SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

ORDER PAPER

No. 13 39

THURSDAY 13TH AUGUST 2009

PRAYERS

OBITUARIES

CONGRATULATORY REMARKS

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF SITTING HELD ON 18TH JUNE 2009.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWERS

1. The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition), to ask the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Planning, Legal Affairs and Grenadines Affairs:

   a. What was the level of the Central Government overdraft as at June 30th 2009; and
   b. what was the level of the Public Sector overdraft as at June 20th 2009.

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

   How much money is owed by Government for goods and services as at June 30th 2009 which is due and not yet paid.

3. The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition), to ask the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Planning, Legal Affairs and Grenadines Affairs:

   How much money has so far been disbursed to the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines by the Government of Venezuela for the Argyle International Airport Project.

4. Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday (Northern Grenadines), to ask the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works:

   a. Why has work on the Customs Department building in Kingstown stopped;
   b. When will construction work on the project start up again; and
   c. How much money has been spent so far on the construction of the building and how much more is required to complete it.

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

   In light of the dramatic decline in yachting tourism noted in the 2009 Budget and given that many people rely on the yachting industry for a living,

   Will the Minister please state what if anything has been done to determine the reasons for the decline reported and what steps have been taken or will be taken in advance of the upcoming tourism season to improve the performance of this vital subsector of our tourism industry.

6. Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday (Northern Grenadines), to ask the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Planning, Seaports and Airports, National Security, Grenadines and Legal Affairs:

   Travel services among the Grenadines islands, especially air travel services, have become more limited in recent years, creating obstacles to internal tourism and trade:

   Will the Minister review the situation and determine the cause of the problem and what practical measures might be put in place to improve the situation immediately and for the longer term.

7. Major the Honourable St. Clair Leacock (Opposition Senator), to ask the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Trade:

   The completion of this country's Export Strategy has been in the making for some time now. Recently there have been presentations of this strategy by government officials.

   a. Will the Honourable Minister please present this long awaited document at the Parliamentary sitting of July 30th 2009; and
   b. will the Honourable Minister be also kind enough to present the summary sectoral targets coming out of this strategy.

8. Major the Honourable St. Clair Leacock (Opposition Senator), to ask the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works:

   Recently the shade trees at the Peace Memorial Hall area which provided much comfort to commuters were unfortunately cut down. Notwithstanding the existence of a bus shed too many of the growing crowd of commuters are left to the elements.

   How soon can some relief be given to these commuters who get their bus at the Peace Memorial Hall area.

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

   There is a group of officers called Traffic Wardens who provide a good service on the streets of Kingstown. Their badges identify them as members of the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force. These officers however do not carry Force numbers.

   a. Are these Traffic Wardens in fact members of the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force; and
   b. do they now enjoy all the protection and privileges of the regular Traffic Police.

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

    Given the high level of indebtedness facing this institution, the paucity of trained professional staff and the economic downturn facing the country;

    Would the Honourable Minister please say what is the justification for the relatively large expenditure for rental for the new office in Kingstown for BRAGSA (formerly GESCO), when there is an existing office at Cane Hall.

11. The Honourable Daniel Cummings (Opposition Senator), to ask the Honourable Minister of Housing, Informal Human Settlements, Physical Planning, Lands and Surveys and Local Government:

    a. Would the Honourable Minister please state what is his government's policy on the removal of sand from the beaches of St. Vincent and the Grenadines; and
    b. when would mining of sand by the government and others be halted at the Brighton beach next to the solid waste facility.

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

    a. Would the Honourable Minister please state how many of the former workers at GESCO are now working with BRAGSA; and
    b. similarly, how many of those formerly in the Ministry of Works who worked in Road Maintenance and other areas transferred to BRAGSA, have been employed by BRAGSA.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Government Orders are marked thus*)

MOTIONS

1. **Motion on Housing -** Continuation of Debate.

WHEREAS the Unity Labour Party emphasised in its Manifesto for the 2001 General Elections that "housing is a basic human need" and accordingly elaborated its housing policy of providing, or ensuring the provision of, affordable housing of an acceptable quality to all Vincentians.

AND WHEREAS since 2001 the ULP Administration has implemented a veritable Housing Revolution through the following initiatives, among others:

(i) Restructuring and modernising the state-owned Housing and Land Development Corporation (HLDC) as the principal vehicle through which the nation's housing policy is fashioned and implemented.

(ii) Turning "Dead Property into Live Property" through the legal transfer by way of deeds for persons in occupation of state-owned lands at very low prices.

(iii) Passing the Possessory Titles Act to simplify certain land transfers in the private sector for those in "adverse possession" in excess of 12 years.

(iv) Putting together a coordinated and well-staffed Ministry encompassing Housing, Lands, Surveys, Physical Planning, and Informal Human Settlements to elaborate and implement housing policy more efficaciously in conjunction with HLDC and the private sector.

(v) Building hundreds of low-income houses at several places including Petit Bordel, Peter's Hope, Ottley Hall, Green Hill, Diamond, Brighton, Sans Souci and Colonarie.

(vi) Building a middle-income housing project at Clare Valley.

(vii) Commencing shortly a three-hundred "No Income Housing" Programme at several sites all over St. Vincent and the Grenadines, financed by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

(viii) Building houses at several places including Rose Hall, Langley Park and Byera (Manning Village) for persons whose houses were destroyed or severely damaged by storms and hurricanes.

(ix) Increasing significantly the distribution of building materials to the poor.

(x) Enhancing the tax benefits available for companies engaged in the construction of homes.

(xi) Providing 100-percent mortgages through the state-owned National Commercial Bank for all public servants, teachers, nurses, policemen/women, to the extent of some $50 million since October 2001.

(xii) Supporting the secondary mortgage market in the sub-region.

(xiii) Elaborating a Building Code and strengthening the Planning Laws on housing.

(xiv) Sorting out the NDP disaster at the Colonial Homes Project at Diamond and Gibson Corner, by way of the Justice Joseph Commission of Enquiry and follow-up action at a cost in excess of $8 million.

(xv) Devising special loan programmes through the NCB for housing repairs.

(xvi) Ensuring that the HLDC, the construction industry, and the Technical College work closely with each other to enhance quality training for technical construction employers.

(xvii) Engaging regionally through the Heart Trust of Jamaica the training and certification of skilled tradespersons so as to facilitate, among other things, the freedom of movement of skilled artisans within CARICOM.

(xviii) Providing water, electricity, roads, surveying, and land-titling to several informal human settlements.

(xix) Implementing a strict aliens land-holding licence policy to ensure that the patrimony of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is not alienated willy-nilly to foreigners.

(xx) Providing much more opportunity for tertiary education to train young Vincentians in all fields which touch upon housing construction including architecture, land surveying, engineering, construction management, and quantity surveying.

(xxi) Assisting private entrepreneurs in sourcing building materials of quality at the lowest possible prices.

(xxii) Taking the lead in the sub-region to push for a more coordinated and scientific approach to the construction sector.

AND WHEREAS the ULP government is seeking ever more opportunities to enhance in practice its many-sided housing policy.

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House endorse the housing policy of the ULP government and its several laudable initiatives and urge the government to continue steadfastly its magnificent work in the area of housing for the benefit of Vincentians as a whole.

BILLS

ADJOURNMENT