, very importantly, Mr. Speaker, there is a primary balance of \$14.8 million though there is an overall deficit though of just \$4.3 million. The report therefore is not unfavourable; but it indicates that there are challenges given the down turn in economic activity internationally.**

So the Government, we are holding our own and we are going forward and responding to the challenges favourably; but nevertheless I report the extent challenges. Mr. Speaker and once I am on that issue, I will just like to speak just briefly on something which I have been advised since I made the announcement has caused some controversy in some circles and there has been clearly a misunderstanding in those circles. Misunderstanding, perhaps intentional because it is very easy to go on the Web Site to see what the Exogenous Shock Facility is about. Mr. Speaker, this Government has made an application to the International Monetary Fund for just under in money terms; just under US\$5 million or 45% of our special drawing rights; SDRs.

Mr. Speaker, when people hear about the IMF quite rightly they conjure up from the past an institution, which was hell bent on prescribing one set of solutions for countries across the world and that they are looked upon with dread as the lender of last resort. But there have been some shifts in the approach of the IMF and some mechanisms and facilities which have evolved to take account of developing countries concerns: one of them is the Exogenous Shock Facility. Now Exogenous really is the word which Economist use to refer to something external that there has been an external shock to the system and usually in the form of a natural disaster in which there is economic lost or in the case of a fall of export earnings; in our case a fall in export earnings in Tourism. And the money from the Exogenous Shock Facility comes with absolutely no conditionality at all; an IMF programme of no kind is proposed and that is clear if anyone goes and read on the Web Site what the Exogenous Shock Facility is and the money is available at .5 of 1% over a 10 year period that is when we have to replenish that money.

We had applied for the first tranche of 25% because you can go for 75% but we said we will go for 25%. In fact, the IMF on its own said look, we are not going to deal with a tranche of 25%, we will deal with a tranche of 45% and we said okay. In other wards that is what they are doing generally; particularly consequent I have been advised since the G20 meeting in London. Now, if you can get approximately US \$5 million at .5 of 1% interest from anybody without any conditions, you will be a complete fool not to take it. I mean I just cannot understand why is it that this could have caused any controversy it could only be because many people speak on subjects, which they do not understand and they have an obligation to check things out and they do not check them out because they want to play upon the lack of information which may be residing in some people. But I did not even have to respond to it. I understand that there are several people on the radio station: Journalist who said no; no; no; we have looked at this thing and what the Prime Minister said, when he made the announcement is quite true.

Indeed, since I made the application, Dominica quickly followed, so too St Lucia and now St Kitts and Nevis and I have been advised that Antigua and Barbuda is doing so. It may well be that some countries in Caricom may have to go to an IMF for a Strategic Response Programme; but that is not the case for St Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, I can say to you to this Honourable House, it was reported to me by the Governor of the Central Bank that when he was in Washington recently, the gentleman from the IMF who is responsible for the Eastern Caribbean Countries and oversight says that the finances of St Vincent and the Grenadines; the Government finances are the best managed in the Currency Union [applause]. The Governor did not have to tell me that just for so; I mean he is not employed by the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines. And Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons why I decided to go early for the Exogenous Shock Facility is because in my capacity of Chairman of the Joint OECS ECCU Taskforce that I would lead the way and to show others that

though an institution like the IMF still has its challenges for us in developing countries that in the case in this particular facility you do not need to be worried about it.

There are some people by the time they hear IMF they back away like jumbie frading holy water; but that may be so generally; but in the case of this particular Instrument there has been an evolution. So I want to make that point and Mr. Speaker, the issue comes up tomorrow for determination by the Board, the Executive Board at the IMF and I have a document here where the representative for the OECS constituency, who happens to be an Irishman, among the things he is going to say about St Vincent and the Grenadines are the following things. I have a copy of his statement here:-

**“Notwithstanding the slow down of the construction boom in 2008 and the unpleasant external environment, St Vincent and the Grenadines managed to post a primary surplus of 1.2% in 2008: one of only two primary surpluses in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union. Measures to cope with the higher cost of fuel and food in 2008 were ‘text book’ in quotation mark, meaning perfect and affordable with increase tax effort and holding the line on public sector pay; as a share of the Gross Domestic Product. The December 2008, Budget ...**

The gentleman is going on to say.

**... lays out an agenda to preserve macro stability improve the environment for business investment and enhance critical social programmes.**

In other words taking care of the poor, which are the things I talk about all the time and I am not the one who prepared this you know, this is what is going to be said tomorrow. It goes on:-

**As the staff acknowledges ...**

That is to say the staff of the IMF: when they came on the Article (4) Consultation.

**As the staff acknowledges ...**

The staff of the IMF

**... the authorities in St Vincent and the Grenadines have made steady progress on fiscal consolidation in recent years. The cost of providing infrastructure and public services across a multi-island country with a small population is always a major challenge. The progressive lost of traditional donor support ...**

That is why I have to go all over the world elsewhere to look for money you know, because when the traditional ones do not give I have to go elsewhere.

**The progressive lost of traditional donor support and the cost of weather related disasters have added to fiscal pressures at 67.5% of gross domestic product, the public sector debt is not unsustainably high none the less the authorities are concerned that total debt service amortization and interest crowds out needed social services spending. Accordingly they have reiterated their commitment to prudent fiscal policy with a sharpened focus on Public Sector Investment including renewable energy and transportation infrastructure.**

**Then on the issue of the Exogenous Shock Facility; ...**

This is the paragraph which the Director for our constituency is saying:-

**The St Vincent Grenadines Authorities, pride themselves on having taken strong policy measures as and when required without a fund programme.**

That means without an IMF programme.

**That we pride ourselves on having taken strong policy measures as and when required, without having to have the IMF impose a programme on us. However, as one of the four PRGF eligible countries in our constituency, St Vincent and the Grenadines is in a position to consider the Exogenous Shock Facility if conditions warrant. Under the circumstances the authorities recognised that the Exogenous Shock Facility assistance; ESF assistance would make an important contribution to their efforts to contend with the transitory that is to say the short term but significant shocks to Tourism receipts and Foreign Direct Investment.**

**The authorities would greatly appreciate a favourable response by the Board to their request for rapid access to the ESF in the amount of 45% of their quota.**

That is to say the quota of our special drawing rights. Mr. Speaker, I mean, I only spending my time talking about it this morning because there are people who try to misrepresent things and they must stop it. Please, these are serious times for serious people. [Applause] I must say Mr. Speaker, one final matter which is in the report tomorrow concerns the International Airport which I will speak about shortly. This is what the gentleman is saying.

**The staff report ...**

That is the IMF Report.

... describes well, the specific measures taken; to mitigate the impact on the short term shock on Tourism.

You know I had announced a number of measures and they described them well.

**However, there is considerable untapped Tourism potential in the medium term: there are many significant planned and proposed Private Sector Capital Projects contingent on improved air access to the islands. It is therefore critical that St Vincent be served by a modern International Airport. [Applause] The Argyle International Airport Project is indeed massive in relation to the Gross Domestic Product of the Island but it is almost fully financed with concessional cash and in kind resources”.**

Mr. Speaker, it is the same thing that I have been saying I have not written this you know, it has been sent to me by Email as the Minister of Finance what they were going to say on my behalf in respect of the constituency. We must be serious. Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to a matter before I come to the International Airport. Mr. Speaker, I am going to make a statement, which I know is going to subject me and this Government to criticism from some quarters in Caricom. Some quarters in some Governments perhaps, I do not know: maybe, maybe not. But I am absolutely sure that it is necessary and desirable to make the statement, which I am about to make for the good of Caricom; in any event I have to defend the citizens of this country and I have to promote their interest. And there are some unfortunate things happening in some countries in Caricom in relation to migration that somebody has to bell the cat.

Mr. Speaker, the statement I am about to read was occasioned by a letter which I received at my office: correspondence. I have been receiving many complaints about difficulties which our citizens have as they go across this Caribbean region and Mr. Speaker, some of them I investigate and I may communicate to one or other officials here in St Vincent and the Grenadines or elsewhere. Some; I find the complaints not to be justifiable and I keep quiet; but this case which came to my attention and there are many cases which are now coming to my attention; but this one about a 5 year old Vincentian child who was deported, who was sent home from a country shook me to my bones and that is what precipitates me making the statement, which I will make today. And the statement which I am making today on Freedom of Movement in Caricom, I want to say Mr. Speaker, I have sent a copy of it; a draft yesterday to the OECS Secretariat Director General and also a copy to the Secretary General of Caricom and I spoke to the Secretary General of Caricom about it.

Mr. Speaker, I got this letter in my mail a few days ago, I read it in the evening, in the night at about 10 o'clock. I couldn't call the people because it was late; but the matter rode on my mind and the morning just after 6 o'clock I couldn't resist calling the people early at six; because it concerned a 5 year old child. Now, I am in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century we are and this is 40 years that I am defending regional integration and promoting it and if a Caricom Country is going to send home a 5 year old child, now if I remain silent on it; the stones across the land will cry out and I cannot live with myself. Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't refer to the name in this letter; I will use fictitious names because I do not want to subject the child and her cousin: she is 5 years old and he is 18 or there about.

This person, this woman let us call her by her biblical name Ruth and probably add her surname Joshua. Let us call her Ruth Joshua, she is writing from a Caribbean country, she is a Vincentian married to someone in that country and therefore is a citizen of that country. She is writing about her 5 year old niece let us call her Eve and her nephew, let us call him Adam. Let us call them Eve and Adam Moses. This letter is written 28<sup>th</sup> March,

2009 to a Chief Immigration Officer of a particular Caricom country, from that Caricom country where she resides with her husband; she has no children of her own.

*Dear Sir/Madam*

She writes.

*In September 2008, I applied for two student visas for my niece and nephew Eve and Adam Moses their Nationality being Vincentian. The Education Department did sign the application form for the child Eve who was 5 years old. The child was a pupil at Deuteronomy Primary School. On the 18<sup>th</sup> February, my husband received a call from your department one Ms. Branch stated that she would like to see the family; we were asked to come in the next day. I took the child out of school and was told by Miss Griffith that the child should not be attending school here the schools are for Babylon children: they had no vacancy at the schools if she gives the child the student visa I would then file for status for the child and that cannot happen.*

*I also asked her if my nephew Adam would be able to write his exams, I was then told that they had to leave the country in order for the visas to be processed and he will be able to write his exams. One of his exams was on March 18<sup>th</sup>. I was asked to surrender the children's passports and that they had seven days to leave the country. Later on I was asked to surrender their tickets also. I want to know what criminal act a 5 year old child could have committed to have her passport seized by your department. Furthermore is this not a violation of the Human Rights to deny a child the right to an education. The child was taken out of school in the middle of the school term, her passport and ticket seized.*

*The child was ill and needed medical attention during the time the passport was in your department's possession. I sent for the passport to purchase the child's medication, not until the immigration officer saw the child's prescription then she handed over the child's passport. The child had an 8:15 a.m. flight on February 28<sup>th</sup>. I had to arrive at the Airport before 6 o'clock in the morning to have an officer bring down the passport and have them check in. I waited for almost an hour for that officer then to my great embarrassment that officer walked with them all the way to see that they were checked in.*

It is a 5 year old child.

*The reason for this letter is that my husband visited your department to speak to that same Immigration Officer and to find out why Eve's Student Visa was refused; she did not want to speak to him.*

*Thanking you for your kind co-operation in this matter; I would like you to look into this matter as I feel it is unfair for a child to be just taken out of school by the Immigration Department after waiting five months to receive a Student Visa. I have copied this letter to my Parliamentary representative in this country and to the Honourable Prime Minister.*

That is in the country where she is living.

*Yours Faithfully,  
Ruth Joshua.*

It comes to me with two other letters one written on the 24<sup>th</sup> April by her sister who is in St Vincent and one upon further request for information on the 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2009. Now, as a consequence of receiving this, I gave it great thought and I want to say that yesterday at Cabinet, I read this statement to my colleagues and asked for the Cabinet approval of this statement which the Cabinet gave and therefore, I now read it. This is the statement:-

*“In recent months challenges have arisen in Caricom regarding the spirit and the law touching and concerning the freedom of the movement of persons in accordance with the provisions of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. Under the Treaty the member states of Caricom commit themselves to the goal of free movement of their nationals within the Community: Article (45) of the Treaty.*

*Further under the Treaty, Article (46) Member States agreed and undertook as a first step towards achieving the goal of free movement of Caricom Nationals to accord to the following categories of Community Nationals the right to seek employment in their jurisdictions; namely:-*

- *University graduates.*
- *Media Workers*
- *Sports persons*
- *Artistes and*
- *Musicians*

*Additionally, the conference of Heads of States and Governments pursuant to the Treaty has added more categories of Caricom Nationals to those already mentioned for Freedom of Movement Status namely:-*

- *Artisans*
- *Nurses and*
- *Teachers*

*Other categories of Nationals are on the table for further consideration for inclusion in that regard. Each Member State has put in place a Legislative and Regulatory Framework to comply with its Treaty commitments in the case of St Vincent and the Grenadines we have issued Skilled Nationals Certificates under the relevant legislation. This country abides by the letter and the spirit of the Treaty and our laws.*

I should point out that we have issued 123 Caricom Skill Nationals Certificates under the relevant law.

*Indeed, St Vincent and the Grenadines goes way beyond the requisites of the Treaty to accommodate Caricom Nationals who are not entitled as yet to the right of employment under the Treaty. Unfortunately, not every member state of Caricom is abiding by the letter and the spirit of their Treaty Commitments. In one or two Member Countries the Immigration Authorities are dismissive of their country's Treaty commitments. My office receives heart rending stories of Vincentian Nationals who have been subjected to unfair, unlawful, unconscionable and discriminatory treatment by some Immigration Authorities within Member States of Caricom.*

*Accordingly, I have set up a unit in the Office of the Prime Minister manned by Misses Miriam Roach to receive complaints of unfair, unlawful unreasonable and discriminatory treatment of our Nationals by Immigration Authorities in Caricom Member States. Moreover, I call on my colleague Heads of State and Government to address the bundle of issues attendant on the Freedom of Movement matter including that of contingent rights most urgently. Contingent rights are those rights which relate and connect to Freedom of Movement so that a man is permitted as a university graduate to move; but his wife is not a university graduate what does he do? Leave her in her own country? She has to get a job, she must have a contingent right to get a job right to. What about the contingent rights of the children? They must get the same treatment like the other children to be able to go to school and to go to school freely and to seek medical attention at the health facilities in the country and so on and so forth.*

Those are the contingent rights because if they do not exist the question of allowing Freedom of Movement for particular categories that is limited to that extent. I am going on with the statement.

*A failure and or refusal to do so ...*

That is to say to address the bundle of issues relating to Freedom of Movement.

*Failure and or refusal to do so; in a fair and reasonable manner is likely to invite the most deleterious consequences for the regional integration movement. It is sad to note that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century some responsible persons including some political leaders are stoking chauvinistic fires which are latent in our Caribbean societies this has lead here and there to an outpouring of a malignant xenophobia particularly against Guyanese, Jamaicans, Vincentians, St Lucians and Grenadians. It must be stopped, if not Caricom would shortly be rend asunder.*

*St Vincent and the Grenadines stands to benefit materially and principally from Caricom in two principal ways Freedom of Movement of Persons and access to monies from the Caricom Development Fund; the CDF. At present our Nationals are unfairly harassed by Immigration Authorities hither and thither as they travel throughout the region and the promise of the benefits from the development fund as so far been illusory accordingly, many Vincentians are*

*beginning to ask: where is the beef in Caricom? Where are the benefits? Are we to become only the dumping ground for manufacturing commodities of questionable quality and uncompetitive prices, protected by Caricom rules and the common external tariff? Are we to be the local for enterprises from other Caricom countries particularly the so called more developed countries; but our nationals discriminated against elsewhere? Is this the faith of the small islands countries in Caricom?*

*It is historically tempting for some to bash immigrants at times of domestic economic difficulties; but to do so against one's own Caricom brothers and sisters is surely unacceptable. It is both necessary and desirable to lift the quality of public discourse on this most important issue and avoid a race to the bottom of the lowest common denominator.*

*My Government and I are deeply committed to Caricom; but we are left to wonder whether it would not be better for us to refrain from participating in the Caribbean Caricom Single Market Economy: CSME and focus on membership in Caricom in terms of functional cooperation in education, health, climate change, the judiciary and the like and cooperation on security matters and a continued coordination of foreign policy where practicable. This approach will dovetail with our steadfast commitment to forging an OECS Economic Union and pushing for a deeper union too with Trinidad and Tobago.*

*My Government is being patient with Caricom and we will never likely abandon the CSME; we are committed but the discriminatory antics against our nationals by some Immigration Authorities must stop and the Caricom Development Fund the CDF must become fully operational. The administrative dragon's dance on the CDF must come to an end and it must be opened for business soonest. I am sure that in practicably all these matters my concerns are precisely those of the Member States of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States: our people must be fully respected". [Applause]*

Mr. Speaker, I have copies here which I will make available to members of the House and to the media. Mr. Speaker, the final statement I will like to make relates to an update. Mr. Speaker, I frequently update this Honourable House and the nation on the progress on the International Airport at Argyle. Mr. Speaker, there are many things which has been said about this project particularly by persons who are opposed to it that it is not in the Budget; it is not voted upon in the Budget. Mr. Speaker, the \$100 million expansion for VINLEC is not inside of the Budget is done by a company. VINLEC, the \$25 million Windward Water Project which was started under the Leadership originally of Senator Cummings was not in the Budget; it was done by CWSA. Where is this talk that if you have a company wholly owned by the state or is a statutory body that they cannot carry out a project? The important thing Mr. Speaker is that Parliament has an oversight nevertheless and the oversight is done in this way:-

- 1) Frequent statements provided by me to this House and provided to the country by officials and Press Conferences and the like.

- 2) The Parliamentary oversight is in questions being asked in this House and we have questions on the Order paper; particular kinds of questions.

Mr. Speaker, the Airport Development Company is a company registered under the Company Laws of this country and they have to submit as they have done their audited accounts at the Company's Registry and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition who is Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee can summon the Public Accounts Committee meeting and he can get the Director of Audit who has an overall responsibility constitutionally on not only the Central Government; but Public Enterprises to ask questions about this matter; but the Leader of the Opposition perhaps over the last eight years has held maybe two meetings of the Public Accounts Committee and is entirely delinquent in the conduct of his official duties as Leader of the Opposition and responsibilities to the people of this country that is the reality. And Mr. Speaker, every year; every single year at Budget time when the parliament is convened it is required for the Leader of the Opposition to submit to this Honourable House a report from the Public Accounts Committee to this Honourable House because it is a sub-committee of this House.

Mr. Speaker, in the eight years since we have been in government there is only on one occasion that a report has been submitted because I asked the Clerk of the House if she can submit the Minutes of the meetings of the Public Accounts Committee to the House on that occasion. So you will notice Mr. Speaker, I have stayed silent a great deal on these question which have been propagated over and over on radio and I was just waiting for the opportune time to address this question. How can the Leader of the Opposition wants a bigger job than the one he has when he is not performing his duties in relation to the existing one that he has? [Applause] It is a simple and elementary constitutional point and I am calling on him to call meetings of the Public Accounts Committee as required under the constitution. You have never heard anywhere in the Caribbean that the Minister of Finance is asking that what he is doing be put under search and enquiry by the Public Accounts Committee: well I am asking that.

We have today, Mr. Speaker, a Report of the Public Accounts Committee for the year ending 2006; the Director of Audit sorry; Report ending 2006. It means that the only year which is outstanding properly at this moment is 2007. When I came to office in 2001, the Director of Audit, the last one was 1994 and 1995; they were about five, six years behind time. Now they are only one year behind time and they are bringing them up to date. So, Mr. Speaker, these are serious times, let us have serious people to do the government's business to do the people's business that is all I am asking and I do not mind serious questions being asked of me; but not frivolities. I am too old for that and the people are becoming more sophisticated and they do not want a lot of ignorance being spoken. They want facts and they want people to carry out their obligations as they are required to; it is a simple point I am making.

Mr. Speaker, with that prefatory statement, I want to continue to report to the parliament of this country about this question. Mr. Speaker, if I must say this; the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is not here; but to add he wanting to know more about the Airport, I have brought for him a red Polo Shirt called 'Chato Yasha Contingent: Coalition of the Willing' and it is a XXL just the size that I wear too that we can go out in our shirts at Argyle and I can take him around anytime he wants and he can have things explained to him. It is in his interest electorally to come aboard with this project and stop the antics and I have this Tee Shirt, he is not here;

but I will give it to his Deputy who is here so that he can convey it to him. I do not know whether he thinks that wearing something red might scorch his skin [interjection] you see this is the point, Senator Leacock when he headed the Football Federation gave me a yellow shirt and I proudly wore it. You see I am not hung up on these trivia. I know the Opposition at one time did not even want to wear the red pin for HIV/AIDS, I mean we have to grow up; what is a red shirt? I mean it is not going to burn your skin. But I am going to give you, you can wear it or not wear it; they can accept my invitation or not accept it.

Mr. Speaker, I say the following, on March 6th I visited the site of the Airport Project and was quite pleased with the progress of the work; as well as the spirit in which the work is being done. There is a clear and steadfast commitment by the International Airport Development Company; IADC to see this project to completion on time. As I said before, the completion date is now scheduled for March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012. The report which I am about to give provides an update on the progress of the work on the Argyle International Airport Project as of the 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2009 that is to say as of yesterday.

### **Progress of the Earthworks**

**“Since August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008 when earthworks on the Argyle International Airport began in earnest the Chatoyasha Contingent has been concentrating on clearing and grubbing the area, demolishing vacant houses, removing the top soil and creating an embankment in the valley within the first kilometer of the Runway; to date the progress of the earth works in quantifiable terms is as follows:-**

- **Clearing and grubbing 42.6%.**
- **Demolition of houses 11.6%**
- **Removal of topsoil 40.4%**
- **Embankment 12.3%”.**

Mr. Speaker, just in case to give an idea: the total volume for the embankment is \$3.3 million cubic meters of soil”.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** What is the percentage you said on that again?

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** 12.3%.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** 12.3%.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** The volume executed so far is 409,861 cubic meters of embankment. In the situation with clearing and grubbing, we are supposed to do 868,410 square meters; we have done 370,200 square meters.

### **Additional Equipment**

**“Following upon his promise to assist with the Earthworks on the project; the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela made available to our country 37 pieces of heavy earth moving equipment and a variety of spares costing US \$10 million, EC\$27 million. The equipment has been fully employed on the project since 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2008. Recently also, the Government of Austria made to the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines a Grant of EC \$502,625.00 to assist with the purchase of three Compactors for the project. These Compactors were bought and are also fully utilized on the project.**

Mr. Speaker, you remember when I went to Austria last year; they said, “why he going to Austria for?” “He is going on a joy ride”. Well you see what the joyride brought? In addition to 10 Scholarships and the students are there. Ah! I tell you.

**However in order for the IADC to complete the amount of Earthworks required for the Airport Project to become operational by March 20th, 2012, it needs to acquire additional heavy equipment. For this reason the IADC has recently purchased from its own resources several pieces of used equipment; some of which have already been delivered to the project site while others are being shipped and will be delivered soon. The equipments recently purchased are as follows:-**

**(4) Articulated Rock Trucks**

**(1) Cat 345 Excavator**

**(1) Cat 330 Excavator with Hydraulic Hammer**

**(1) Wagon Drill**

**(2) Bulldozers: (1) D8 and (1) D9 and**

**(2) Motor scrapers**

**With these additional pieces of equipment the IADC is confident that the work would be speeded up further barring unforeseen natural disasters.**

### **Workshop and Fuel Station**

**To support the Earthworks a workshop has been constructed on site to carry out repairs of all equipments to reduce down time. A fuel station has also been erected on site to eliminate the long frequent trips into Kingstown and to have a guaranteed supply of fuel on site. These two facilities will also be needed by the new Airport during its construction phase.**

### **Blasting Operations**

**Blasting operations commenced on the 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2009 and will continue for the rest of the year. These blasting operations will be carried out during the early afternoon period of Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays of each week. For the benefit of homeowners who live within a defined distance from the blasting operations, I wish to make it clear that the IADC has in place an All Risk Insurance Policy that covers any damage to their properties from its blasting operations.**

**These Homeowners would also recognise that IADC officials have already visited their homes for the purpose of collecting photographic and descriptive information of the physical state of their homes so that the IADC can assist them with any possible future claims that they may have to make on the Insurance Company for compensation for any damage which may be done to their homes. I trust that no one would suffer any damage; but the event that it happens we have a facility to deal with the compensation.**

Mr. Speaker, you see the details which we have to address in this enterprise and there are people who are still saying, “do not bother Ralph a fool you, de airport na come”

### **Employment and Training**

**The Airport Project has so far created employment for 85 Vincentians. Many of these are technical workers who form part of the Chatayasha Contingent which includes 42 Cuban engineers, technicians and operators. Over the life of the Airport Project IADC will therefore provide opportunities for Vincentians project workers to be trained in a number of areas at present many are now working side by side with highly experienced Cuban engineers, technicians and operators in a way that allows for learning and human resource development to take place as in a virtual university.**

**In addition to this, IADC is already embarked on the process of hiring other Vincentians who will be trained in management and operations of an International Airport. This training will take the form of Internships or attachments at Airports in Atlanta in the USA, Montego Bay Jamaica, Piarco Trinidad and Tobago; Lisbon Portugal; Funchal in Maderia and at special institutions for training of Air Traffic Controllers in Cuba and Mexico.**

### **Terminal Building and other Landside Facilities**

**In March 2009, the IADC received a visit from a Taiwanese Engineering Firm called CECI; Engineering Consultants Incorporated. The firm felt it necessary to come to St Vincent to gather first hand information as they prepare to submit a bid for the contract for designing and supervising the work on the terminal building and other Landside facilities for the project.**

**One may recall that the Government of Taiwan has pledged an amount of US \$30 million or EC \$81.5 million for the construction of the Terminal building and other Landside facilities for the Argyle International Airport. IADC experts expects that the successful architectural firm will complete the designs for these facilities by the end of September 2009. When these designs are completed the IADC will make them available for public scrutiny and comment.**

### **Airport Master Plan**

**The IADC continues to collaborate with Professor Federico Duvalle of the Airport and Auxiliary Services A. S. A of Mexico: on the Master Plan for the International Airport. A.**

**S. A; ASA is a Government company that designs, builds and operates about 20 Airports in Mexico. The support from ASA is part of the assistance provided by the Government of Mexico.**

You may recall that when I went first, President Fox gave the assistance but I had to have the assistance renewed by the new President that is why I went to see him President Calderon, last year. Again, you heard that “wha he travelling all about fa?” That is the result of it.

**The Master Plan for the Argyle International Airport is being done to guide the development of the Argyle Airport over the next 30 years in a way that meets the demand for growth in local industries, environmental protection and aviation services consistent with overall National Development.**

**Work on this Master Plan started in June 2008 and is expected to be completed by June 2009. Even so, IADC has decided to implement at least one aspect of the recommendation of this Master Plan. IADC’s recent decision to increase by another 30 acres or so the land space for the Terminal Building and other landside facilities is done to allow for these facilities to grow in a cost effective and orderly manner in the long term.**

**Let me point out that the land space earmarked earlier by the Cuban designers for the Terminal Building and other landside facilities is adequate and may suit our needs for the next 15 years, however, in making the decision to implement one of the recommendations of the Master Plan before the design and construction of the Terminal Building and other Landside Facilities; IADC has seized the glorious and one time opportunity to design these buildings and to locate them on the land space so that we can have a more structured, cost effective and orderly growth of these facilities over the next 25 to 30 years and well beyond.**

Mr. Speaker, when the issue came up about the additional 30 acres they say: “what you ever hear of a thing like that you designed an Airstrip without a Terminal Building”? Nobody said that at all but again some people prefer lies and propaganda and the sad thing is that some of them are professionals. A mean what you do when you do that you not only demean yourself as a human being but as a professional. Sensible discussions can only take place if we do so with an accepted matrix of facts. We can all have opinions; but let us have the factual matrix in order.

**The decision to purchase additional lands in the area of the Terminal Building is also a sound policy decision for the Government apart from the positive long term growth effects; the decision also allows the Government:-**

- a. To take ownership of adjacent lands today when the land price is likely to be much lower.**
- b. To control developments on land that would in the**

**future be normally required for expansion of the Airport facilities.**

**The decision to purchase the additional 30 acres of *serve* land today will also help us to avoid the pass mistakes and the difficulties that we now experience at E.T. Joshua; at Arnos Vale where there is virtually no land space at all: none available for the expansion of the apron, erection of new hangars for the Aircraft, or expansion of the Terminal Building.**

And you know, Mr. Speaker, you see it is Professor Duvalle who suggested this in the Master Plan. So in addition to the untruth which some pedaled about an Airport was designed first without any Terminal Building: when we see that the Cubans had one design and the land space to take it up to about 15 years; but they want to have nearly double that time; but the second thing which is nasty they began to suggest quite falsely that somehow people inside of the International Airport Development Company will benefit that is why they plan it that way; because they have land to sell. They should simply go and check and find out and they will see that the land in question; I have been advised belong to Lady Antrobus and her family. You know, I mean we have to stop this 'Jobing' of descent individuals I think we can now use that as a verb to 'Job' somebody because this is what they have also done in another respect to Reverend Job. It is a classic case.

#### **Wind Studies**

**To date wind data has been collected and analysed for more than three years, from three weather stations installed in the Airport Zone. IADC's Associated Meteorologist at the E.T. Joshua's Airport and in Venezuela continues to analyse the data, the result so far show that there is no significant cross wind component to necessitate the construction of a Cross wind Runway; however these studies will continue for the duration of the construction phase.**

Remember again Mr. Speaker, that this is another thing: "you go out by Argyle there is so much breeze; plane can land de"? The so call experts confuse wind speed with breeze. I mean, I really ...

#### **The new Windward Highway Bypass Road**

**Work on the 3 kilometer Argyle Bypass Road and Bridge is nearing completion. This road is scheduled to be completed sometime in July 2009.**

#### **Upgrade of Stubbs Rawa-Cou Argyle Road**

**The IADC has now started improvement works on the Stubbs Rawa-Cou Argyle Road. This road which traverses the southern end of the Runway and terminates in Argyle near to corner rock is being widen and paved to provide proper access to persons living on the eastern side of the Airport and to persons visiting the recreational pond at Rawacou.**

Mr. Speaker:

#### **Environmental Monitoring**

**As part of the process of implementing the proposals contained in the Cox Consult Environmental study of the Airport Project IADC assigned an In-house Environmental Auditor to lead a team of professionals drawn from other government agencies and civic societies organisations; to put together and implement an environmental monitoring plan. The role of this Environmental Monitoring team is to ensure that adequate measures are put in place and the engineering work plans are designed and executed in a manner to mitigate all adverse consequences to the environment from the construction of the International Airport.**

**On the request of the Government, this Government the Cuban Ministry of Science and Technology and Environment SITMAR has agreed to assist with our environmental monitoring as well as conduct additional studies and train our officials to implement our monitoring plans. During the period January the 20<sup>th</sup> to February 3<sup>rd</sup> a two member team from SITMAR conducted some geology and hydrology studies in the areas of Yambou, Rawarrou and Peruvian Vale. These studies were done to provide additional information to the project and to propose solutions to some outstanding issues for the airport project. IADC also welcomed the Cuban ornithologist, (those are the people who deal with the birds) in January for a six weeks period; during which time they conducted studies on the diversity of the birds and their abundance and densities within the airport zone. This is initial study would be followed by other studies during this year. The objective of these studies is to make a proper assessment of (a) the impact of the airport project on the wildlife population (b) the likely impact of birds on the airport operations and (c) a plan to address both of these impacts.**

Preservation of our national heritage.

**IADC and the National Trust continue to work on the implementation of a cultural heritage plan proposed by the National Trust and funded by the IADC in the amount of EC \$460,000.00. And Mr. Speaker, part of that plan we know was the team the team of Canadian archeologists and we have reported on that before. Next month another group of archeologists from Leaden University in Holland which has indicated an interest in doing some archeological excavations at another site in Argyle, will begin work in collaboration with National Trust and the IADC, it is felt that this site is rich in Cayo complex which forms the least well known but most intriguing ceramic assemblage known from the Lesser Antilles; apart from allowing us better understanding of our forebears and ourselves, these excavations will help to promote St. Vincent and the Grenadines to visitors as a rich cultural centre and add to the development of our tourism product.**

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the issue of the Roman Catholic Church.

**The cemetery and the shrine. The IADC continues to work with both the Roman Catholic community and the Ministry of Health with the relocation of the Roman Catholic church, cemetery and shrine to a four acre plot of land at Spring. It is a magnificent site, and I urge people to visit it, where the church and cemetery and shrine and other facilities are**

going be, including the shrine. The infrastructure works at this site is nearing completion. IADC has also recently concluded a contract with the local firm to provide assistance to the Ministry of Health with the actual exhumation of the remains of those interred, at the cemetery at Argyle and for the reburial of these remains at the New Roman Catholic Cemetery at Spring, Peruvian Vale. I am obliged, Mr. Speaker, in carrying out again another of my Parliamentary reportage functions on the international airport.

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

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if you would accommodate comments on the Ministerial or questions.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I do not really want to get into that because we would be moving into different boundaries.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK :** So you would....

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Is there a specific matter you want to ask the Prime Minister?

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK :** There were a series of questions, not ...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I do not think we can entertain this. Let us move on.

### **PAPERS**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSLAVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the report of the Director of Audit St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Public Accounts for the year ending December 31<sup>st</sup> 2006 being laid on the Table. They have been circulated already to all Honourable Members.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I wish to state to Honourable Members, that perhaps with the coming into being of a new constitution for St. Vincent and the Grenadines we will have an opportunity to look again at the Rules of this Honourable House and to make wherever as Members we see fit the necessary amendments so that we can perhaps have rules in this Parliament that will be structured to meet our needs. So I suppose that until such time, until we can amend our rules we will have to abide with them as they are. So I am just suggesting that may be at that time, that would be an appropriate time when we can again... as a matter of fact, we will have to look at our rules when it comes to the question of the new constitution so at that time we can see how we can amend the rules to suit our situation. All right. The rules as it stand will abide.

## QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWERS

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 1 standing in the name of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. The Honourable Leader is not here so the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines would ask the question.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question on behalf of the Honourable Arnhim Eustace Leader of the Opposition.

1. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition) to ask the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Sea and Airports, National Security, Legal and Grenadines Affairs:*
  - a. *Would the Honourable Prime Minister please provide the total cost of his most recent trip abroad to Europe and other countries and provide the details of cost for each member of his delegation; and*
  - b. *Please indicate the particular interest of the state that each delegation member represented.*

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSLAVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to begin by saying that the visit overseas to Europe and to Iran and Libya was a most successful one. Mr. Speaker, the benefits immediately quantified in dollar terms amount to no less than EC \$40 million. There are, first of all Mr. Speaker, 29 university scholarships, 15 from Libya, 7 for medicine, 8 for engineering; from Iran, 5 for medicine, and 4 from engineering, and from Portugal up to five. The scholarships for Portugal would be about four years each, those for medicine in Iran would be about 7 years each, those for engineering about five years because you have to learn Faeroese in the case of Iran, and for Libya, those for medicine is about 6 years and those for engineering and the applied sciences five years. Mr. Speaker, if you take the cost of about \$70,000.00 a year, for economic cost, tuition and living expenses and other incidentals, EC\$70,000.00, if you check the sum you will find that those will come up to about \$11.35 million. But I have round it off and called it \$10 million. Round it down, because I want us...in the case of Portugal, Portugal has agreed to provide assistance in respect of the lightening systems, telecommunication systems and their contribution is assessed at being in the region of US \$4 million or EC \$10 million. In case of Iran, Iran is providing immediately US\$2 million; in fact

In fact, I have sent off the wiring accounts for monies to be paid into the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines account in London for transmission here and US \$2 million to a construction company for Iran which is operating in Venezuela and which will come here to assist with the earthworks as we go ahead; so that is \$4 million that is another \$10 million. And I must point out that the monies to the company in Venezuela that is the minimum sum and they have given an undertaking to consider favourably to part finance at least the US \$16.5 million for the paving of the runway. In the case of Libya the figure, and which we are hoping to work out in a memorandum is also US \$4 million. Mr. Speaker, I should point out that already letters have gone off

to every single person whom I have met confirming all of our various agreements and understandings, because that is how this government works. And Mr. Speaker, the length of time it would take to give instructions to somebody else to do it, I just did them myself. It is easier to stay up late in the night and do them all, and there are several letters for all different people whom we discussed with different things.

So, Mr. Speaker, any... and these are just...there are other things, other training opportunities which I just spoke about, in attachments and so on for the airport, there is the arrangements with Madeira, you take for instance, right now I have asked my office to get someone who... the Maderian Government has asked us to get somebody who is at least 18 years old to come to Madeira for a particular programme they are having, all expense paid and they are identifying that person at the Office of the Prime Minister. There are the questions, Mr. Speaker of the foreign investment opportunity from the Pestana Group for hotel development, then in the case of Libya the question of Libya Development Bank they want to bring to the Eastern Caribbean as a consequence of these discussions and the Investment Company. And the private sector would benefit enormously from these initiatives out of Libya, I am talking about the Development Bank and the Investment Company.

So, Mr. Speaker, the quantum overall for those who were on the delegation from the Central Government, airfares, hotels, expenses and per diem allowances amounted to just over \$123,000.00. Mr. Speaker, the International Airport Development Company would have dealt with Dr. Mathias separately. I just want to say this, Mr. Speaker, in respect of allowances for the Prime Minister, I get US\$60.00 for my per diem allowance, that is all; this is not a money making venture for Ralph, my wife she travels with me, she gets zero cents, zero, you go and asked Central Water and Sewerage Authority, you ask VINLEC, you go down and ask ECGC, you ask the Football Federation how much per diem they get and if you go to them and tell them US\$60.00 they will laugh at you, US\$60.00; in the Caribbean I get EC\$60.00, that is it you know. Mr. Speaker, I am not, emphasize not, going to provide the details of the cost of each member of my delegation and the reason why I am not doing this is because of a frenzy which has been fed against Reverend Job, I am not going to subject individuals, decent people to this kind of 'summer madness'.

Mr. Speaker, when I went to Turkey, nobody asked how much the trip cost. When I went to Austria nobody asked. The only reason why they are asking now is because Reverend Job went on the trip. And what they have said about this good and decent man is a shame. Please they must stop it. I am very happy to see the outrage of the community against those who for partisan, political advantage, they have dragged the decent man into this kind of maelstrom. It is unacceptable. Mr. Speaker, I have here,... Mr. Speaker, I just told you the delegation and of course, let me point out, neither my mother-in-law, nor my daughter were part of the delegation. They accompanied me. And rather than having discussions as to what the delegation achieved, your mother-in-law should not go with you, your daughter should not go with you, really, anyone can tell a grown man where he should take his daughter or his mother-in-law if the state is not paying for it? I mean really! I mean what sort of uncivilized utterings are these, you know? Once upon a time they Leader of the Opposition presumed to say that he does not think that my wife should go on that trip, the sort of trip she should go on is this one. I made the point then that he can decide where and when he should take his wife, and leave me to decide where and when I should take mine. I mean, really.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say in the first ten days of August, 1998, a delegation of 30 persons left St. Vincent and the Grenadines, headed by Sir James, for EXPO 1998 in Lisbon, Portugal. That visit of 10 days cost over

\$400,000.00 and Mr. Speaker, there are several different accounts from which persons, the monies were allocate. In one case for three persons none of these persons were politicians, none of them members of Parliament, one was from the Hotel Association, one was from the Agro Process Association and one was the local Commissioner selected for EXPO 1998. For the three of them to go for the ten days, the cost was \$102,679.46. If they think that I am not speaking the truth on it, let them in their capacity as Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee check account number 1090/119.02 under trade promotions. Mr. Speaker, and nothing came to this country from EXPO 1998. That was a joyride. You see, I will not... I know persons will be saying call the names but I will not call these private citizens names. Because to do so, would be to deter private citizens from going on government business. At that time I did not question this, the government at the time thought that they needed to go to this EXPO but three of them, \$102,679.46. I do not know why they ask me these questions; I really do not know why they ask me. If they ask me... if they insist that I say how much each got, well then equity will demand that I call out all the names of those who had travelled on this extravaganza. But really I would not do it, because I do not want to join them in demeaning decent human begins; never ever would I stoop that low.

The (b) part of the question please indicate the particular interest of the state that each delegation member represented. Mr. Speaker, I do not owe the Leader of the Opposition any explanation as to the individuals whom I in my deliberate judgment as Prime Minister take on a trip to represent St. Vincent and the Grenadines, it is sufficient that I state the purpose of the visit and there are several purposes which this trip had to seek money for the international airport, to seek investment, to seek university scholarships, to seek training opportunities, enhancing diplomatic relationships and also to hold dialogue on ecumenism, the matter of the moral imperatives of foreign policy and to hold discussions on Muslim Christian dialogue and understanding; this question is asked basically because... they are not asking... let us be very clear, they are not asking why my wife is there, because she is my wife. And you do not expect me to turn up at the Holy Father, the Pope he would ask me where is my wife. Now, they cannot ask me about Dr. Mathias, because it is self evident, and Dr. Mathias, went with me to Austria, he went with me to Cuba, to Mexico, to Venezuela, so they would not ask me about Dr. Mathias who heads the International Airport Company. They are not going to ask about Cenio Lewis, High Commissioner from London, who has linked with the Holy Sea and who represented us at the funeral of Pope John Paul; nor in respect of Portugal because he is the person who is the point man for Portugal. This question really is about Reverend Job, and I will not join the Opposition in this dastardly lynching of a good and decent man. It is an utter shame and I tell you in all my years, in public life, I have never seen anything so disgraceful brought to the floor of this House. But, Mr. Speaker, let me just say this, Reverend Job is a distinguished theologian and pastor not only in the Methodist Church but in the Ecumenical Movement. He was the president of the Christian Council last year; he was the vice president, this year. The president this year is a gentleman from the Salvation Army who is a Jamaican citizen who had come here not too long ago, a fine gentleman. Once I am talking someone from the church people should really asked the question, well who really could you have had better than Reverend Job and particularly the Leader of the Opposition being a Methodist, he should be very happy that his own pastor, one of the Lord's anointed was taken. And Reverend Job, I listened to him at the Vatican in the discussions with Cardinal Burtoni who is the Secretary of State to the Vatican, the Foreign Minister essentially and Senior Officials and I sat in awe at his learning and his exposition on ecumenical issues and the moral imperatives of international public policy. He was simply brilliant. The same thing in discussions, those in which I was present when he was discussing issues of Muslim Christian

Dialogue, it is clear that he prepared himself well and drew on his vast knowledge of church history, and theology and really about Islam. No. I am not going there with you all. Go there by yourself. I am obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 2 to the Honourable Prime Minister.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question No. 2 on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition the Honourable Arnhim Eustace and to ask of the Honourable Prime Minister of Finance, of Finance, Economic Planning, Sea and Airports, National Security, Legal and Grenadines Affairs.

2. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition), to ask the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Planning, Sea and Airports, National Security, Legal and Grenadines Affairs.*

- a. How many people are directly employed in the construction of the Argyle International Airport;*
- b. How many of those employed on the project are Vincentian nationals;*
- c. How many jobs is the project expected to generate at the peak of construction;*
- d. What is the current monthly wage bill for the project and the total wage bill of the project thus far;*
- e. How are the wages and salaries of the persons employed on the airport project being financed; and*
- f. How much money has been spent to date?*

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, as of the 13<sup>th</sup> of May, that is to say yesterday, there were 127 persons employed on the Argyle International Airport Project. Of these 127 persons 85 are Vincentian nationals. Sixty-five of whom are employed directly by the International Airport Development Company, and 20 employed by the Total Protection Security Services a local firm that provide security services on the Argyle airport project. The other 42 workers on the project are Cuban engineers, technicians and equipment operators. At the peak of the construction, the Argyle International Airport project is likely to employ about 400 persons. These workers would be engaged in (a) completing the earthworks on the runway, apron and taxiway. (b) paving the runway, taxiway and apron, circulation roads and car park, and (c) constructing the terminal building and other land side facilities. The current monthly wage bill for the project is \$340,000.00. This is the value of salaries and wages for all Vincentians on the project and the amount paid for the 42 Cuban workers. The total wage bill for the project from the inception to this time that is from 2005 September to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009 is \$3.9 million Eastern Caribbean dollars.

Mr. Speaker, let me just point out something. The Cubans who are working on that site are working now 12 hours a day. The period in excess of eight hours they get absolutely nothing for it. And they work seven days a week. They only have one day free a month. They have decided to work that, to speed up, to make up for lost time last year because of the bad weather. I want to repeat. The Cuban brothers and sisters who are out there, their overtime they get absolutely no stipend nor remuneration. Now, you may ask what about our Vincentian

workers, naturally they are paid for their overtime. The question, how are the wages and salaries of the persons employed on the airport project being financed; Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members would recall that as part of my government's contribution to the project, government vested over 800 acres of crown lands in the IADC to be sold to raise funds for the purchase of properties on the airport site that is the primary purpose and to cover the cost of project management and other project related expenses. As I indicated before in this Honourable House, National Properties Limited, NPL, another whole owned Government Company was appointed by the IADC as its sale agent. National Properties is therefore in the process of selling lands on IADC's behalf. To date NPL has sold to private developers' \$21.9 million worth of lands for the IADC. In addition, NPL also bought for itself a 600 parcel of land at Park Industry, Bequia from the IADC for \$125 million. So far, IADC has received \$52.8 million for land sold by the NPL and sold to NPL, while NPL is in the process of selling IADC's lands as I have explained before, IADC will also raise bridging loans to meet its immediate financial commitments. Hence in addition to the EC\$52.8 million that IADC received from its land sales IADC has also raised a bridging loan of EC\$30 million from the First Caribbean International Bank to help finance its work plan. The wages and salaries paid by the IADC to Vincentians working on the project are paid with funds, generated from land sales and bridging loans taken from First Caribbean. On the other hand, amounts being paid to the Cuban workers on the project are to be provided by the Government of Venezuela. One may recall that as part of its contribution towards the earthworks component of the project the government of Venezuela promised to meet the wages and stipend paid to the Cuban workers; even though at this stage the IADC's is making these payments we expect to receive in due course a reimbursement of these funds from Venezuelan Government.

Finally in August 2007, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago made a grant of US\$10 million, EC\$27 million; to the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, to use in any way the government sees fit on the airport project. These funds were paid over to the IADC and are available to meet any project management related expenses over the life cycle of the project. How much has been spent so far to date? Over the 3 ½ years, that is from September 2005 to April the 30<sup>th</sup> 2009, the International Airport Development Company has spent EC \$98.2 million, on the Argyle airport project. The Expenditure is broken down as follows;

Properties and vacant lands	\$60.37 million
Office and equipment	\$17.27 million
Recurrent Expenditure (including loan interest)	\$20.56 million
Giving a total of	\$98.09 million

Mr. Speaker, if you want answers come, I will give you the answers. I just want to say this; they must stop this opposition to the International Airport and stop telling people that it is a hoax. Stop it.

**HONOUABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 3

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question No. 3 on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition the Honourable Arnhim Eustace and to ask of the Honourable Prime Minister of Finance, of Finance, Economic Planning, Sea and Airports, National Security, Legal and Grenadines Affairs. The question has three parts.

3. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition), to ask the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Planning, Sea and Airports, National Security, Legal and Grenadines Affairs.*
- a. *Does the Honourable Prime Minister intend to bring the Agreement on the Alba Initiative to the Parliament;*
  - b. *What differences if any, exist between the Alba agreements for Dominica and Nicaragua and that proposed for St. Vincent and the Grenadines; and*
  - c. *How do we intend to participate in the proposed new currency the Sucre.*

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSLAVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February, 2007, the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines along with the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica and President Chavez of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, we signed a document on the principles of the Alba here in St. Vincent. That document was brought to this Honourable House. Every time I sign any document on behalf of St. Vincent and the Grenadines I bring the document here to this Honourable House. In fact, I even do better than that, I circulate to Members of the media. This is a routine thing for me, so do not get up high on a horse and ask me if I am going to bring it here. This is not the NDP under the Leader of the Opposition. This is a party interested in openness and transparency. And we will do it, and I need no lessons from the Leader of the Opposition in relation to transparency and openness of government. Mr. Speaker, if you were to find today my language a little sharper, over the last few days I came back, the sort of a rubbish I have heard, being articulated by a number of persons who are supposed to be responsible that I have to provide a leadership to just squelch all of this, because it is half a pound of chicken back and half of soap, the Leader of the Opposition says that is happening in St. Vincent, people are buying; insulting people, you know, Reverend Job and so and so forth. I mean the things are so ridiculous.

Mr. Speaker, the agreement which I am concerned about is the one in relation to... which was signed by Dominica. I do have a copy here, this agreement, Mr. Speaker, the first paragraph describes the Neoliberal experiencing Latin America and the Caribbean and why is it a new path was needed? The second paragraph identifies the principles of the ALBA, solidarity, economic complementarily, fair trade, integral cooperation and strict respect for our sovereignty. Representing ALBA's fundamental ideas. The third paragraph gives examples of fraternal cooperation, the Vision Now, what is called in the other Latin American countries, Mission Milagro that is to say, Miracle Mission, the eye surgery issue, all the forms of assistance that Cuba and Venezuela give. There are a few of them. Paragraph 4 is about the PETRO CARIBE Agreement. Paragraph 5 is about the people's trade agreement; an initiative aimed at paving the way for a fair and compensated trade, offers special treatment to export products and recognizes the production differences among out countries, thus fixing a fair price for our goods and services. Paragraph 6 is a recitation of meetings which have been held. Paragraph 7 ALBA is ready to become a consolidated political and strategic alliance capable of productively integrating our nations, concentrating all their creative potential to guarantee the attainment of full economic

sovereignty and independence, under such conditions that we can become part of the world's economic reality with true possibilities occupying the space that belongs to us.

And then the final paragraph aware that the ALBA is the alternative which suits best the interest of our peoples, recognizing the unselfish nature of the far reaching cooperation provided by Cuba and Venezuela governments and following the ideas that became a reality in the joint declarations subscribed to here, on September the 17<sup>th</sup> 2007, which includes the question that this ALBA is complementary to CARICOM and not subversive of it and expressing the will to become part of this historic project. And the last thing is I set my hand thereto and Skerrit signs it. What happened to it is simply to do some editing of this, bring it up to date in accordance with all what has been gone on over the last six years and that is what we had signed and bring here. Now it is a very simple and straightforward. I just want to make this point, I have been advised that from the ALBA fund, over the last 18 months, Dominica has received in excess of \$120 million grant from the ALBA fund and they have access to the ALBA bank. I do not know. Go and unsign it. Well, I do not know when because all you not getting power in this country.

I want to quote, Mr. Speaker, Sir James. You see one of the reasons why all these bitter questions are coming and the language in which they are coming and the jobbing of individuals, is that Sir James once said to people in the NDP, he said you know when you could have a good government, when people are capable of good governance, is when they possess wilderness material. The problem with the Opposition today nobody in it is of wilderness material. They are hungry for power, they are not in opposition long enough, they cannot bear it, they get bitter, do not have wilderness material. I agree with Sir James, you need wilderness material. Do you see me, I was in the wilderness ooh, 30 years plus. I am wilderness material, that is why I could provide the governance that I am providing.

The last matter here, Mr. Speaker, is whether we are going to participate in the proposal currency Sucre; Mr. Speaker, we have made it plain and Dominica is not part of Sucre, because ALBA is not subversive of CARICOM, the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union or the OECS; and Norman Girvan had done a study on this, Professor Girvan, one of our intellectual icons, he said but this is not subversive of all of CARICOM, and he was saying it is a very good agreement, very good, and CARICOM Secretariat has also pronounced on it. I do not understand why it is that persons in the Opposition do not seek to restrain their leader from going off on these dead ends, these curl de sacks and please drop the bitterness; show that you are made of wilderness material. Without wilderness material you can never come here. Look, reflect, Sir James advanced almost a biblical proposition, you have to be able to stand the wilderness to be able to govern properly. The Old Testament is full of men and women who have been in the wilderness and who have become prophets and leaders of men and women. But there are some no, instant coffee, they have no wilderness material in them, that is what they are so bitter, busy jobbing people.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 4, Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines, question in your own name this time.

4. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday (Northern Grenadines), to ask the Honourable Minister of Tourism:*

a. *Whether any investors have been found; and*

- b. *If so, who are the investors, what is the nature of the development being proposed and how far along has the proposed project progressed.*

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

**HONOURABLE GLEN BEACHE:** Mr. Speaker, this should be addressed to the Honourable Prime Minister, investment fall under the Honourable Prime Minister's portfolio.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You are going to past it on. Yeah you are correct Honourable Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, it is a central cornerstone plank of this government's economic strategy to promote the development of tourism, it is the strongest argument in favour of the major investments we are making in airport infrastructure in Argyle, Canouan, Union Island and other parts of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. These infrastructural investments would be a monumental waste of money, if among other things they do not give rise to directly to productive investment in tourism as well as in other economic sectors that can benefit from greatly improved airports services. So we are making big efforts in promoting investment in the tourism sector. It is our firm view that St. Vincent and the Grenadines can boast the best yachting waters in all the world if we ourselves are reluctant to make that boast other would do it for us. There can be no gainsaying that the potential for developing this segment of the tourism business is phenomenal. So yes, we have been looking for investors to develop the yachting, marina facilities and related plant and services. And at this point National Properties has reached a very advanced stage in its negotiations with a group of investors to develop St. Hillarie in Bequia. Indeed, representatives of those investors are currently in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, I have been advised.

The project envisage will develop yachting marina facilities in the Bay, a five star hotel, bungalows, conference centre, spa, administration and reception, restaurant and entertainment centre at the lower reaches of the slopes, and gated in residential community at the higher reaches of the slopes. The project is estimated to cost in excess of US\$100 million when it is completed. Mr. Speaker, we do not wish at this stage to give any more precise information because we are frankly humbled by all the economic uncertainties besetting the entire world and hurting players who are much, much more powerful and formidable than we are, like for instance in the United States and Europe. These are not times to count your chicken before they are hatched, but we are very close to coming to an agreement. Sufficed to say that this project is an imminent one, and one way or the other we will be soon be able to furnish further details to this Honourable House and to the country. Mr. Speaker, the group which has come out of Europe, we have checked them out, we have done the due diligence and we are satisfied they are a group with whom we can do business.

Mr. Speaker, while I am at it let me say this, you know, St. Vincent and the Grenadines we really have been fortunate with several things this year, despite the difficulties, the four major employers of labour we have not lost jobs, government and the state generally. Indeed, there has been an increase in the number of jobs. (b) Mustique, (c) Canouan, and we got the understanding that they would not lay off anybody. In the case of Canouan, even though the resort now lost a fair amount of business because of the situation internationally and fourthly, our nationals who are working on the cruise ships oversees Royal Caribbean Cruise line and the like.

And I would say fortunately, Mr. Speaker, whereas in other countries we are having in the region people closing down work sites in Jamaica, St. Lucia, in the Bahamas; here at Buccama, on Monday they hired 50 more artisans. The numbers have gone past more 400 now and within two weeks or so, I have been advised, that they will go up to 720 in addition to 40 who are going to be on a quarry. Because the movers of the project clearly they have the requisite finance.

Mr. Speaker, when that project started one leading member from the NDP went down and led a group there, he said it is a phantom project, it will never happen. They had a public meeting, when some difficulties arose with the contractor and they scaled down to below 100 until they got a new contractor. When I was making the point, that this is what the people have said, they have assured this, that they are taking a pause, taking a fresh guard, and in about four to eight weeks they will be ramping up back their numbers when they get a new contractor. All hell was breaking loose on a certain radio station. They were rejoicing, thinking that the project was going to fail. I do not really understand how you can be a patriot and rejoice, if a project is going on and the investors find difficulties from outside given the climate. You say well how is it, how it can be addressed. People become instant experts all of a sudden on investment and their thirst for power overpowers them; and part of it, because they are not wilderness material. They are not wilderness material, they cannot wait. Wait until I go, forget about the next time. Show that you have wilderness material.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No... any supplementary? Question No. 5.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** No, Mr. Speaker, the question was answered so long ago, I kind of lost track.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** You are *bassidy* today. You get so much licks.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** No, you talk so much that is the problem. Mr. Speaker, I now move on to question No. 6, no number 5, standing in my name.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** You really *bassidy*.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** All I wanted is an answer to the question, you answered the question, well move on, good gracious me.

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Question No. 5 standing in my name.

5. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition), to ask the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Planning, Sea and Airports, National Security, Legal and Grenadines Affairs.*

a. *Why has the boat that was used by the Customs Department in Bequia been removed; has it been re-deployed and if so where; and*

- b. *In light of the continuing problem of boat break-ins or burglary of yachts and theft of dinghies from yachts visiting Bequia can the boat be used to improve security for yacht and other vessels in Admiralty Bay.*

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, in 2008, an amount of Eastern Caribbean \$1.969 million was expended, to purchase three RIBS. That is really the Ridged Inflatable Boats from Canada under the ongoing security enhancement programme for the police. These RIBS are now used jointly by the Coastguard and the Customs Department for patrolling. One RIB was deployed in the Grenadines, in particular Bequia; presently this RIB is undergoing routine maintenance at Ottley Hall Ship Yard. That is they are cleaning the bottom and servicing the engines, thus contrary to what is intimated here this RIB was not redeployed. In the interim the coastguard has been and will continue to conduct regular patrols in Bequia and the other Grenadine islands. The Custom RIB is slated to be back in Bequia waters by the end of this week. So in addition to the Customs and the people in Bequia know that you had asked me to get a RIB patrol the waters in Bequia by Customs to take care of the contrabands. You had asked that in this House and so too the representative in the Southern Grenadines, and I had complied and I had provided RIBS so that you can easy up on the contraband, because you found that was not a good thing to be happening, that people should be doing contraband in Bequia.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** You have a vivid imagination.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** No, no, you raised that with me, you raised that here.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** ... and talking nonsense in this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 6.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** I have asked the questions over and over again to provide security in the waters and there is still none for all the problems the yachts are facing throughout this county, that is what you need to focus on.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 6

6. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday (Northern Grenadines), to ask the Honourable Minister of Urban Development, Culture, Labour and electoral matters:*
- a. *Has a workers Institute for Research and Education been established in this country;*
  - b. *If so, what is its operational budget and how is it financed;*
  - c. *Has the institute undertaken any research or provided any educational training through seminars or workshops; and*

*d. If so, when, where and to whom was the training provided and what was the nature of the research conducted.*

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Minister of Urban Development, Cultural, Labour and Electoral Affairs.

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Labour as a first step has established the directorate for the Workers Institute for Research and Education which is headed by Labour Consultant and Caribbean Labour expert, Mr. Joseph 'Burns' Bonadie, a former member of this Honourable House, and alongside him is Ms. Joy Browne, former principal of secondary schools in the state, who sits on the National Accreditation Board. This function commenced with Mr. Bonadie in February of 2006 and he presented a work plan completed with a budget of over half a million dollars less the cost for physical structure and staffing. He has consulted regularly with his ILO colleagues as a former CCL General Secretary and with CCL personnel, and the ILO sub regional office in relation to the research aspects and component of this project. I myself had had preliminary discussions with the ILO and fully appreciated the enormity of this task. We are still in the process of identifying suitable premises because of the outline she has documented requiring library, archives and training rooms. The work of the Directorate of WIRE, which is the acronym is done within the training budget of the Ministry of Labour and through donations and contributions in kind from ILO affiliates. He also provides work through the Labour Management and Statistical system. That is (a) and (b). In relation to (c) has the institute undertaken any research or provided any educational training through seminars, workshops; et cetera, yes; in relation to (d) training workshops are being held on an ongoing basis in 2007, workshops and seminars, were held in Barrouallie in conjunction with the Small Business Association; employees and small business operators attended the workshops at the Barrouallie Secondary School, radio programmes which were held with stakeholders and IR issues aimed at promoting opportunities for dialogue on 1. The CARICOM Single Market and Economy, public discussion on minimum wage and conditions, incidentally he worked in an advisory capacity dealing the minimum wage and structure, et cetera to the Minimum Wage Council and leading discussion on health and safety at work places. Research was done on workers' attitudes to issues related to HIV in the work place as a basis for promoting greater understanding among employers and employees how to deal with HIV/AIDS in the work place; interviews dealing with AIDS at work places; and interviews with participants in adult education workshops. (d) Lecture, services and advisory consultations, he provides advisory services to the Minister of Labour particularly with CCL matters and the regional office in Trinidad. He has held regular sessions with the secondary school A Level and university students during exam periods on a range of industrial relation issues; the role structure and function and types of trade unions, background and development of the impact of trade unions in the Caribbean, industrial relation principles and procedures. In 2008 advisory services were provided to the human resource department of the Mustique Company and seminars conducted with heads of departments and staff members were part of the company's human resource development programme. (e) Support Services to trade unions, providing materials for the Commercial Technical and Allied Workers Union in their negotiations with WIBDECO, facilitated components of the annual St. Vincent and the Grenadines Teacher's Union, Canadian Teachers' Federation Ministry of Education in service training workshop in July, 2008. Facilitated training programme for section representatives and executive members of the Public Service Union of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in September 2008, aimed at strengthening capacity of the SVG PSU in improving the level of service to its membership, sessions included overview of trade unions, functions and responsibility of section representatives

and executive and grievance procedures. (f) Regarding the ILO and the Canadian seasonal programme assisted in promoting the ILO tripartite declaration and plan of action for realizing the decent work agenda in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The decent work agenda programmes to enable the ILO and tripartite constituents to work closely with United Nations, Britain Wood Institute, regional financial institutions, regional development organization and donors to integrate objectives of full and productive employment, poverty alleviation, decent work in policy, dialogue and programme cycling at country level. (g) Collaboration with Cave Hill School of Business, the Workers Institute directorate for research and education was a key partner with the Cave Hill School of Business in implementing its training programme re: Human Resource Management Skills Certificate for the police force in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The programme was conducted over several months, provided offices with skills and knowledge needed to function effectively as human resource management professionals within the Organisation. Industrial relations which is one of the seven modules of the programme was facilitated again by the directorate of the Workers Institute for Research and Education, WIRE. Components of that module include a series of industrial relations, trade unionism with the emphasis on Caribbean, collective bargaining and the legal framework. The directorate along with facilitators from the Cave Hill School of Business participated in the final assessment in November last year. The directors also assisted the Cave Hill School of Business in presenting certificates, which is the usual thing, was the feature address. It was delivered by Mr. Brian Toppin, researcher and training advisor of the Cave Hill School of Business. The director served as a panelist on the Chamber of Industry and Commerce Television Business Round Table programme which discussed IR and other issues impacting on the community and the economy of St. Vincent on the Chamber of Commerce programme ongoing projects. The appeals tribunal we are providing them with assistance and also they had assisted us when we had a few critical issues and working on helping to put together a guideline for managers and supervisors and shop stewards, on HIV/AIDS issue in the work place. The social contract between the government and civil society, organized public consultations, seminars, for officials and section representatives and radio interactive programme and worked on the productivity work now, he is working on the productivity week which would be an intervention to complement the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence with the Barbados National Productivity Council which would be source to do that information. He has even submitted a couple of the programmes and how many people attended these meetings. Right at the moment I think he missed out, he did some work with the occupational health and safety, so I think that gives you a programme. We have a programme for 2009, but as I have indicated it is financed through our training programme in the Ministry because it is local funds.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Just a quick supplementary and all of this was done during 2008 – 2009?

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** This was done 2007, 2008 and in 2009 he is now unfolding the programme for this year.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 7

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question No. 7 on behalf of the Honourable Terrance Ollivierre, the Member for the Southern Grenadines. He is absent and to ask:

7. *Honourable Terrance Ollivierre (Southern Grenadines), to ask the Honourable Minister of Education:*

*The Mary Hutchinson Primary School in Ashton Union Island is said to be structurally unfit. As a result the school's population has had to be temporarily relocated.*

*When will work commence to repair the school and how long is work expected to take.*

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

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines has in his preamble acknowledge the fact that the Ministry of Education is doing its work; we have temporarily relocated the schools population. And I would like to remind him as I always do, that in doing work there is due process. At the moment we are awaiting reports from the engineers and we are also waiting to have the full cost implications, so I am in no position to speak of the time, but it would finish.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 8 seeing that you cannot ask a supplementary.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to ask question No. 8 on behalf of the Honourable Terrance Ollivierre Member for the Southern Grenadines. And this question too is directed to the Minister of Education.

8. *Honourable Terrance Ollivierre (Southern Grenadines), to ask the Honourable Minister of Education:*

*Canouan Public Library is in a run-down condition.*

*Will the Honourable Minister please stat when will residents and visitors to Canouan be provided with proper faculties.*

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

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the maintenance and upgrading work necessary at the Canouan Public Library has been recorded with other maintenance work for educational institutions. We are striving to have work completed before the end of the financial year. I am obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 9 Honourable Senator St. Clair Leacock.

9. *Major the Honourable St. Clair Leacock (Opposition Senator), to ask the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Information Legal and Grenadines Affairs:*

- a. *Would the Honourable Prime Minister please name and give the value of the buildings or plant on the fixed asset register of the National Properties; and*
- b. *The buildings and their value of the property owned by the National Commercial Bank and Cobblestone Inn.*

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I draw Mr. Speaker, the attention to Standing Order 20 (1) (g) IV.

**“A question shall not be asked if the answer to which can be found by reference to available official publications.”**

The official publications would include, the audited accounts file with the Company Registry; and if you go to the Company's Registry you will see the accounts for the National Properties and for the National Commercial Bank. Now, I am going to answer the question, Mr. Speaker, if you permit me to; but I just want to draw Honourable Members attention to this Rule, because that Rule is there, which basically says, that Members of the House must do their own homework. I cannot do homework for the Honourable Senator when he can simply go to the Company's Registry and... no, the point is this, I do not think, this matter, it is said that the NDP has a... the Opposition has a Research Officer, Patel is busy running rum shop and...

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** The Rules of the House also says, you should not have gratuitous mention of other members who are not involved in the business of the House, I do not know why the Prime Minister is calling up Mr. Matthews' name in the business of the House here; it has nothing to do with the question.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** All right, Honourable Member, would you please respond.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know any such rule, but the point is this they are made up as we go along, because the word gratuitous does not appear in the rules at all. Because these things I know them to the back of my hand. So you see... No, no, Mr. Speaker, there is no such rule in the House, but the point... but Mr. Speaker I understand the point that you are asking me to go ahead...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** That is why I asked you to respond to the issue. I am not aware of the rule either.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** No, no, I know. There are lawyers who would go to court and do not check out the law and they advance a proposition and the judge says, please, Dr. Friday, would you refer me to this novel point of law. It is so new that the judge does not know it. Now, Mr. Speaker, but the Honourable Senator Leacock says contrary to what you have said earlier that he likes me to hear me answer these questions. You said that I am answering too many questions because you asked me all of them.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** He said you are too long.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** You are burdened.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I am burdened? I am just pointing out the contradiction between you all...The two of you I know are not made of wilderness material. [Interjection] No, because the question you asked was not properly directed...

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Drink some water man.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I am a Leo; I am strong like a lion.

Mr. Speaker, the value of the buildings and plants on the fix assets registered of the National Properties Limited as of the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, 2008 the date of the last audited accounts amount to \$16,707,319.00. Investment properties, properties held for sale, \$29.12 million. Properties leased \$74.1 million, properties held for lease but vacant \$7.5 million; properties under construction \$27.8 million, giving total investment properties of \$138.57 million. Fixed assets, land, \$18.01 million. Building \$7.3 million, farmhouse \$176,584.00, work in progress \$1.2 million, giving \$23.65 million, less accumulated depression of \$513,526.00 a Net Book value for the fix assets of \$23.133 million giving the grand total between the total investment properties and the fixed assets. The National Commercial Bank has no buildings on its books; if you were to look and see, because all the buildings occupied by the bank are owned by National Properties and leased to the bank. Now, Mr. Speaker, I would just... he wants to know where the properties are, the NCB buildings, you have the one at Bedford Street, you have it Halifax Street, you have in Kingstown, you have in Union Island, Bequia, Canouan, Barrouallie. He is asking for the value of the buildings not the lands, the buildings there is \$13.6 million, the other buildings in Kingstown, the Reigate Building currently is \$11 million, it does not include the land, Food City Buildings \$3.7 million, and equipment of \$650,000.00. Cobblestone Inn, the way the question is asked, Cobblestone Inn is not an entity separate from itself. Do you remember that had gone through from the National Hotels and it has gone into National Properties. That is the only one you asked where you say, you want to know, the buildings and the value owned by the National Commercial Bank, well there is none for that. So for Cobblestone I will give you the building and the land. I am answering precisely what you asked. The listed value for the building is \$2.75 million and the land which is \$7.148 square feet, at \$650.00 a square foot which is the going price, is \$4.6 million. So Cobblestone itself would be \$7.3 million. The glove factory the building there is \$990,000.00. The former Bottlers' property we put a zero value on those buildings because though they have a replacement value of \$700,000.00 we are knowing them down, because we are going to build a beautiful complex there, offices and the like for private sector and the public sector, so when we come into town, when your grandchildren come into town and when you are in the back seat and they ask you granddad who built this beautiful thing, you would say the Comrade built it. You know, in fact, you might bend down to buckle your shoe lace because you do not want to say it is the Comrade who built it, but if you are an honest man you would sit upright and say it is the Comrade built that. When your grandchildren.... Or you want me to say your great grand... I am not going anywhere further than that you know.

At Campden Park we own nine buildings down there, providing 180,000 square feet of factory space as well as four small snack shops for rent the value of those buildings, not the land \$9.8 million. We have buildings at Diamond, \$500,000.00, and then in relation to National Properties with the LAP, the Lauders Agricultural Processing Inc. The building is \$2 million. Shrewsbury House the value of the building is \$710,000.00. In Marriaqua you know, National Properties built the beautiful building there, it includes NCB which offers ATM services and Ministry of Telecommunication and post office and public library, that building is nearly \$400,000.00.

Canouan, the King Crab Property, it is really a derelict building; the building there is just \$65,000.00. And there sundry buildings, like down at Mt. Wayne/Peter's Hope and Orange Hill Estate, they have a value of about \$70,000.00. The thing is this, if you look in the accounts, you will get the information. Thank you, very much.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary or question 10?

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to the Honourable Prime Minister, could he clarify or confirm that to the extent that the National Commercial Bank does not by itself own any buildings, whether it is in fact, can affect that bank in the sale as a going concern. And the same rules as well for Cobblestone Inn whether there is any problem if they were to dispose of, as going concerns, would there be any going problems, or the National Commercial.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the Cobblestone Inn is a standalone facility with land, wherever it is, it is just that it is located within the property company. In any event we do not have any intention to sell the Cobblestone Inn.

In relation to the National Commercial Bank, in fact, Mr. Speaker, there are very clear rules on the amount of real estate that a commercial bank has relative to its deposit base. There are a whole set of rules and usually the bank would have real estate of its buildings. Some banks do not have. But that does not affect any sale in any way, if you have real estate naturally; the bank will have a piece of real estate to sell. But if it does not have a real estate, you got the money; you got the money! That means the value of the bank when it sells the real estate is the same value but if you cannot really have too much real estate. In fact, one of the problems with banks, insurance companies, credit unions, and in the case of commercial banks it is very clear, you need to keep your liquidity at a particular level and do not go and invest in a whole set of real estate; so the contrary is the point.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Question No. 10; Honourable Senator Leacock.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, I ask question No. 10 standing in my name, and I ask this question of the Honourable Prime Minister. Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, I see the (b) and the (c) of this question were detached.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Yes we were looking at Rule 21 (b),

**“A question shall not include the names of persons or statement of fact unless they be necessary to render the question intelligible.”**

And I do not feel the (b) and (c) of the question made the question more intelligible.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I saw the (b) and (c) you know...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You saw them?

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I am prepared to answer him the (b) and the (c) because you see, many brief catch a lot of things, they get a lot of gossip and they put them in questions.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You are not asking the question then?

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** No, to the extent that the Prime Minister agreed I wondered if I could ask the (b) and the (c) and I will raise the (a) as the supplementary.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You will raise the (a) as supplementary?

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** If he is prepared to answer the (b) and the (c) as he said he saw.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** You are asking me question that is not here.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** No but you said you saw the (b) and the (c) that is not here today. I want..

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** The question obviously would have probably sent out, and then, but I in my own right,...

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** In your own judgment, you took off the (b) and (c) of the question?

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** ... I thought of removing the (b) and (c).

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, the simple truth is this, the persons whom he is asking about they do not have diplomatic passports.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I mean it is, you know, I mean you all go about the place, no sorry, some Honourable Members go about the place, you get information...

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** But the question really has not been asked, yet.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I know, Mr. Speaker, but I am telling him.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to the Honorable Prime Minister for answer (b) and (c) which was not asked here today and to know the Honourable men in question do not have diplomatic passport. I now ask you on (a) which is..

10. *Major the Honourable St. Clair Leacock (Opposition Senator), to ask the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Information Legal and Grenadines Affairs:*

a. *Would the Honourable Prime Minister please indicate the number of individuals by categories who hold Diplomatic Passports.*

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Let me just say this, every person whom this government grants a diplomatic passport, the matter can stand up to scrutiny, and we can give a reason. There are some persons in the previous administration, who had diplomatic passport, you would have had to search for a reason why. But I am not going to drag those people's name into thing. When I came into office, and their

diplomatic passports, they did not have the gall to come and ask me to renew it. Because they know themselves that they should not have it. So there are a lot of things I know as Prime Minister but I do not say, because I have to keep the confidentiality and the dignity of the Office in that regard. So, but sometimes you all, want me to do it, and it is some of your own supporters that would be embarrassed but I would never want to embarrass them, because they have children. Do you get where I am coming from? I have some inside information you would know some of them I am talking about. Now, we have a deal?

There are 137 diplomatic passports, there are four for judges, I want to say, Mr. Speaker, once the judges are Vincentians, whether that judge is in St. Vincent and the Grenadines or not, once he is in a CARICOM jurisdiction, this government has a policy to provide a diplomatic passport for the judge. Members of Parliament, as you would be surprised here that you will see 31 diplomatic passports, one of the thing is some of the former Members of Parliament who have asked to keep their passports, I allowed them to keep their passports; some of them. Senior government officers, 35, diplomatic circle, 27, Ministers of Religion, 8, spouses, and there would be spouses of all these various categories, in some of them 25; goodwill ambassadors, 7; 10 official passports, 72,944 regular ones.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in relation to question (b) as I said those two persons ask, what is the basis for them to get a diplomatic passport? There is basis, save and except in the fertile imagination of some, and the question about a gentleman who was providing diplomatic functions for the government and when a particular incident occurred the very morning, and this was told to this House at the time long ago. Incidentally in relation to that gentleman, he was traduced up and down the country by the Opposition that, his members of his family was also traduced, the Honourable Attorney General who is the wife of this persons nephew, she was also traduced, the Leader of the Opposition asked her to resign. Do you see why you all must contain, you all tongues? And when that person,... I am not being rude. No Mr. Speaker, if in fact, no, I am not going to take it back. How can you ask the Honourable Attorney General to resign...

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

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, we are going quite well but the Prime Minister is not speaking to his children and asking Honourable Members of this House to contain their tongues. The expression is really not becoming, it is not parliamentary, and I think he can make his statement in another way, and I really think you should address this Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Contain your tongue. I am studying what is unparliamentary about it. If you can convince me on that I would ask him... because I really cannot see the unparliamentary part of that. Contain your tongue?

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, may I, you see, Mr. Speaker, within the last year or two I have been reading the Bible a lot, and it is an expression which I find to be beautiful both in the Old and the New Testament, about holding tongue and there is even a verb where Christ himself uses it, bridle it. He was not speaking to a child. And I am not Christ, so I am not talking about... but I am just saying, it is a lovely formulation in the Bible.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Okay, Prime Minister, could we move along, because I do not think we need spend any more time here.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I do not think... if you are in the Catholic Church long enough, you might understand the theology there. It is okay. That is a heckle.

Mr. Speaker, and that gentleman in question was acquitted in the United Kingdom by a jury. And there are persons in this Honourable House against whose families certain allegations have been and have proved to be false and they would appreciate that we must hold our tongues on these things. That is the answer to the question, Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Question No. 11

11. *Major the Honourable St. Clair Leacock (Opposition Senator), to ask the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Information Legal and Grenadines Affairs:*

*As details of the collapse of the Stanford Investments including his former bank in Antigua unfold.*

*Will the Honourable Prime Minister indicate the paid up cash to date of the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to rescue the Bank in Antigua now owned by some OECS countries and the ECCB.*

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has not paid any money to the Bank of Antigua; the government. The funds required to provide liquidity support to the Bank of Antigua were provided by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank in accordance with its mandate and those monies arrangements have been made in terms of the membership of the bank as to how that is dealt with. The NCB, the National Commercial Bank has provided an amount of \$2 million towards the purchase of its share of the equity, in the new company that is to assume ownership of the Bank of Antigua, once the valuation and the due diligence processes are completed. So we are in the transition period.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary?

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Yes, Please, Mr. Speaker. Would the Honorable Prime Minister therefore, indicate whether in essence that to date no liability, contingent or otherwise has really accrued to the Government of St. Vincent thus far.

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** There is none. We have been very careful, professional; we have provided leadership in this process, which leadership has been acknowledged far and wide, but this is a matter which I have put, having put out the framework of the policy which has been dealt with entirely on the technical side by the technical staff in the bank and by my Director General of Finance and Planning.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Thank you, very much, Mr. Prime Minister.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 12 in the name of the Honourable Daniel Cummings.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question 12 standing in the name of the Honourable Senator Cummings who is unavoidably absent and I asked this question of the Honourable Minister of National Mobilization Social Development...

12. *The Honourable Daniel Cummings (Opposition Senator), to ask the Honourable Minister of National Mobilisation, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, Non-Governmental Relations, Local government, Persons with Disabilities and Youth Affairs:*

*Many families on the bay front in Rose Place rely on public convenience for water supply, washing, bathing and bodily waste disposal. There exist but very few toilet facilities for the hundreds of persons who need the service. Even so, one of the two (2) toilets has been shuttered for a very long time.*

- a. Would the Honourable Minister please state if any when this would be replaced or repaired; and*
- b. When would adequate housing and sanitary facilities be provided for these unfortunate members of our Caribbean civilization.*

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister is not here, and I have been given the answer. Mr. Speaker, I am really sorry that Senator Cummings is not here, because I would have said many things in his presence, which I will not say now because he is absent, only to say this, he was the principal architect at CWSA to close down all the public baths and toilet facilities in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In the Opposition I had a fight with him, repeatedly, in government I had to talk to him. He told me some choice words about ordinary people, when they are using these facilities, I would not want to demean the House with the use of some of that language. It is vivid in my head. And the Honourable Senator Leacock knows about that history. He knows, so that it comes ill out of the mouth of Senator Cummings, to ask about closing bath, public bath and toilet. I mean I have never heard, I mean are people serious?

Mr. Speaker, there are four, not two public sanitary conveniences in the Rose Place area, three of them are public bath and toilet while the other is a laundry facility. They are maintained by different agencies such as the Kingstown Board, the National Sports Council and the Environmental Management Department, the Public Health Division in the Ministry of Health and the Environment. The Environmental Management Department is responsible for ensuring that the public is not expose to any undue risk from these facilities and inspects them routinely. The public facilities are often vandalized to the extent where facets, sometimes entire toilet sets are removed. There is currently one facility that has to be closed off for public health reasons since it was vandalized to the extent where it was rendered unusable. You can imagine some things which he has told me about facts like that, and what sort of facilities should be made available for such people. I would not say they were referred to as apartheid type language from South Africa, but I mean, we know him when he is in his flights.

This government has a well articulated Housing Policy through which all Vincentians can improve their quality of housing, this include the people of Rose Place. The NDP administration said that they were not going to build any houses and we have been building hundreds and we continue to do so including now, we have just unveiled the no income housing policy. The population of Kingstown has been decreasing steadily over the years. This is evident in the data provided from the last three population and housing censuses conducted in this country. Households in urban areas are migrating to suburban areas particularly in the South East and South West of St. Vincent.

The government has a policy of providing water in related services directly to the households, in their dwellings rather than through standpipes, public baths and other similar facilities. And the Honourable Senator Cummings must be aware of this policy, since this is something which he was involved in previously. When we came to office we had about between 70 and 75% of the population having pipe borne water at their homes, the number is now about 96%, I mean you find, places in Park Hill did not have it, even some places in South Rivers, Chester Cottage, a number of places in fact, there are a few persons who want water in St. Vincent who really cannot get the connect at their homes. And what we are doing we pay for the connection. If a fellow lives way on top of a hill, he alone and he want to have the connection to pay for it, if he wants it, he has to pay for it. Like Ralph Gonsalves, where I am building my house in Gorse, I had to pay four thousand and something dollars for the water connection. I had to pay just by the way, \$40,000.00 for the electricity connection, because I fall subject to the same policy. I wonder if you go and ask some people who have water and electricity from the previous government in far places if there is any record of any payment for these connections. I draw that as a comparison. I know what I am talking about, but I again, I am not going down any of those roads this morning.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 13, Honourable Senator Leacock for Honourable Senator Cummings.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Mr. Speaker, you smile when the Prime Minister besmirching the character of former parliamentarians here, but I think it is a serious matter, the Prime Minister must not take those cheap shots, you know.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I am not besmirching anybody.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** You are besmirching. But let us move on, it getting closer to the lunch hour and you always get like that when it is at that hour. Question 13, Mr. Speaker,

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** You feel you are a ghetto man, you know, not me.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** But you know that, you know that.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** You have ghetto mind.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** No, no, no, do not try that dirty tricks on me. Sir Louis stay out of this one here.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Question No. 13 please.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** You coming out of the wilderness so stay out. Question 13 in my name Honourable Speaker, and I ask this in the name of Senator Cummings, and I ask this of the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works, I suspect the Honourable Prime Minister is deputizing since he acts for all Ministers.

13. *The Honourable Daniel Cummings (Opposition Senator), to ask the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works:*

- a. *Would the Honourable Minister please state what is the total indebtedness of the General Equipment Services Corporation (GESCO) including the overdraft, as at the latest available date; and*
- b. *Further would the Honourable Minister please indicate what measures have been taken or are to be taken to recover debts owed to the Corporation.*

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Prime Minister for the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works who is not in Parliament today.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, the figures for the overdraft on loan for the GESCO, you find it in the estimates, you know. I mean, I do not know, you all must follow the rules; you have been in the House so long...

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** We like to hear it from you.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I must stop answer the questions what the rules say I should not answer you.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** No, We like to hearing from you.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Make up your mind between yourself and your deputy leader, what you want, you want to hear from me or you do not want to hear from me.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** We want to hear from you.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Okay. You should tell your deputy leader that. [Interjection] You mean you take the permission.

Mr. Speaker, as of the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 2009 both the loan and overdraft balances at NCB was \$6.6 million. There are some payables \$88,000.00 for Foreign payables, an export agency in US and one in Trinidad, these is for spare parts for heavy duty equipment. Similarly for local payables \$250,000 plus and there is a balance for the NIS of \$108,515. [Interjection] I know you will jump at that [interjection] ah, Mr. Speaker, when we arrived at office the balance owed by the GESCO to NIS under the NDP period was \$344,000 and what we do, we agree to pay the arrears whilst we are paying the current and the we have brought that down now to \$108,000 [interjection] ah, what do you say about your government which was not paying over workers money to the NIS.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Delinquent.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Very delinquent. So I put it that way because I know I would catch you [laughter] A catch you easy, easy, easy. Mr. Speaker, the Government owes GESCO \$891,000 various Ministries and Departments to..., some of it, it fluctuates..., this is a fluctuating sum, it involves gas, it involve rental of equipment, it involve all sorts of things. So it is..., in fact GESCO will tell you that over the years, even from the last NDP years, this is one of the better positions with the government account. And then there are some staff receivables of \$33,000 and there are some other receivables of \$323,000 from some local construction companies which have contracts with the Government and do business with GESCO hiring things, but they [interjection] nah, nah, nah, nah, they pay them on an ongoing basis, they are paying them on an ongoing basis. So that is the situation. There is no mystery you know. I mean the thing is this, I would like GESCO to be performing better and I am hoping that when GESCO is dissolved into BRAGSA that we will see, to use your favourite expression, certain synergies. [Laughter] [Interjection] I do not love it because you see, you are encouraging on your side of the House. It really upset me that you all are engaged in the Jobbing of people. I do not like it at all, you all must stop it.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** End of question time, lunch Honourable Prime Minister. You have supplementary? I am sorry, I did not realize that.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** He loves lunch, I will not deny him.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** I am sorry.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, the problem with the Honourable Senator Leacock, when he sees me he sees doubles, he sees also not only the Honourable Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, the Honourable Conrad Sayers, he also sees for some strange reason my Cabinet Secretary Mr. Bernard Morgan, I do not understand, I know your problem, I understand your problem, but as I say, we will find out whether you are made of wilderness material. Mr. Speaker, I think we should perhaps come back at 4 O'clock. It is now quarter to two and to round it off.

I beg to move Mr. Speaker, that this Honourable House do stand suspended [interjection] it depends on..., I do not know which Bill you will like to speak on.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Are we doing the Motion today?

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** No, no, no, no, the Motion is not being dealt with today.

**HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK:** Then it is okay. I want to go the Harvey Williams funeral.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Okay, yes. You must convey my regards too.

Mr. Speaker, before I move the Motion for the luncheon suspension, may I just move under Standing Orders 5(2) Mr. Speaker, 12(5) sorry that I beg to move that under Standing Order 12(5) that the proceedings of today's sitting be exempted from the provisions of the Standing Order hours of sitting.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, before I move the adjournment, I have this gift I would like if the Clerk can pass it for me to the Honourable for the Northern Grenadines, for the Honourable Leader of the Opposition with my kind regard and we can go to Argyle together [interjection]. I can get one for you, you know if you want.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House do stand suspended for the luncheon period until 4:00 p.m.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** End of question time.

### **MOTION**

The Honourable Prime Minister moved that the proceedings of the day's sitting be exempted under Standing Orders "Hours of Sitting" (S.O. 12(5)).

**Question put and agreed to.  
House suspended at 2:00 p.m. (Luncheon)  
House resumed 4:10 p.m.**

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

#### **BILLS**

##### **1. BILLS OF EXCHANGE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, on the 26<sup>th</sup> March this year, we had the first reading of this Bill. Accordingly, I beg to move the second reading. I beg to move that a Bill for an act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act be read a second time.

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

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Debate on the Bill, Honourable Prime Minister.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Bills of Exchange (Amendment) Bill 2009 seeks to amend the Bills of Exchange Act Chapter 99 of the Laws of St. Vincent and the Grenadines which I shall refer to hereinafter as the Principal Act. And the amendment seeks to:

- a. Allow cheques to be presented at an address specified in St. Vincent and the Grenadines *Gazette* by the paying bank

- b. To enable a cheque to be presented by a banker for payment by notification of the essential features by electronic means rather than by physical presentment.
- c. To render inapplicable section 2(4) of the Principal Act which pertains to the duties of the holders of Bills of Exchange to cheques presented in accordance with the proposed section 45(b).
- d. To provide for the concept of cheques certification.
- e. To provide for the use of nontransferable cheques.
- f. To extend to unendorsed cheques and similar instruments the protection which a paying bank at present enjoys in respect of endorsed cheques and other instrument, and
- g. To give the Minister responsible for finance the power to make regulations.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment is part and parcel of the thrust within the Member countries of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union to reform a series of legislative measures to take account of modern banking practices and modern technologies, but to maintain at the same time security and safety and businesslike practices. So we have had a raft of legislation brought by this Government including the Uniform Banking Act, the Payments Systems Act, we have brought here the changes in relation to the Regional Stock Exchange, we have brought legislative changes in relation to Insurance Companies and they will still have to bring with a more updated bit of legislation in that regard. In short, all of these measures would have a purpose. Similarly, we have brought legislation governing the matter of the Money Services Bill and so on and so forth. So this is part and parcel of this modernisation and reform exercise.

I shall Mr. Speaker; present a brief synopsis of the main clauses of the Bill.

Clause 1 is the usual Short Title for which this is the Bill.

Clause 2 amends the Interpretation Section with the Principal Act to include the definition of the Minister.

Clauses 3 and 4 as regards these, technological advancements had made it possible to present cheques more efficiently by means of electronic transmission of essential data relating to the payment instruction. The proposed section 45(a), 45(b) and 52(a) provide the platform for a banker to utilise this mode of presentment. The proposed amendments would provide a workable mechanism for eliminating the paper burden imposed by the Principal Act and improve cheque efficiency.

Clause 5 the proposed section 73(a) seeks to give legal certainty and validity to a bank's undertaking to honour the cheques of certain clients, the proposed section described the consequences of certifying cheques and declares the rights of the parties relying thereon. Provided that the criteria for certification are satisfied the

banker is immediately obliged to segregate the amounts certified for payment. In the event of the bank's insolvency prior to payment, the unpaid cheque becomes a first charge on the assets of the insolvent bank.

Clauses 6 and 7 the proposed section 81(a) provides for nontransferable cheques. Where a cheque is demarcated as indicated in the provision, the cheque is valid only as between the parties to it and cannot be transferred by the payee to any other person. The endorsement of a nontransferable cheque is not effective to transfer ownership and the paying bank is absolved of any liability in respect of the collection of such cheques with any purported endorsement.

Clause 8 the new section 82 seeks to extend to unendorsed cheques the protection presently enjoyed by a paying bank in respect of endorsed cheques and other instruments. The section seeks to absolve a bank of negligence where in the normal course of business and without bad faith it pays a cheque that is not endorsed or irregularly endorsed and in Clause 9 the effect of the proposed section 97 is to give the Minister responsible for finance the residual power to make regulations for the effective implementation of the Act and Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, that in a nutshell is what this amendment is about. Very straightforward, I do not think it should provide us with difficulties today. I am obliged.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not sure you would call this so much a debate Mr. Speaker, because as the Honourable Prime Minister pointed out in the objects of the Bill, this is something that is region wide and from time to time we have to update our instruments of exchange, update our banking practices to keep pace with changes that are taking place in the world and the electronic transfers are certainly one of those areas where more and more certainty is required, more and more business is being done and certainly anything that is being done in this legislation whether it is in St. Vincent alone, or the OECS level will facilitate the work at the banks, hopefully speed up the way in which we do business, the work that the banks do and make our region more conducive for doing business for our own citizens but also for our own investors international banks that do business in the region and the like. So with those objects stated and as the Prime Minister described the Bill and in keeping with the spirit of having all the countries of the Currency Union essentially stay in step that we endorse and support the Bill.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Any further debate? No further debate Prime Minister.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines for his support of this measure.

I beg to move Mr. Speaker that this House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole House to consider this Bill clause by clause.

**House went into committee.**

**House resumed.**

**Bill read and reported without amendments.**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act be read a third time by title and passed.

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

## **2. STOCK TRESPASS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009**

**HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move the introduction and first reading of a Bill for an Act to amend this Stock Trespass Act Cap 54 of 1998.

Mr. Speaker, the objects and reasons of this Bill is that the Bill seeks to amend the Stock Trespass Act (Chapter 54) by increasing the rate an owner of any animal found trespassing pays to a distrainor and by providing for other related matters.

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

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

**HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg that this Bill be taken through all stages at today's sitting and passed.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill for an act to amend the Stock Trespass Act Cap 54 be read a second time.

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

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Debate on the Bill, Honourable Minister.

**HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Bill that is presently before this Honourable House has approximately seven amendments which is being detailed in the Act.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that this measure be done so as to continue to build the confidence of the Agricultural Sector. I say that Mr. Speaker, because a few years ago one early morning I was awakened by my telephone and when I answered the telephone Mr. Speaker, it was quite an outstanding notable citizen of this country asking me to do him a favour. Mr. Speaker jokingly asked the question to the person, how can a simple humble man like me be doing such a favour to a well outstanding Notary Public? He said, Minister Daniel, what I am asking you though small it would mean very much to the Agricultural Sector and to the country of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. He went on further to say that sometimes he is very much embarrassed in the court where when matters dealing with Stock Trespass are being dealt with and the sentences applied, he said

sir, I cannot understand as a lawyer what is happening here. So that very day I went and I did my research only to find that what the gentleman was implying existed. He said, Mr. Daniel, do you know that they are charging 48 cents in the court for Stock Trespass? So I went and I took volume 2 and I really looked at the Act and I was amazed to see that the Act really commenced on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1980 and subsequently had amendments in 1947 and 1978, but that in the Bill still had for animals like horse and cattle and donkey that it was 48 cents that really was charged for Stock Trespass and for every day after that once you would have kept the animal was 36 cents. Then in relation to goat and sheep and pigs it would have costs 24 cents for the animal once it was taken up as trespass and for every day after that it was 18 cents.

Mr. Speaker, it went on to goose and duck and turkey and fowl where the price charged was 12 cents once it was taken up and 6 cents for every day after. Mr. Speaker, I really couldn't believe when I would have seen what was existed at the time. So Mr. Speaker, I really..., having seen in the document what it was I called the AG's Chambers to clarify and she indicated to me (that is the attorney General) that there would have been a revision in 1998 and so Mr. Speaker, that in itself was quite touching, but more importantly that when the consultations were done as we did for the Agricultural Produce Bill which was passed sometime last year, Mr. Speaker, almost all of the consultations the question was raised, when is it that the Ministry of Agriculture will honestly be looking at the Stock Trespass Act.

Mr. Speaker, it came to the Ministry of Agriculture that something must be done in relation to this Stock Trespass Act. But even quite recently Mr. Speaker, one farmer called my physical presence on his farm to see some damages that were done by some pigs on his farm. Mr. Speaker, when I got there and I saw the level of damage and even reflecting on the payments that were put in for the 1998 amendments in this Act that the damages that were done that the animals could not have even compensated for the damaged and so Mr. Speaker, we in the Ministry of Agriculture, we cannot go on like this. The farmers are calling on us, because even when in 1998 when the amendments were made the cost of production in Agriculture has more than doubled. Let us say for argument sake, ten years ago the price of labour was \$25 per day, today it is not so. Ten years ago the cost of one sack of fertilizer was \$40 per sack, today the farmers are buying fertilizer at \$104 per sack and yet that is a subsidise price and so Mr. Speaker, it is very important that what we do in the Ministry of Agriculture, must reflect what is to be in a new Agriculture. What is happening Mr. Speaker, is that the competitiveness of the sector is forcing the Ministry to find innovative ways, to find new strategic interventions so as to modernize the sector the meet that kind of competitive edge.

As we all know Mr. Speaker, our major exports Banana Industry has really been levels of decline for quite some time. But interestingly this year, for the first quarter or so our export would have been just above our exports of last year in terms of the corresponding period. But Mr. Speaker, the challenges continues to face not only bananas but the sector in itself and so we have to seek to diversify the sector and to give that kind of environment to our farmers so that we can help to build their confidence as we move forward. And so Mr. Speaker, we also in the Ministry have been looking at Agriculture as a business enterprise and that what is happening when it comes to Stock Trespass if that kind of risks cannot really be compensated for then of course this is really going to be a deterrent to the production of whether it is root crops, whether it vegetables certainly it is going to be a deterrent.

Mr. Speaker, and maybe while I am talking about risks I should also indicate that WINCROP as an insurance company which would have serviced us well over the pass years at the level of the production of bananas in the

Windwards, this is becoming a concern to that organization. In that the level of contributions that are now being offered by our farmers certainly this is also a challenge to that organization and so with all of this that is before us, we in the Ministry of Agriculture, we have to really create the kind of climate so that our farmers can understand and produce in an environment that is going to be good enough for them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that hopefully with all of what it is before us that by the end of this year I am hoping that we will be able to bring a much more comprehensive Bill to this Parliament for improving on the overall Act that is before us. What is being proposed at this time Mr. Speaker, is more or less a more stop gap measure to help in terms of that kind of relief that our farmers are facing at this time and so Mr. Speaker, in relation to the Bill that is before us, Mr. Speaker, the amendments as I indicated, there are seven clause 1 would provide Short Title of the Act; clause 2 would amend Section 2 of the Principal Act by adding “rabbits” to the definition of animal that animal was left out and so because we know rabbits do make tremendous damage we are now inserting rabbits as an animal into the Act. Mr. Speaker, clause 3 would amend subsection 1 of section 5 of the Principal Act by increasing the trespass rates set out in that subsection in addition to rabbit and cat would be added to paragraph “f” and the addition of rabbit is as a consequence of the amendment to the definition of animal in relation to the addition of cat. The definition of animal was amended in the 1998 Act No. of 1998 to include cats but no trespass rate was set out for this category. As such it is proposed that the trespass rate for cats be set at \$20 and for this reason cat will be inserted into that paragraph.

Mr. Speaker, clause 4 would amend section 11 of the Principal Act by increasing the costs of proceeds of sales set out therein from \$50 to \$100. Clause 5 would amend section 21 of the Principal Act by reducing the time within which the owner of an animal that has been destroyed has to remove the animal, the time would be reduce from 12 hours to 4 hours and this is very important Mr. Speaker, because the Principal Act which had 12 hours in terms of the removal of the animal once the animal was killed that you would have decomposition that will be setting in and so if the animal is really going to be use for protein consumption, for meat then it is important that you look at the time as to what time the animal was killed and so that is why the time would have been removed from 12 hours to 4 hours.

Mr. Speaker, clause 6 would insert a new section into the Principal Act, section 22(a). In 1998 Parliament introduce the term “authorised person” into this section 23 of the Principal Act. Presently under the section, a police officer or an authorised person may seize any animal found trespassing or either tethered or at large or any highway or public byway or any public place, however, it is not clear how a person becomes an authorised person. Consequent upon the insertion of this section, a person will become an authorised person if the Governor General appoints him to be an authorised person and that is very, very important Mr. Speaker. And clause 7 would amend section 23 of the Principal Act by adding a new subsection 6, the amended Act would only have had 5 sections and therefore we are adding 6 sections and this subsection would provide a definition of the term “authorised person” which term is used in the section. An authorised person would be a rural constable or a person appointed to be an authorised person.

Mr. Speaker, these are the simple amendments and I do not think that there is anything that is really controversial in this Act. In my mind Mr. Speaker, the amendments are very clear and so I hope that there is no sort of controversy as the Bill is being presented Mr. Speaker, I am much obliged.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a brief contribution on the amendment to the Stock Trespass Act. My heart goes out to anybody who really is involve in the business of trying to make a living in Agriculture, whether it is raising animals, farming or anything of that sort and they do not need support and encouragement as the Honourable Minister said. Just a couple of days ago I was walking along the streets of Kingstown and a woman, a vendor called me and she called out my name so I went over and I said, hi, and she had these lovely plantains and some Tania and so on selling and I asked her how business was and she said, well it is not selling, but I rather be here than sitting at home and having them there, so she said she came out to try a thing [laughter].

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I hope you bought some plantains.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Well you will never know.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I hope you did not bid down the price.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Leave me alone please [laughter]. Mr. Speaker, when I was a youngster I remember we use to plant corn and peas in Bequia a lot, everybody had a little patch round their house and when corn season came around and you planted, everybody with chickens would tie them up or pen them up and anybody whose chicken was found straying on somebody's property you know and try to get at the corn or peas that were buried in the ground, it was fair game basically, but everybody planted corn and peas so everybody did it, nowadays, nobody or hardly anybody who plants corn and peas. A friend of my tried it about five years ago and he said he planted the first set and the chickens came and took out all the corn, the rains was still coming so he tried again and he planted a second set, the same thing happens and he complaint to the neighbour of course, but the neighbour had no interest because the neighbour wasn't planting any corn and peas so her chickens were being fed, so he tried a third time and I think eventually he got something to come. So he was doing that for his own personal use, but for some people it is much more serious than that they are doing it for their living. So it is important that we provide support for them.

The increase in the rates of fines, the last time was in 1998 a long time ago, so I do not know if the way you set the rate whether it is at \$75; \$100; \$85 the point is whether it would be effective or not, time will tell. The only clause that I have a little concern or question about is the shortening of the time within which a person whose animals destroyed has to gather the animal, it was shorten from 15 hours to 4 hours and the Honourable Minister said [interjection] from 12 hours to 4, sorry, yes, from 12 hours to 4 hours and the rational being that the person must gather the animal in time so that it is not..., yes decomposition taking place and so forth, but the thing is if the person does not gather the animal according to the Acts if my understanding is correct, within that time frame then the person who destroys the animal is obliged to bury it, he cannot consume it, he has to dispose of it, he has to bury it, I think that is what the Act says. So essentially you have the reason for changing it has to find a compromise between giving the owner a chance to use the carcass of the animal and to way that between with the dangers of decomposition and so on, because it is not like if the animal is left, the carcass is left unclaimed that the person whose property was damage can then say, well okay, I can use it. According to the scheme of the Act I think it is only if it is a police officer an authorised person is entitled to do that if it is found on public property, but if it is on private property it does not appear that the owner is entitle to use the carcass of the animal.

So I have not really thought this through completely, but when I was reading it I thought it seems a terrible waste if you have to bury it after 4 or 5 hours and the person shows up 6 hours, 7 hours late and the animal is still good and it's gone. So I think that there has to be..., a balance has to be struck between the two practical considerations, one of decomposition and the other of ensuring that the person who owns the animal having been informed has time to come and gather the carcass of the animal that is destroyed. So that is the only matter for reconsideration if the Minister wishes to reconsider that point. But certainly Mr. Speaker, we supported the Praedial Larceny Bill when it was passed a while ago and again part of that is the rationale to try to provide some support and assistance to farmers and persons who grow crops whether commercially or for their own personal use and this Bill is in the same vain and we on this side of the House Mr. Speaker, have no difficulty in supporting it.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I am very heartened to hear that the Honourable Minister has indicated that a comprehensive Stock Trespass Bill will come to the House sometime later this year, because when one reads the existing 1926 law as amended, it is in many respects very archaic and it puts a great deal of pressure on the person who is impounding the animal and the bureaucracy, the procedures that you have to go through having lost your crops, you are not going to be in such a good mood to want to have to go through all these procedures. In fact, that is why there are many persons, I am not encouraging it, because if for instance you have a goat or a sheep which has come to eat down a crop that if it has a rope on it you have to impound it or a chain, but there are some people who do not bother with that even if they have a rope.

They may tell you that they take a stone and knock it down because they try all their best to catch it, they couldn't catch it because it had no rope, because they cut off the rope and when you meet it with the throat slit they say the reason why they slit the throat is because they want the blood to run so that the person who owns it could get a chance to eat the meat that if you just kill it so and the blood is not let out that it is easier to have the decomposition takes place quicker. What happens some fellows just simply go and hold the rope and slash the throat one time, but they give the reason that they throw a stone and knock it down it had no rope and they throw away the rope and so on, I am not speaking anything here to encourage people to do that, but the point is this, those of us who have lived in the farming community that we know these things because it is not easy to plant your sweet potato and have a sheep or goat coming to eat off the potato vine and there are some people who have no lands but who have a lot of animals. I do not know where they intend to keep them if it is on the moon and they do not tie them, they let them go. You see it happening also with animals on the highway, particularly you passing around Argyle area you see so many cattle and if you take up..., if you were to restrain one somebody will say, yes is theirs, but if the cattle run into your vehicle is not theirs, is nobody own. Well that is something which we have to deal with also. But these are really what you may call the bread and butter of Parliamentary life, the knots and bolts of things which we have to fix where some of the things are outdated or unreasonable.

You are not going to likely to find somebody impounding a chicken because that is defined as an animal, more than likely that is going to end up in pealeu. So that the point about it is this there will be nothing found because nobody is going see that you kill your neighbour fowl when it comes over into the yard and when you see the pealeu you do not know which chicken is inside of there, you cannot prove it so that the law itself makes..., I mean it provides for people to go and do all these things. I am talking as somebody who has grown up in the country and I understand how all these things take place. I myself would never engage in such activity

or encourage people so to do, it would be holy wrong, but there are people who do these things because really it is a frustrating business to plant your crop like in Bequia the example which is given. I mean that person who planted two, three times because the fowls coming over and picking them up that person really has the patience as Job. I will have to be very careful Mr. Speaker, but I only use the biblical Job, I am not talking about the other Job whom many persons in the Opposition have been harassing you know, I am talking about the biblical Job. So that is what we really have to bring a comprehensive law and there has been a lot of comments on this when the consultation was done in relation to the Praedial Larceny Bill so that we do not have to have another consultation again. I know a lot of people would say well have another consultation on that, but you do not need it, we just go ahead and address the issues from what we know from our practical experiences.

Mr. Speaker, I have an obligation to report as to what is happening with the rural constables. I know several persons have now been selected and if they have not yet been appointed through the Public Service Commission they will be done so very shortly to assist with the issue of praedial larceny. A corresponding issue which we have to address and I am hoping the Ministry of Agriculture would also get his staff to work on this, it is dogs' injuries to cattle and to other animals. There are some dogs which are very dangerous and they kill people's animals. I must say that some of these dogs are owned by persons who are in the hills who are engaged in the illegal cultivation of marijuana and some of these dogs apparently come in and they are not properly quarantined, but they take these bad dogs in the hills apart from being protection for their illegal cultivation and let me make this point Mr. Speaker, with absolute clarity, I know that there are some who argue. I have heard a gentleman who addresses the Chamber of Commerce about two month ago. He said that the farmers in the hills, the Government must leave them and let them plant their marijuana and the police must not harass them. I even read in the newspapers that one or two lawyers have expressed a similar view.

Well those spokespersons and those lawyers they are living in the clouds, they do not understand the reality in the real world. They are talking about noble ganja farmers of 20 years ago that is not what you have up there now you know. Maybe as much as 90% of the ganja produce in this country is produced now by criminal gangs, not noble farmers of the traditional type 20 years ago. Because some people only drive from their law office to their home and go to a restaurant or a place of entertainment, they do not know what is happening in the country at all. So that is what is happening and they are in some cases there are absentee landlords out of Trinidad or Barbados or Grenada or St. Lucia, they will go into the hills and they will say this 5 acres Government land, they say, that is mine and they planting ganja there and employing people from the nearby village or distant village and keeping them in near slave like conditions and they have their dangerous dogs and they have Mr. Speaker guns. No longer the pipe guns you know, no, the old things which some of the fellars use to make those are not the ones now, they are having the Ozzie, the M16 some of them even get from Grenada from the old stock of the AK47's that is the reality and they bring in the guns with the cocaine and when they are going back out they take ganja just like when the Geese boat come and bring down one set of goods and take bananas, they want to have an integrated system of economic organisation, that is it you know. That is what is happening and they are protecting fugitives from other countries in the hills. Surely these are not noble farmers trying to eke out a living. These are criminal gangs seeking to destroy the peace and harmony of the country. But I know sometimes, I mean a lawyer may do a little something for gallery and maybe as a..., if they go like that they may get a few more briefs from fellars, but they go laugh at the lawyer and say the lawyer do not know what he talking about, but the lawyer nah mind, he getting his fees. But those of us who have the responsibility to deal with these matters we have to take a strong line on that which I have just

described, we have to deal with the dogs, with the injuries to animals and we also have to deal with dangerous dogs generally.

I know there is a Bill, which has been drafted and I will very much like to see it comes back through the system. It has had some discussions and I know some people would say that you cannot talk something about dangerous dogs because dogs are not dangerous by nature; it is people who make them dangerous that dogs are animals which are tame by nature and not vicious. Well, that may be so at common law, but the common law hasn't taken into account the way some men threat the animals, they get involve with criminal activity. So all these things you have to change the legislative framework and sometimes the Ministry of Agriculture is a little slow in addressing some of these things. Largely because the Ministry of Agriculture tends not to be dealing with the laws, they want to see people plant things and get a lot of crops out of the soil and see how their agronomic practices and so forth. So sometimes they do not focus as much, the professionals I am talking about, do not focus as much. So I hope they are hearing me speaking in public about things which I speak on at Cabinet Committees on the economy when I am talking with all the members of staff. I am sure that the Minister who has spoken about these things with me repeatedly will exercise the leadership in this regard on many of these matters, because we have to do. So if we have to make life more bearable, a better life to people who are farming and people who involve in animal husbandry.

And Mr. Speaker, I have been talking to the ECGC about the price of animal feed, they have indicated that they are going to reduce the price, but they think they can do better even so we can build our animal industry much more they have suggested that perhaps we look at addressing the issue of VAT on the animal feeds, I mean reducing it and that is something which I have asked the Ministry of Finance to look at. All these are what I call repeat the bread and butter of people's existence and there are hundreds of thousands of persons who are so involved. We see that we can when all these systems are in place, we can do the production, like for instance we are self sufficient in pigs. We can get there also in sheep and in goats and those are parts of the tasks which we have to see how we can make life better for ordinary people. I am obliged Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** No further debate, Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

**HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL:** Mr. Speaker, let me thank the Members who would have offered their contributions to the debate and I am indeed heartened though Mr. Speaker, to the Member of Northern Grenadines for expressing his own feeling towards farmers in this country.

Farming has not been an easy thing over the years as we all realise and that farmers do operate under severe conditions and as the Prime Minister raised the issue of injury by dogs, Mr. Speaker, this also exist where farmers are producers of livestock's that dogs continue to create severe problems on some farms. I recalled one day I was going to my own farm when a farmer called my attention to a situation where when I got to his farm there were nine dead animals lying sheep and goats of which all over their bodies was torn up. These were nine animals killed by dogs that were a Thursday morning. The Saturday morning he called my attention again, again there was a dog attack; he would have lost seven animals again. So that in a matter of two days he would have lost 16 animals and in the Ministry of Agriculture, you are there you are going out and encouraging farmers to get involve into the production of plants and animals and at the end of the day, here is this farmer losing 16 animals, but there is no one that he can go to for compensation. These are some of the things that are happening in Agriculture and so yes, I believe later on this year that when we bring a comprehensive Bill to

look at all of this, that the Parliament would look favourably in terms of the Bill that we will bring to this House.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the comment made by the Member for the Northern Grenadines where he had a bit of problems in terms of section 21 I want to say to you under the old Act that I have seen where an animal is being killed this evening 2 O'clock and the animal is there in the hot sun until the rest of the evening and it is the next morning at 8 O'clock the animal is removed and then it is being prepared for human consumption, it is being sold and so these are things that we have to protect ourselves against. I am told that bacteria will set in at approximately 20 minutes to half an hour once an animal is being killed and to have an animal beyond 12 hours or up to 12 hours is not the best for us if we are going to utilise the meat for human consumption and so we have looked at reducing that length of time to ensure that if the meat is going to be use for human consumption that it is done in a way that it is proper. And so that is the way we would have looked at that section Honourable representative for the Northern Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole House to consider this Bill clause by clause.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** It was seconded? Well you have to speak up so that I can hear please.

**HONOURABLE DR. JERROL THOMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

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

**House went into Committee.**

**House resumed.**

**Bill read and reported without amendments.**

**HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill be read a third time by title and passed.

**HONOURABLE DR. JERROL THOMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a third time by title and passed.**

### **3. IMMIGRATION (RESTRICTION) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009.**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Immigration Restriction Act Cap 78. The Bill seeks to amend the Immigration Restriction Act Cap 78 by making adjustments to the provisions dealing with the advance passenger information system. I like to so move Mr. Speaker.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a first time.**

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

**HONOURABLE DR. JERROL THOMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Immigration Restriction Act Cap 78 be read a second time.

**HONOURABLE DR. JERROL THOMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the Immigration (Restriction) (Amendment) Bill 2009 seeks to amend the Immigration Restriction Act Chapter 78 of the Revised Edition of the Laws of St. Vincent and the Grenadines which I referred to afterwards as the Principal Act, by making adjustments to the provisions dealing with the Advance Passenger Information System (the APIS).

Mr. Speaker, the APIS as is known was introduced into our law and practice at the time of the Cricket World Cup. Well there have been a number of criticisms about it has worked or not worked and it has been the subject of discussion within Governments and also across the region in relevant bodies and the amendments which we are proposing today to this Honourable House are based on recommendations made by the Joint Regional Communication Centre (the JRCC). The Bill is a very straightforward one. It has three clauses. Clause 1 as usual the Short Title to the Bill; clause 2 would amend section 11 of the Act in the following manner. In subsection 1 would be amended to provide a definition of the term departure. This would clearly express what constitutes departure from St. Vincent and the Grenadines by an aircraft or the maritime vessel. In addition, the definition of the term maritime vessel would be inserted. Currently Mr. Speaker, section 11 uses the term ship and doubt remains as to whether a boat or any other smaller maritime vessel is included in this term for the purpose of providing advance passenger information. For this reason the Joint Regional Communication Centre recommends that ship be deleted and that the formulation maritime vessel be used in its place, thus there is a definition for maritime vessel.

The amendment to subsection 2(b) is minor and it really replaces words like left, to leave and departed and to depart, it basically editorial. In subsection 4 in paragraph (a) ship would be replaced with maritime vessel. In addition in paragraph (b) which deals with departure Advance Passenger Information, a requirement for the submission of departure Advance Passenger Information by private aircraft or private maritime vessels would be inserted. This requirement would obliged the master or commander of the private aircraft or the private maritime vessel departing to a destination outside of the domestic space to submit departure Advance Passenger Information 30 minutes prior to the departure instead of 15 minutes.

Clause 3 would amend Schedule 1 of the Principal Act. First in paragraph (a) item 14 would be deleted. This item would be placed under paragraph (b). Secondly, additional data that would be required to be submitted as Advance Passenger Information would be added to paragraph (b).

Mr. Speaker, the Advance Passenger Information System is to facilitate easier movement, but very importantly to assist with the provision of security, because we would know in advance basically who is coming and we will have the information so that all the relevant checks can be made so that law abiding people would be easily facilitated and you would be able to tighten the net on those persons who for one reason or the other may be detrimental to the security of the country. And we have had it working and we are basically looking at our experiences and we have pooled those experiences regionally. There was when it started some problems which was envisage for yachts that is an issue which has arisen, but that had been sorted out in the practical implementation of the system, because clearly, you do not want to prejudice in any way the yachting industry and the yachts people themselves have come aboard and they realise that it is a good system properly implemented and carried out and like with all changes you will have some hiccups but things have been moving well I have been advised and this is really an improvement of the existing arrangements. I am obliged.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Mr. Speaker, just briefly, I am..., that is the thing I was concern about is the reference which the Prime Minister made to the problems that the yachts were having, having to present this information and the extra in a sense red tape and hassle that it had created for them. I have heard complaints about it, I think the Honourable Member of the Southern Grenadines had one point had mentioned it in this Honourable House as well and I will take the Prime Minister's word that those issues have been resolved and that because as you know in the yachting industry the idea is to try to make it much more welcoming and easy and straightforward for people to just if they are going to St. Lucia and they say, listen I want to in Bequia for the night, well so be it and make it simpler for them to do so because it is business for us as well. So the system as it is in place, it is a regional matter, it is something that enhances security, so long as the practical issues are dealt with and that persons who are enforcing it use common sense which is something you know we always have to impress upon officials that you have to sometimes be practical and use common sense in dealing with issues that pop up from time to time. So Mr. Speaker, with that cautionary note, we will support the Bill.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our Honourable friend for his support for the Bill and I agree with his cautionary note about public officials. We always have to apply our laws sensibly and with sensitivity. We have to be careful that we do not have a situation of operations successful patient dead because we live in a practical world and we have to make sure that we achieve the objectives of the law but at the same time we do not create unnecessary difficulties which have nothing to do with achieving the objectives of the law and we have seen that on many occasions at several of our ports of entry, with different officials. I mean our Immigration Officers, our Customs Officers have been improving the quality of their work, this does not mean you do not still have complaints, but I think with more training, better recruitment of staff, we are seeing a lifting of the quality and that is something which we have to build upon and Mr. Speaker, the world is changing so much in..., when I was a boy there was no need..., in fact just over a few years ago, there was no need for Advance Passenger Information System, but the way in which some bad people are functioning we have to put systems in place to make sure that those bad people do not do injury to others, particularly innocent people and that is one of the first obligations of a Government of the State. To provide the security and protection for people and this is designed in part to do all that.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole House to consider this Bill clause by clause.

**House went into Committee.**

**House Resumed.**

**Bill read and reported without amendments.**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Immigration (Restriction) Act, Cap 78 be read a third time by title and passed.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a third time by title and passed.**

#### **4. REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009**

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move the introduction and first reading of a Bill for an Act to amend the Representation of the People Act to provide the enabling provision for the regulation of the National Identification Card.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a first time.**

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that this Bill be taken through all its stages pursuant to rule 48(2).

**Question put and agreed to.**

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Representation of the People Act be read a second time.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Any debate on the Bill?

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, this Bill to amend the Representation of the People Act is to tidy up the provisions to ensure that we streamline what is required for the new National Identity Card. In 2000 I believe when it was last amended, these tidying provisions had not been done, so I will just take you through the sections of it. In section 4 of the Parent Act it says here that the

pertinent portion, no person shall at any election without first producing their Identification Card issue to him under that Act unless he proves to the satisfaction of the Presiding Officer that he has not been issued an Identification Card and you would notice Mr. Speaker, that you see here in the Schedule to the Bill in section 2 and each portion is makes provision to insert the National Identification Card wherever the words “the Identification Card” appears in the Parent Legislation. And this is also in the proviso to section 4 and in clause 2 a section 11 which deals with registers of voters under section 11(2) Mr. Speaker and section 11(2)(b) where the words appear again, the section reads that not later than the appointed day 1984 the Supervisor of Election should cause to be prepared and should publish the preliminary registered voters for each constituency which shall consist of all the qualified persons and under (b) who although not registered in the register mentioning paragraph (a) have since the publication of that register not later than the appointed day in any relevant year being photograph for the purpose of being issued with the Identification Cards under section 20 for that year and that again is to insert the words “National Identification Cards”.

Similarly in section 16 Mr. Speaker, marginal note publication of supplementary register again where those words appear in that section which is right at the very end and I will read it for the matter of the record, the Supervisor of Elections shall not later than seven days after the publication of the revised quarterly list of voters for each constituency caused to be published a supplementary register of all the names of persons which appear in the Revised Quarterly List, published in accordance with section 15, if such persons have not been photograph in accordance with the regulations for the purpose of being issued with Identification Card and that again is to make provision for insertion. Similarly in section 17(4) and the marginal note there reads in section 17 special electoral registration period and publication registered list and again it makes reference to National Identification Card to insert the words “National Identity Cards” and in section 20 the Supervisor of Elections shall caused Identification Cards containing the prescribed matters to be issued in accordance with the regulations to make provision here to insert, delete Identification Cards and to insert National Identification Cards and in section 67 in the miscellaneous section 67(1)(e) the issue of Identification Cards in place of those which are lost, defaced or destroyed and the fees to be paid there for to insert, delete those words, Identification Cards and to insert National Identification Cards. So it is actually a tidying up of drafting provisions wherever this appears Mr. Speaker. I am much obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Debate, any further debate? No further debate? [Laughter].

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Well you probably right there Mr. Speaker [laughter]. Mr. Speaker, it is a basic tidying up changing the words Identification Card to National Identification Card where they appear on the Bill as far as I understand and that is the case and I see no problem with that Mr. Speaker.

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

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, may I just say very briefly that I want to commend the Honourable Minister and the Supervisor of Elections and the Staff in the Ministry of Electoral Matters in their quest to lift the quality of the machinery for our Electoral Democracy. Mr. Speaker, a lot of work has been done in respect of the National Identification Card and one of the top firms in the world Canadian Bank Note is dealing with that matter. I have been advised that there is very high quality hardware, software which are shortly to be installed and I know that in my capacity as Minister of Finance, I have had the several request for resources, the resources having been released because this is an exercise which we take very

seriously and that hopefully on Wednesday the Chief Surveyor will send to Cabinet the memorandum relating to the purchase of the property D's which is a large property for the Electoral Office. Because we have to have real quality accommodation and equipment and everything, put people in environment where they can work well, staff I have been advised are being trained, more will be trained and it is easy for people, especially the elderly to be able to go in on the ground floor, for everybody, but particularly those who are elderly or who in some way may have some difficulty in moving. It would be a central place too, so hopefully more young people will come forward to well say, coming in town, they passing there to be registered they do not have to leave to go inside of a cul-de-sac.

So I want to congratulate the Honourable and her staff, the Supervisor of Elections and all those who are involved in this. This Government gave its commitment to the deepening and strengthening of democracy and this is one such exercise to which we are profoundly committed. I am obliged.

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

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** Thank you very much Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, more in particular your position as Minister of Finance for releasing those heavy resources which my Ministry in this regard has requested.

Mr. Speaker, just to further elaborate for the benefit of Members of Parliament, this equipment is over \$1 million and we had significant amount of has been put into this process starting last year and CBN would be in St. Vincent shortly. They are so anxious to be here, they wanted to be here this week, but as soon as we are able to move into the premises, we are pleased that the owners have consented to the purchase of the building, to the sale of the building and the terms agreed as the Honourable Prime said and it will be formalised shortly. We are in the process of the recruitment; the Supervisor of Elections is in the process of recruitment of her staff that she requires for these purposes. She has also intimated to me that the new Identification Cards and I had occasion to be with the contractors to see how the cards would be processed, how they would be made and this system will be speeded up so that you will have the cards going at the rate of some 24 cards every 4 or 5 minutes, that is how it will be done. There would also be documentation provided to institutions such as banks and other financial institutions to indicate to them what are the security features in the new Identification Cards. It would not be a piece of laminate over something that you can take a razor blade and do anything with. They would be searching equipment which will have to be given to the financial institutions as a matter of dealing with the security of the card and we are in the electronic age, so the signature would be electronic signature.

Very soon we will be bringing to this House Regulations which are already drafted by the Attorney General's Chambers or the negative resolution as is required under this Representation of the People Act for the negative resolution, because there would be certain regulations that would be made in order for us to have all the master information etc. that is required under the new system. The other matters which of course I cannot disclosed because of the nature, it is an Identification Card that you will have and it is made built-in with a feature where it can be use for travelling as a swipe card the way that our passports, the same person..., the same firm that did our passport is the firm that has been contracted to undertake this exercise and they assure us that they will be quite willing to work the extra hours with us and I can assure you that they are good high quality card when you see it. It was really a pride and joy for me to see how much work that the new Supervisor of Elections and her team had been able to complete within the short space of time beginning this year in February and I am very

happy with that Mr. Speaker and you will see the regulations when they come for the negative resolution in this Honourable House.

Accordingly Mr. Speaker, I move that the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole House to consider the Bill clause by clause.

**House went into Committee.**

**House resumed.**

**Bill read and reported without amendments.**

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that this Bill be read the third time by title and passed.

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

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Bill read a third time by title and passed.**

**5. SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH OF SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES REGION (INCORPORATION) BILL, 2009.**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** We have to name the Select Committee for this Bill.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, the usual team:

**GOVERNMENT**

The Honourable Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs

Selmon Walters

The Honourable Minister of Education

Girlyn Miguel

The Honourable Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office

Conrad Sayers

I do not think we need more than three of them and

The Honourable Attorney General of course.

Judith Jones-Morgan

**OPPOSITION**

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Godwin Friday has ask that himself and the Honourable St. Clair Leacock be included.

## ADJOURNMENT

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, the next meeting of this Honourable House would be a historic one, because it would be on that day we present the Constitution Reform Bill for the first reading which will set the process in motion which will lead us towards the referendum God's willing in November this year.

Therefore Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable do stand adjourned until Thursday May 28<sup>th</sup> 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

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

**Question put and agreed to.  
House adjourned at 5:55 p.m.  
Until Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.**