
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, February 17, 2004

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.20 a.m. on Tuesday, February 17, 2004.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, G.C.M., B.A., Dip. Ed.,
(Speaker)

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P., (Deputy Speaker)

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.)

Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A. (Oxon.)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed.,
LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., J.P. (Minister of Labour and Social
Security)

Hon. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P. (Minister
of Public Works and Transport)

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY (Minister of Social
Transformation)

Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Minister of
Housing, Lands and the Environment)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Deputy
Prime Minister, Attorney-General and Minister of Home
Affairs) (Leader of the House)

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc., J.P.
(Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General and
Minister of Home Affairs)

Hon. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of
Tourism and International Transport)

Hon. A. P. WOOD, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.Phil, J.P.,
(Minister of Energy and Public Utilities)

Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc., J.P., (Minister of
Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, L.C.P., J.P., (Minister of
State, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Hon. J. X. WALCOTT, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S., (Edin.),
J.P. (Minister of Health)

Mr. R. D. JONES, B.A. (Hons.), M.A. (Ed.), J.P.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., M.B., B.S.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons.), M.A.
(Public Finance) (Leader of the Opposition)

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, LL.B., (Hons.), L.E.C.,
(Minister of Industry and International Business)

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY, LL.B., (Hons.)

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B., (Minister of
State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

Mr. R. L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A.

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, February
10, 2004.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to
move that the Minutes so cited be confirmed subject to any
omissions and/or corrections and/or observations.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no corrections or
observations, then let those Minutes stand confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to report to this Honourable
House that I am in receipt from the Accountant-General, the
Accounts and Statements for the month of October, 2003.

PAPERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Redemption Ministries) Order, 2004.
2. Annual Report and Accounts of the Barbados Agricultural Management Company Limited for the year ended 30th June, 2002.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the rest of this day's Sitting.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 10 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
BORROWING BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
SUM OF US\$13 502 530 FROM THE BANK OF
NOVA SCOTIA FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINAN-
CING THE PROVISION OF A MODERN
COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK
FOR THE ROYAL BARBADOS
POLICE FORCE

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to move this Resolution which seeks to approve the borrowing of the sum of US\$13 502 530 to be able to upgrade and modernise the telecommunications sector of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, while the Royal Barbados Police Force has been benefiting from aspects of modernisation over the course of the last decade, it remained badly in need of assistance in the area of telecommunications, that is, its ability to ensure that all members of the Force have the capacity to communicate with one another when necessary, to ensure that there is greater flexibility and response capacity, to ensure that there is greater efficiency in the movement of information and to ensure that they are capable of fulfilling their mandate in respect of the maintenance of law and order in this country.

Mr. Speaker, it is fair to say that the operations of the Royal Barbados Police Force constitute the nerve centre of

security, the maintenance of law and order in this country. Therefore, if we have a system that is not functioning properly, it ultimately would have an impact on our capacity to maintain law and order in extreme cases of crisis or national security. This is clearly not the desire either of the Royal Barbados Police Force or of this Government.

To this end, the Ministry of Home Affairs has been working over the last 18 months to be able to conclude the design of the package which has led to the occasioning of this loan. We have held extensive discussions with Motorola Incorporated in order to be able to ensure that the design of the system is capable of upgrading and is capable of what is known as interoperability. In other words, that other security related agencies such as the Barbados Fire Service, the Barbados Defence Force, Customs and the Central Emergency Relief Organisation would all be ultimately able to use the architectural backbone which we are putting down for the benefit of the Royal Barbados Police Force in this first instance.

Mr. Speaker, it is also critical that there be linked communication between the 14 police stations on the island in terms of the transfer of voice and data to ensure that there is a linkage between those police stations, the mobile patrol units and the marine patrol vessels of the police.

Mr. Speaker, this system would not only work onshore, it would work to a certain level offshore that would allow the police to maintain direct communications with its officers when they are patrolling the territorial seas of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, it would also ensure ready communication between other departments of Government which play a critical role in the police being able to do their work, for example, the Ministry of Transport and Works in relation to drivers' licences.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that the system which we currently have is antiquated and deficient for the needs of a modern police force to be able to meet the strong demand for that level of responsiveness and flexibility for which we have become accustomed in other areas of our governance.

Mr. Speaker, another difficulty is that the current system has not reflected island-wide coverage. There are areas in Barbados in which the communications do not work as effectively as they ought to. Likewise, some of the physical infrastructure that carries the communications in the current system is in need of urgent rehabilitation. We therefore, Mr. Speaker, have come to this point recognising that there is now an urgent and pressing need to both modernise and upgrade, not just to bring us to the state of where we ought to have been a few years ago, but hopefully

to put us on the cutting edge of communications both in relation to voice and data in relation to this country.
10.30 a.m.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am having difficulty in hearing myself.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please. I need to hear the Honourable Member.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, tangible evidence of this was seen last year at the Crop-Over celebrations, particularly at the Party Monarch Finals, when the convergence of that number of people at the East Coast had required the most comprehensive and efficient level of communications but where senior officers, at their various command points, had difficulty in communicating amongst themselves. Therefore, there is no doubt that this is an urgent matter which is before us.

Mr. Speaker, I have not even dealt with the role of the Drug Squad, the Special Branch or the Criminal Investigations Department, whose access to reliable communications, particularly when they are on operational duties, is not only critical in the macro sense to the security of the country but, also, to their individual safety, while putting their lives on the line in the defence of the law of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that we believe that this has the capacity for providing the architectural capacity for other critical agencies of Government that are in the business in relation to the maintenance of security, maintenance of law and order or emergency response, where that capacity to be able to speak to each other across distances or to transfer data is also critical, if we are to be successful in having them fulfill their mandates.

Mr. Speaker, what we are proposing is to ensure that we provide a system that effectively has been proven to be compliant with the Association of Public Safety Communications, where 25 standards have been developed by public safety agencies, to ensure the highest level of communication service and mission during critical operations.

We would, therefore, be seeing five sites across the island, and the provision of island-wide and offshore coverage. At the present time, there are only three stand-alone repeaters at Castle Grant, St. Joseph, Husbands, St. James and High Gates, St. Michael, that are using the traditional UHF technology, dedicated only to a single-channel communication with minimal backup power.

We would hope that the system which we would implement would be able to facilitate the transfer and travel of voice and data over the system; that it would be a centrally-managed and controlled network; that it would be built to facilitate expansion for the future because it would be futile for us to believe that the needs of the Police Force, in 2004, would be the complete needs of a force in 20 or 30 years' time. Therefore, it is being built to ensure that it is capable of expansion and that, for the first time, we would have the incorporation of high levels of security and encryption.

Sir, indeed, those of us who happen to know, for example, the ease with which media houses could tract police communications in this country, would understand that while they might do it for good purposes, there might be others who might do it for nefarious purposes. Therefore, we would have to elevate the level of police communication, especially in certain levels, to a higher level of encryption, to ensure security so that persons cannot simply buy equipment that might be available off the shelf, not necessarily in Barbados but in other countries, and might be able to track the communications and movements of the Police Force, especially in critical operations.

Mr. Speaker, we would also be looking to establish virtual private networks within the Force and multiple talk groups, so that individual departments or groups of persons within the Police Force could communicate in private and, that ultimately, while the other agencies are linked, would also facilitate that level of inter-ministry and inter-agency co-operation, which very often is critical in the maintenance of law and order.

Mr. Speaker, the Royal Barbados Police Force are not the only ones charged with the responsibility of protecting the rule of law and order of this country, and while they carry the burden in respect of most of it, the Customs Department, the Immigration Department and other joint patrol agencies, have all been utilised in order for us to achieve the results that we have achieved in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to carry this debate wide and far in relation to the performance of the Police Force because we already have had a debate on that and we know that Barbados has achieved a 17.5 per cent reduction in crime, when the other countries, unfortunately, were not seeing that same movement.

Mr. Speaker, today we are treating specifically and strictly to the narrow operations on how we modernise and upgrade the communications system to ensure that our Police Force could remain on the cutting edge of their tasks in this country. In fact, it is fair to say that as we see the technological developments around us in the society, in commerce, and in other aspects of our lives, unfortunately

the Police Force has not benefited to the same extent, other than in an *ad hoc* fashion today, from those improvements in technologies in the movement of information at a speed which is quicker than that of persons.

It would also allow us to ensure that there are priority levels for system access in disasters or crises. Sir, once again, I refer to the Party Monarch at the East Coast Road. Sir, all who were down there knew the hell that they had, while having to move 20 000 or 30 000 people from one place, and where they were relying on one repeater for communication.

We have to be able to have a system in this country where, in the event of an emergency or crisis, there are certain levels of communication that are able to guarantee that those who have the responsibility for maintaining law and order could communicate with each other in those critical times, particularly in the hours immediately after such a crisis or national disaster.

Mr. Speaker, we are also using the opportunity, because as I have said, it makes no sense to simply put up that architecture to allow them to be able to communicate with each other in voice alone, which is now their capacity, but to carry them to data, so that level of communication would also save in terms of manpower, movement of persons or the time that it would take but, at the same time, we felt that we were going to take the opportunity to introduce other aspects that would allow for modern policing techniques.

Sir, I specifically refer to the capacity to locate vehicles, so that the stations could tell where are the police vehicles at any time across Barbados, so that these vehicles could be deployed in a more efficient manner to urgent calls. Sir, immediately appearing on a screen, the police would know who to contact and who to deploy.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would not be a part of the discussion I am hearing *sub voce*, that is, to be able to track people because I know that the police work beyond the call of duty.

Equally, Mr. Speaker, that is linked to something known as computer-aided dispatching. At present, all the dispatching is done by persons but the computer would be able to help us in how we would dispatch persons across the island.

There is no doubt that, over the years, persons have complained about the length of time it takes for the police to respond to crime. This Government has tried to ensure that those things which are needed to improve the capacity and performance of the police have been given.

Three years ago, we secured a loan to provide the Police Force with a large number of vehicles in relation to a fleet replacement package, and only this year in the Estimates, through the Ministry of Finance, we have intimated to them that we would need a slight modification of that policy because instead of buying vehicles all at once, there is the need to have a rolling-stock replacement on an annual basis for a percentage of the fleet.

10.40 a.m.

Sir, what normal cars will do in one year, a police car will do in one month. Therefore, the question of ready access to parts and maintenance are critical, also, a commitment towards annual replacement of the vehicle stock in a steady and sure way to make sure there is always access to vehicular transport.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes when people call the police station they cannot get through to emergency numbers but we believe we can expand the functionality of those emergency numbers considerably and this system will allow us to do so.

Mr. Speaker, the end result will allow us to see more efficient day-to-day operations in relation to the crime and security agencies of the country. It will also allow us to improve the inter-agency communication eventually, the privacy and security of communications and also be compatible with the regional systems used in Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, Bahamas and Bermuda which has become an associate member of CARICOM. Sir, this is critical, particularly as we move into a single market and economy.

The digital voice communications network will also use microwave to link. The package will see us acquiring 150 mobile radios for cars and 750 portable radios. When you consider that the Police Force has about 1 400 established persons, this means that virtually every police officer will have access to a portable radio if that is the desire of the Force. There will be 17 fixed-based stations installed at police stations and in mobile units like the container at St. Lawrence Gap and elsewhere. We will also acquire four motorcycle radios and two radios for use in the Coast Guard boats because, as you know, the police work in joint patrol with the Coast Guard in relation to drug interdiction.

Sir, we feel that this will improve the level of safety of each police officer on duty because the capacity to communicate instantaneously is critical particularly when an officer in the line of duty needs backup, additional assistance or to divert resources to another location. We also feel we have to give them the tool they need, not only to do their job but to ensure a greater level of protection to themselves in the course of their duty.

Mr. Speaker, the phased approach to the project will see us in Phase 1 treating to civil works. Phase 2 will establish a wireless communication and microwave system which we anticipate can be implemented within 12 to 15 months. In this phase, a data system will also be established and the functionality of the emergency response system for 211 will be expanded. Sir, most importantly, there will be the establishment of an automatic fingerprint ID system.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the capacity to expand the forensic tools available to the police is the key in being able to increase the level of detection and successful conclusion of their work in relation to fighting crime in this country. Government has in the last year opened a new forensic centre which has been designed partially to be able to amplify the level of forensic services available to the police. I am happy to say that last year not only showed a 17.5 per cent in crime committed but it also showed an increase in the clear-up rate with police from 34 per cent to 43 per cent of crimes reported to them.

Mr. Speaker, we are moving in the right direction. We are not where we want to be as yet because it is not a utopia but all the indices in relation to police performance and the capacity they have are moving in the right direction. It is fortuitous that this debate comes almost on the morning after our Commissioner of Police and the Commissioner of Police of Jamaica were complimented for their work with the FBI in order to bring to closure a major kidnapping/homicide incident with the Russian Mafia out of California.

Mr. Speaker, the package will cost US\$13.5 million and after receiving proposals from a number of various banks the Ministry of Finance advised that the Bank of Nova Scotia had put forward the best package for the amount indicated. The principal is to be repaid in 17 half-yearly instalments of US\$750,140.00 over a period of nine-and-a-half years to facilitate the execution of this project. The interest rate is a six-month LIBOR plus 1.5 per cent per annum which is reasonable in the circumstances. There is also a commitment fee of 0.5 per cent per year on the amount not drawn down in relation to the sum of money.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of this loan we anticipate that in 10 years' time there may be a need to upgrade other aspects of the police infrastructure and hence our desire not to carry the loan beyond the 10-year period. Motorola will benefit from the usual exemptions that are available to entities in relation to the supply of products to Government, to the import duty and corporation tax and the exemption of payment of VAT on items imported in the use of the project. This is a standard provision in relation to the policy of the Minister of Finance as it relates to these types of contracts.

Mr. Speaker, this Government is of the firm view that the Royal Barbados Police Force is more than deserving of this type of upgrade and modernisation of its tele-

communications backbone as it has been one of the areas that has been crying out for urgent reform in the last decade.

Once this loan can be secured and the project executed, we look forward to a higher and greater level of performance on the part of the Police Force which, as I already indicated, has been showing in the last few years its commitment over and above the call of duty to ensure that Barbados remains relatively safe and secure, not only for its citizens, but for visitors and, by extension, in being able to promote the kind of investment climate that people would want to associate themselves with, particularly given the acute difficulty faced by other countries in the region.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Resolution but, of course, to ask several questions of the Resolution, which I am entitled to do.
10.50 a.m.

There is a common thread going through several discussions and debates in Barbados. I am concerned that even today, as we debate this Resolution and the Addendum, it says that the offer of the Bank of Nova Scotia to finance the project will lapse if not accepted by February 29, 2004. It also speaks to the need for us in this Parliament to be better informed about issues in Barbados.

Sir, while we can support any effort to improve the service provided by the Royal Barbados Police Force, I think we are entitled to know exactly what are the matters being discussed with respect to such a handsome loan. Therefore, it is not beyond the Opposition to require that more information should be passed between the Government and the Opposition, especially when the Government is seeking support in several matters.

Mr. Speaker, let me discuss some of the issues in greater detail. Sir, I am being informed for the first time that this loan would be used to deal with civil works and I am not aware of what magnitude the civil works would be. I am also being informed for the first time that there will be the development of a wireless system over the next 18 months, a data system, an emergency response system and an automatic fingerprint system.

Mr. Speaker, I am simply saying that we are not aware of what systems would be involved and the extent to which the finances would be allocated across the particular systems that have been identified. The only thing that has been given of any specifics would have been 4 motorcycle radios, 2 Coast Guard radios and 17 fixed-based stations which, in all fairness, even though I am reading, I do not know what the entire programme is about.

I think that if we are to come to the Parliament of Barbados where democracy has to rule and where we have to give a voice to Resolutions, whether or not we disapprove or support them, we should really be given more time to debate, more substance for which we can debate and therein lies a major problem, as we are seeing it.

Sir, currently, there is a major issue in Barbados and I know that several people in Barbados, including Parliamentarians, do not have the privilege of fully understanding the matters raised in this most recent matter across the length and breadth of Barbados. We are therefore asking for better treatment in that regard.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member has made the point of not being better briefed on the matter which is topical. The Honourable Member and I would have discussed, this morning, that the Clerk of Parliament would have called all Honourable Members of the House and Senate to a briefing at 5 o'clock this evening because it is the Government's intention to share the information with all Members of Parliament and key stakeholders, including the fishing community, between today and tomorrow.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, in this particular regard, we are aware that the deadline being put forward by the Bank of Nova Scotia is less than two weeks from today. We are saying, in all honesty and fairness, that it would be better for us to be better informed so that we can make a greater contribution to the debate.

Sir, if we look at the Resolution before us, we would recognise that it states:

"WHEREAS by section 2 of the Special Loans Act, Cap. 105 the Government is authorized from time to time to borrow from any bank, corporation, company or other institution sums of money not exceeding in the aggregate BDS\$500 million on such terms as may be agreed upon between the Government and the lender of any such sum of money";

Sir, the important thing to note in the first part of the Resolution is that it falls under the Special Loans Act and that the aggregate is determined in local currency, that is not exceeding \$500 million.

Mr. Speaker, from the presentation of the Honourable Leader of the House, I would think that this loan is being borrowed from a local bank. The question that I need to ask myself, as a trained economist, is why would I borrow foreign dollars from a local bank? The third clause says:

"AND WHEREAS the Government deems it necessary to borrow US\$13,502,530 from the Bank of Nova Scotia for the purpose of financing the provision of a modern communication network for the Royal Barbados Police Force";

Sir, the question that I would need to ask this Honourable House, why is it that I am borrowing approximately \$26 million, but I have been able to get this special loan in foreign currency? I have my suspicion why we are borrowing United States dollars from a local bank but I would need the Government of Barbados to explain why it is necessary to borrow United States currency from a local bank.

I think we are all satisfied that there are some very pressing issues confronting this economy and that we are all concerned about the level of borrowings over the last five years. If we were to look at the growth of the national debt, we should be concerned about the country's capacity to service that debt. Therein lies this report that has been lingering in the public for a few weeks, the Standard and Poor's report, which is an assessment of the country's capacity to pay its loans in the future.

Sir, any person who borrows a loan is asked what their future earnings are and whether they are capable to repay the loan in the future. On that basis, predominantly, a decision is taken whether the person has a good credit-rating or credit-worthiness, and the same thing applies to a country.

Currently, all the discussions in Barbados about whether Barbados' credit-rating has taken a negative dip has to be seen within the context of what has happened over the last 10 years. If we are honest in the assessment of our economy, we would be concerned, as every reasonable person looking analytically at the Barbados economy, about the country's lack of foreign exchange earning capacity, that is, we are now standing on tourism alone and tourism has not been performing well in this country.

Therefore, the concern which I am raising has to do with the increased foreign debt component resulting from the borrowing of money by this Government from a local commercial bank and that it is going to increase the foreign debt component of Barbados' overall national debt and this has to be a source of concern for any reasonable individual in Barbados.

11.00 a.m.

Therefore, it does not surprise me that all of a sudden, leading private sector individuals, as was cited in yesterday's *Nation* newspaper which cannot be quoted, are now concerned about the declining fortunes in the major sectors of the economy. It is all connected, Mr. Speaker, to the whole question of debt servicing.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please, I have given you some rope, but please do not go too far.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, too far east is always west.

Mr. SPEAKER: You know, too far with rope, what could happen.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: The important thing to note here, Mr. Speaker, is while this may be a loan for the Royal Barbados Police Force, it is a loan, nevertheless, and it has to do with the impact of this loan on the country's outstanding national debt.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, there are Orders which are laid here and these Orders are debated, not according to how an Honourable Member sees them, but according to the rules that have been laid down. Any person can connect anything that is given here in an Order with any possible thing, but that is not how it is supposed to be.

It is supposed to be that we have rules that are to be followed, rules relating to relevance, for instance, and the Leader of the motion made it very clear, and was very careful to stick to these rules relating to relevance.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to be rude, but it therefore means that the relevance is determined by the presenter of the Resolution. Therefore, that needs to be questioned because if, in fact, you can determine in this House that the Leader of the Resolution determines the scope of the debate and, therefore, it is only the Leader of the Resolution who determines how the Resolution can be interpreted, it therefore limits us and the capacity for democracy to truly rule in a parliamentary setting such as this and that is all I have to say.

Mr. Speaker, when this Resolution could speak about the Special Loans Act, and the raising of a foreign currency loan in a domestic market, and the Leader of the Opposition has to be contained within the relevance of the Resolution, it really does speak to the freedom of speech, even within Parliament.

Parliament derives its meaning from "*parler*", to speak, the French. Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, it is a loan and I understand the gravity of it.

Mr. Speaker, this loan speaks to the need to establish a network of communication for the Royal Barbados Police Force. It therefore means that the use of technology must be critical in the provision of any such network. If that is true, then the policemen would have to be trained extensively to be able to make use of this communications network. Sir, by extension, therefore, the role of a policeman is being redefined in this new global era. If we accept that you no

longer have to be taller than 5 feet 8 inches to be a policeman, and weighing more than 200 pounds, and if we accept that for a person to enter the Force, he must now have three or more CXCs, then we have to accept that a policeman is now different, in character and nature to what he was 30 years ago.

On that score, Mr. Speaker, if we agree that less than 35 per cent of all children leaving school in Barbados gain one CXC or more, then by extrapolation, by induction it does mean, therefore, that a policeman in this society is now part of a special breed who must not only have bronze but brains.

Sir, if you look at that, and look at the environment relating to security and, in fact, the risk that policemen are being put to in their jobs, I cannot think of any better justification for a regrading of the workers in the Royal Barbados Police Force at this point in time. Therefore, while we are thinking in terms of introducing modern communications network for the Royal Barbados Police Force, we must also think in terms of the way in which the job of a policeman has changed, and therefore, it is time to see a policeman as a special breed and not in the context that was described a year or two years ago at Fort St. Charles.

This is all I have to say on that matter, since you understand that policemen now have to be able to use technology and use it well, since you understand that policemen are now part of the *crème de la crème*, Mr. Speaker, it therefore means that there must be recognition of a policeman's work.

Mr. Speaker, let me therefore look at an issue that is tangential to this matter, with respect to security at the QEH. I would hope that I will be allowed to expand this particular point. Now that the QEH is no longer being captured within central Government and has become a statutory board where the Government has to transfer resources to it to be managed, it means that the QEH has the right to hire any security firm that it wishes, and does not have to use the Government's security guards.

In fact, there are 40 Government security guards at the QEH whose jobs are now under threat, and I want to expand the point.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, if it is the wish of the House, we will hear you on this diversion, as I call it, but surely, this matter that you are raising has no connection whatsoever with this Resolution that is before the House.

As I said, if it is the wish of the House, we will hear you, but surely, the matter relating to the QEH and guards

at the QEH does not relate at all to the modern communication network that this Resolution speaks about.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It only does show that if you do not see life holistically, you could become very trapped. Mr. Speaker, if you are telling me that we are going to have communication networks across Barbados where the Royal Barbados Police Force can tap into a system, and execute better security, that there cannot be a link between the security system at a primary institution such as the QEH and the Royal Barbados Police Force, then, I think you have limited yourself to understanding the notion of security.

I am therefore saying, Mr. Speaker, that...
11.10 a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please, you keep referring to "you". To do so in this Honourable Chamber, as you would know, would be very disrespectful to the Chair. When you use the word "you", it sounds as if you are referring to the Speaker, and I take it that you could only be referring to the Speaker. Your explanation there, for instance, is much clearer than where you were going before about guards and numbers and so on. That is all I am trying to tell you.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, now that I have made the proper connection, it therefore means that what we are seeing with respect to the establishment of a network system by the Royal Barbados Police Force and the practice of security at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital can be linked.

I am therefore suggesting that when you use increasing levels of technology, even in a security system, that it has the potential, as is being now explained at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, to reduce the size of the staff because the network systems that can now be used to manage security systems really required security guards to have special training and may not necessarily require just the manning of particular points at any institution or organisation.

Mr. Speaker, I am explaining the example at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to suggest that the overall implications for the security systems can be significant and severe. I just want it to be noted that I cited the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as an example because it is no longer the case that Government security guards have to be used for security at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is now a statutory board that would be able to determine which security firm it hires. Therefore, the implications for the use of technology in the security system at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would also drive the employment levels down. Let me move on, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in this particular context I am therefore suggesting that rather than driving down the employment levels within the Royal Barbados Police Force, that the policemen should be recognised for what they are now,

persons who have to use all kinds of skills in managing security systems and in conducting the affairs of security, not only within the boundaries of any particular country but certainly offshore.

Mr. Speaker, I would therefore hope that the kinds of communication network systems that we are thinking of would also be linked to the major international network systems across the world. I speak about the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and any such large security systems worldwide.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that there are concerns about managing security, not only regionally, but internationally. I am therefore saying that if we are contemplating raising as much as \$26 million simply to provide a modern communications network for the Royal Barbados Police Force that it has to reach far beyond the provision of walkie-talkies, fixed base stations and coast guard radios.

Therefore, I would hope that the contemplation of the Government is to look way beyond such simple provisions, because it cannot take \$26 million to buy 17 fixed base stations, walkie-talkies and radios, so the Government of Barbados must be contemplating a far more advanced network system that links us way beyond our shores.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the time has come for us to truly be engaged in a wider discussion of the implications of spending \$26 million in a communications network system for Barbados. How could we come here on the 17th of February to pass a resolution for a special loan for \$26 million under a provision from a commercial bank which says that unless some consideration is given by the 29th of this month that there would be a lapse of the project proposal?

Mr. Speaker, it must be a source of concern for everyone that issues as major as these are being allowed to go without full debate and full expression. When an issue becomes a matter of public interest, there is also provision within this Parliament to bring a resolution quickly and to allow it to be debated effectively and urgently on the Floor of Parliament.

There is need for consideration as to what this Parliament can do and should be doing if our democracy is to be maintained and if our democracy is to mature to the levels that we will hope it matures over the foreseeable future. When you can have major issues being dealt with willy-nilly and not being brought to the Floor of Parliament urgently then there must be cause for concern.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that the Honourable Member can mislead this House by impugning the character of

Honourable Members on this Side by suggesting that a matter is being dealt with willy-nilly as if it is not the subject of the most careful and deliberate action on the part of Honourable Members of this Government. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, there must be a standard below which this House is not allowed to fall.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, in no part of the world are matters pertaining to national security the subject of the most elaborate and definitive discussions, so it is free to the Opposition to make a parody of the efforts of Government with 17 stations and a few walkie-talkies *et cetera*, but I take specific objection to the question that this matter is being treated to by those who have the responsibility of bringing it here in a willy-nilly manner.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member would you care to rephrase what you have said?

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: If the issue is as urgent, as important and as critical as we think it should be, then I am simply saying *ad nauseam* now that we should be given more information on what the project is about because it is a \$26 million project, not a \$26 000 project.

Mr. Speaker, I am no better off after having heard the Leader of Government Business this morning on this project. In fact, she made it quite clear that we have recently discussed crime extensively in a debate and that there is really no need to treat to this issue, using her most favoured word or expression, as if it is a major debate. Therefore, I am suggesting that we have reduced US\$26 million to \$26 000.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. I really take offence with the Honourable Member misleading this House. I never said that we should not treat to this issue as a major debate. I said I would not treat to the issue of crime and the police's management of crime as a major debate in this debate since we had treated to that issue recently in a debate. The Honourable Member needs to be specific in his references to anything I say.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I would still not be derailed. I am suggesting that there are several issues pertaining to civil works, wireless systems, data systems, emergency response systems and automatic fingerprint systems that need to be elaborated on in this debate because we are spending \$26 million to provide this communications network for the Royal Barbados Police Force. Therefore, to come here and to try to reduce the borrowing of \$26 million to something that is not a major matter, is really to treat Parliament with the kind of scant respect that is worrying.

I am therefore suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that we need to have more information. I am not privy and neither is the

Opposition. In fact, we received this Resolution yesterday evening while we were at a parliamentary group meeting. Twenty-six million dollars is not two cents. It is a lot of money. The Addendum says that the offer of the Bank of Nova Scotia to finance the project will lapse if not accepted by the 29th February, 2004. So what is the real purpose of coming to Parliament? Nobody wants to deny the Royal Barbados Police Force of having proper equipment.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. I was really intending to respond in the wrap-up but the Honourable Member is consistently misleading this House. To suggest that I have not stated specifically the purposes or the phases of this loan in a detailed fashion is to mislead this House.

11.20 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I intimated that there would be five Sites where infrastructures were being developed in order to provide wireless and micro linkages. I intimated that would include new towers and physical facilities surrounding those new areas.

I spoke about the fact that it would also relate to systems for vehicle location; computer-aided dispatch; greater 911 functionality; automated fingerprint database system; a digital voice network linking those five cities. There would be 150 mobile radios for each police vehicle, which is not five cents; there would be 750 portable radios so that the amount of police officers available on duty at any one time, would have access to a portable radio.

I spoke about the fixed-base system, 17 of which are not like that of a small radio where one walks about with, but which is a major fixed-base system which would allow for communication. I intimated that radios would be installed on the Coast Guard boats.

Sir, I intimated that this whole programme would be implemented in four phases within three to four years. Sir, if that is not detailing to the Honourable House's satisfaction, the scope of a project of US\$26 million, then clearly the Honourable Member needs to have his ears cleaned.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I am still not satisfied with how we are being treated here today. I do not know who else is not, but such is life in this neck of the woods.

Mr. Speaker, I will end on this note that there is sufficient evidence here for us to recognise that the duties of the Royal Barbados Police Force have been changing over time because crime has now become far more technical than what it was before.

If we respect all of that, I am then suggesting that we need to look at the overall work, and to evaluate the work of the Royal Barbados Police Force within the context of this new global era.

If that is so, then I am further suggesting that we need to understand that there is justification for an upgrading of the Police Force's salaries in Barbados. Sir, there are concerns, as have been expressed to me by older constables within the Police Force, that the recent adjustments made, were, in fact, benefiting those who were entering for the first time, but were not taking into consideration the constables who were in for a number of years.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Yet again, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber. In here in not a place where rumour becomes fact. There is no system that has been accepted by the Government or no recommendation that has been accepted by the Government in relation to regrading and re-evaluation.

Therefore, to say that we are making it easier for constables who now come in and affecting those constables at the top, is not only to mislead the public but to speak an untruth about what is happening and about where the matter is.

The question of regrading has been the subject of a comprehensive job reevaluation exercise. The information which has come in and has not yet been accepted by the Government of Barbados, has been forwarded for consultation to the various unions within the public service. Therefore, to elevate a concern or a rumour to a ground of fact, is not worthy of membership in this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, if that were the condition for membership, there would have been several Honourable Members who would not have been on the Other Side.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: You have made an inference, I am only substantiating the inference. If we were to accept the criteria upon which the Honourable Member has just spoken, then there would hardly be any Government Members.

Mr. Speaker, given what has been said to me by the policemen in Barbados, perhaps they need to know what is in train for them with respect to the regrading because there have been substantial requests made for their interest to be represented. Perhaps, I am not the one who is speaking untruths, perhaps I could be ignorant if the information being

provided to me is not correct. Therefore, in this instance, instead of my need to be satisfied, it is the police who need to be satisfied and to be told exactly what has been happening.

Mr. Speaker, I have made my point clear that I am concerned about increasing the national debt, especially the foreign component of it when borrowing in foreign currency. Sir, this smacks of suspicion because I do not know why one would borrow in foreign currency from a local commercial bank, and perhaps it needs to be explained by the Other Side.

Mr. Speaker, I have also expressed severe concerns about the galloping debt in Barbados over the last five years. Everyone in this Honourable Chamber who has looked at the Barbados Central Bank's Report and at economic reports, would recognise that the debt has been galloping in Barbados.

Therefore, it would have been more appropriate if many of the funds that were borrowed for a rainy day could have been more constructively used, in providing these kinds of services and projects for the people of Barbados. Instead, we have used those borrowed funds to not only reposition the private sector but to constrict any inefficiencies across the public service in Barbados that would have provided for the public sector to become more relevant and up to date. Instead, they have chosen to spend those rainy day funds on several projects such as GEMS and now the ...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I would go on to say that I am, therefore, concerned about the overall context from the point of view of the timing, the source, and the size of the loan, with which this loan is being raised.

Sir, even though I am supporting this Resolution because of its ultimate purpose to upgrade the Royal Barbados Police Force, I am expressing these concerns in light of the short notice and in light of the lack of attention to details that have been provided by the Leader of Government Business in this Resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your indulgence.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, it would have been disrespectful of me if I were to assay and answer the questions just put by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West who has just spoken. Sir, the reason being that there is someone who has just brought this Resolution, namely the learned Attorney-General and, therefore, I would leave it to her to answer those questions.

However, the Honourable Member did wonder aloud about the timing of this finance, and clearly all of us in this Honourable House must, from time to time, know that every institution would, from time to time, look at its resources and would seek to work out whether or not those resources would be adequate, considering the changing times.

Sir, while I submit that there is no magic about the timing, what I would suggest is that this proposed sum of money is money which is going to be very well spent because policing in 2004 is different from that of 1950. 11.30 a.m.

Indeed, it is different from the year 1960 or 1970. We have a Barbados in this 2004 where in the last 25 years we have seen norms and values changed often to the chagrin of the more conservative elements of our Barbadian society. The policemen of 1950 would not have foreseen the challenges facing the policemen of this year 2004.

Sir, last week a young lady contacted me and told me she was horrified about the sophisticated system of communications that some lawbreakers have been developing and using in Barbados. I told her not to worry that we have a competent police force. Mr. Speaker, in the changing times communications for the Police Force become critical.

Sir, in a quiet Barbados 50 or 60 years ago the type of communications we need now would not have been necessary. The population was smaller and the number of persons involved in crimes in those days would have been substantially lower, and the nature and character of crime would have been different from what policemen encounter today. Indeed, the methods used by criminals of 50 years ago would have been simple compared with those used by criminals nowadays.

Sir, this money is going to be well spent. We on this Side must make some observations about Government's contribution to the upliftment of the welfare and competence of the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force. A few short years ago, Central Police Station needed refurbishment and a project was undertaken to refurbish it with the comfort of police officers in mind.

Mr. Speaker, the District "D" Police Station also underwent substantial repairs consistent with the thinking in the Barbados Labour Party that professional policemen should be made to work in conditions of comfort and in situations where they can achieve the greatest efficiency in the operation.

The Forensic Laboratory is proof of how serious this Government is as it relates to the question of methods of detection and verification when crime occurs. Mr. Speaker,

except for deviant persons, there is hardly a Barbadian who would endorse crime of any kind. All mature, responsible Barbadians would applaud the excellent work done by the Royal Barbados Police Force which is the envy of the Caribbean for its integrity and high degree of disciplines.

Mr. Speaker, earlier I said that the mores, norms and values have changed in this country and that as these change, certain persons get involved in crime because of the changing morality and values in the community.

Sir, a good and positive change in value is that the type of person attracted to the Royal Barbados Police Force is different from those attracted to it in the 1950s. In the 1950s, it was the norm for a policeman to be two hundred pounds and of a certain height. Sir, that was the norm or standard in the 1950's but significantly more highly educated persons are opting for careers in the Royal Barbados Police Force and this is a positive shift in the norms and values of Barbadians where weight and height do not matter above things like education and a sense of professionalism.

Mr. Speaker, in seconding this Resolution, I want to observe that as persons set about to practise deviant behaviour and purchase expensive equipment to communicate with one another, the Royal Barbados Police Force must have superior equipment to those persons who used equipment and technology to further ends of crime.

Mr. Speaker, I have every assurance that investment in these sophisticated technological devices will inure and redound to the benefit of Barbados. I am also sure that the Police Force will take good care of this equipment because it has internal controls in respect of the management of property and equipment. Those internal controls suggest a sign of maturity and sense of responsibility.

I endorse the position taken by my learned and distinguished colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East and, notwithstanding any queries that Honourable Members on the Other Side may have, all Honourable Members would realise that something like this is an investment in security that the population of Barbados will have the assurance as they go about their business and that those appointed to protect, serve and reassure will be able to discharge their function with efficiency in circumstances where there would be able to counter any innovative thinking among the ranks of the criminal element out there.

Mr. Speaker, I take particular delight in seconding this Resolution.

I thank you.
11.40 a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, this particular Resolution before us has been ably addressed by the Leader of the Opposition in areas that demonstrate his competence and his knowledge relative to these particular areas. We on this Side would not have to continually express our dissatisfaction relative to late arrival of information. Nevertheless, we are on record stating that we will support the Resolution because we support safety and justice in Barbados. We support the safety of those who seek to enforce law and order and we support the safety of all law abiding citizens of this country.

Therefore, a Resolution which seeks to enhance the capability of, not only the police in this instance, because we are speaking about the interoperability of a very sophisticated system, a system which, by its very nature, would link all the emergency service components of this country. I also believe that the ambulance, fire, the coast guard and all of the various services would be linked to this system.

Sir, this system is one that is very sophisticated and a wide range of training would have to be provided for those who would have to manage it. One would understand that the Motorola Corporation or a computer provider in Barbados would have to train persons in order to ensure that when training is completed, persons who have been trained would be better able to manage such a sophisticated system.

Sir, it is not a system that is unknown in the area of security. It is being used across certain ancient countries and in certain parts of North America where the level of crime is higher than in Barbados and where police officers and agents of the State are being deployed to provide safety of the citizens of those countries. Therefore, it is from these kinds of vantage points that the Opposition, the Democratic Labour Party, would support the intention to provide these kinds of services.

The Honourable Attorney-General spoke of voice, data, video capabilities, solutions and record management systems. This is a total justice solution from Motorola and we can get caught up in with technical jargon but I do not think that we need to be caught up with this technical jargon in this Honourable House. We need to allow those who are conversant with this type of technology to manage and deal with that.

We need to look critically at how we are to protect our country, people and those who are on the front line of dealing with certain criminal and lawless elements of our society. We also have to protect our country from those who try to bombard our coastline with poisons which seek to destroy the minds and senses of our people.

Sir, this Parliament has a responsibility to ensure that it has the tools of the trade in order to effectively carry out their mandate. We cannot rely on that solution as the be-all and end-all of careful and proper policing and the management of the emergency services in Barbados.

As we rely more on technology, we tend to forget some of the more practical and simple solutions of managing crime and safety in the country. Therefore, we have to work the technology which is part of the new world but we have to urge caution rather than the abandonment of one and the adoption of the other and work hand in hand, in an integrated framework, in the management of these particular areas for the benefit of our country.

Mr. Speaker, as technology is improved, I want to emphasise a caution that "Big Brother" watches. Sir, "Big Brother" is the eye of the State and the eye of the State uses the unsuspecting to invade the rights and privileges of law-abiding citizens.

Sir, I have no problem with the police and any law enforcement agency that have knowledge of sophisticated systems and seek further knowledge to enhance the prosecution of criminals. However, I have a substantial problem when ordinary citizens who do not have any thoughts of committing criminal acts, and "Big Brother's" eye preying into their personal life.

In the midst of our concerns about September 11 and the security of the State and the panic which has set into the hearts of many people, the rights of citizens are being trampled. In Barbados we cannot bury our heads in the sand and believe that it will not happen here or it cannot happen here.

Sir, more and more as we surround ourselves by these ultra sophisticated pieces of technology, that is what we are purchasing in Barbados, we stand a chance that you, Mr. Speaker, as the Honourable Speaker of this Honourable House, can have your privacy invaded.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I only have a simple telephone.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, your simple telephone can do a lot of things that you do not know about.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of elucidation. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member has misunderstood what has been said. There is no indication on the part of the Government of Barbados that any of this \$26 million is for surveillance equipment.

This equipment is to allow policemen to communicate among themselves. This equipment is to allow voice and

data transfer between police officers, between police stations and ultimately to serve as the infrastructure for communication between other security agencies or national emergency agencies.

I would not wish the Honourable Member to treat to the issue as if the Government is purchasing security surveillance equipment, when all that it is doing is providing a modern platform for communication among police officers in circumstance where that platform has not, and I am told by the Commissioner, been upgraded properly certainly since he has been a member of the Royal Barbados Police Force, 30 years ago.

11.50 a.m.

I trust that the Honourable Member will take the point and recognise that this has nothing to do with surveillance but to do with communication among officers between stations and, ultimately, between agencies of Government.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I was being very kind to my friend and colleague, the Attorney-General and I did state that we supported this, but I went beyond that because sometimes we stay in the now. I am not one who believe in staying in the now, and it has nothing to do with paranoia, but as one looks down through time, this system is not a simple one.

It is a complex one and, yes, I recognise what the learned Attorney-General has stated but, maybe, sometimes when we talk of technology, we do not understand the debts of technology because we are not technologists in Barbados. We are technicians. We can repair them but we do not understand the seeds of what we are talking about.

I am saying that this technology also has... and let me make the point. I do not understand how we can talk about just communicating between police stations, between vehicle and vehicle, and between a police and a police, without utilising certain global positioning strategies coming off satellites with a system as sophisticated as this.

Mr. Speaker, what are you going to communicate? You are not chatting about how good your night was. You are chatting, coming out of certain surveillance activity, such as response to calls for help, and getting data from your colleagues in various locations to deal with all the other issues.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member continues to mislead the House.

Mr. Speaker, I am sadder than I am angry that the Opposition does not seem to understand the difference between communication equipment and surveillance

equipment. There is a basic difference. If it is to suffice for the Commissioner to speak outside of this Parliament, I will arrange for that meeting, because there is nothing in this package of equipment that will allow for surveillance.

It is to allow the officers we see all around this Parliament, and Barbados, to be able to communicate with one another in a way, Mr. Speaker, that has not been possible effectively, since most of them have been members of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, there are other police forces across the world where all officers are equipped with radios, where they have personal digital things that they can now transfer data back to the station, where they can check the Licencing Authority, where they can check the conviction of persons who are in front of them. That is communication. That is not surveillance as in listening into other people and there is a fundamental difference.

I say in all the goodwill that is within my body, Mr. Speaker, that the Opposition ought truly to understand the distinction between communications and surveillance. If it were otherwise, Sir, I would not have spoken in the way in which I did. If they would wish a fuller briefing in relation to the levels of communications equipment, then they may have that.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, it is not open to the Government to speak in a public forum and to detail all of the aspects, locations, conditions and nature of its own communication because it then renders the lives of each police officer, subject to anyone who would wish to interfere with the ordinary course of policing and, indeed, threaten their own security as individuals in this country.

I am sure that neither a single Honourable Member on the Opposition nor a single Honourable Member on the Government's Side would wish to undermine the personal security of any member of a law enforcement agency in this country. Perhaps it may be, Mr. Speaker, as a result of a lack of knowledge, or it maybe as a result of a lack of understanding of convention but I ask them to respect those hallowed conventions in relation to our supplying all of the details pertaining to the design and infrastructure of this communication system. Equally, to appreciate the difference between communications and surveillance, and I say this in good faith.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, if I use the terminology that to some extent we are on all fours, I am sure that you would understand that particular terminology. In other words, we are in agreement on the point. I do not want to break down the walls. I understand certain notions of security and the need to protect, so we are on all fours on that particular point, Mr. Speaker, but that which is now deemed impossible, is the basis of my argument.

I am talking about future journeys, relative to a lot of things we do in these countries. We are now satisfied that all is well. The point I am making is that which is now deemed impossible can, in truth and in fact, become possible because in every society and State, there are the overzealous who believe that they have some God-given right and mandate to reach beyond that which they were told to do because they believe that someone is their master that they have to do things on their behalf.

The system is not simple. I understand the need for communication. I understand the need for the rapid response to incidences through the sophistication of the commander and control technologies that this brings. I also understand that the need to manage major incidences in this country, with the utilisation of the technology, moving from emergency type situations to riot and rebel type situations within this country, God forbid, if they had to occur.

I am not one who is going to blind myself that the future is possible with anything, and it only takes extensions to this kind of technology that the police will be using to invade the privacy of ordinary citizens of Barbados, because we are responding with certain elements of fear.

Let us say, for argument sake, Mr. Speaker, that crime became almost unmanageable, where the dope runners, the dope lords, and the dope gurus are beginning to control Barbados and to penetrate the very heart of the State. Are we going to sit by? I believe there are people who will not sit by but will look for more sophisticated instruments of technology to get the knowledge to prosecute and to deal with these systems, so do not let us shy away from the reality.

I am not condemning the Government at all from getting the resources to equip the police, and all of the other agencies. I am a born, bred, navel string-buried citizen of Barbados and I want to be safe where I live. I also want to be safe as I drive from St. Lucy in the North to the South Coast of Barbados and criss-cross this country. I have brothers and family in the Royal Barbados Police Force, in the Emergency Medical Service, in the Fire Service and throughout Barbados, and therefore, I want to see them protected. I do not want to see any of them die on the job.

I want to see criminals get off the streets of Barbados and that the ordinary, decent, law-abiding and lovely citizens of Barbados can go about their business in Barbados without worry, that we can possibly return, which I know we cannot do, what people refer euphemistically to as "the good old days", when you could leave the house open and go to town and buy your groceries and return home and nobody has disturbed it.

Mr. Speaker, I am just implanting a word of caution. I do not think that anybody should respond with panic or fear from the words of caution. I understand a bit of the

technology, not a lot. I am a novice too, in relation to this system they are going to be using, and I believe that all of us are. We have to read the data and the Attorney-General, as the one responsible for security and safety issues, would obviously keep certain things close to her chest.

12.00 noon

We, as a Parliament, with the ultimate responsibility for the safety and protection of the country would also want to keep certain things close to our chest. However, we must not run away from the point that in the midst of our movement towards the protection of what we call, the total state, that the rights and privileges of our citizens cannot be affected by the kinds of sophisticated technology which can become present and which can be added to this or any other system to confuse, bother and humbug the lives of ordinary citizens.

We will do great disservice and great damage to our intention if at the end of the day the citizens of this country feel as though they are being spied on and being looked at too critically. Yes, the Attorney-General spoke to it.

There are people who drive around Barbados without paying road taxes and or without having a driver's licence and we would need to be able to integrate and to map those systems into dealing with those offenders, so I have no quarrel with those kinds of systems or with those kinds of things. Also at times you might want to check if someone has a criminal record or not.

Improving the efficiency relative to the delivery of the police services is important to the management of crime. Therefore, those elements are supported, but we must not run away from other truths which might not now be self-evident but which, in the future, can very much be evident. I would hope that built in to this US\$13 500 would be a sum for the maintenance and upkeep of the system over some period of time.

One would recognise that there would be certain warranties built into it, but beyond that period, one would hope that we would be able to service and manage. Technology goes down from time to time. It is not foolproof as yet. Some day coming soon when the brave new world is fully emerged, we might be able to say that it would not go down.

I hope that all the architects of this particular Resolution and those who have to manage the system would understand that they also have to build into it certain maintenance costs and have certain management of this particular information and communications system technology so that at the end of the day the lives of all the citizens of Barbados would be better off because police

services and the other associated services would have been provided for with this very sophisticated piece of technology by the Government and people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I went out of this Chamber for a few minutes and on my way back in to take part in this debate, I heard the wailing of a police siren and I said to myself that this is what we are discussing today, communications for the police. I am quite sure they were responding to a call which would have come through their Communications Department.

Mr. Speaker, when the Honourable Member of the Opposition started his debate, I heard him talking about funds coming from a local bank as opposed to a foreign source and I thought he was starting off like he did in his last debate in here about this Government being in bed with certain banks, but I am glad to see that the Government is showing to this Parliament that it can get involved with institutions in financing through merit.

Mr. Speaker, I support this Resolution brought here by the Honourable Attorney-General. The policemen and women of this country have a very difficult job to do to combat crime in this country, but they do a tremendous job of it. I have always respected and supported them. I believe that the people who do not hold respect for the police should look about this country and see the job they are doing and give them their support.

The Attorney-General said that this debate is about the purchasing of equipment for the Police Department so that they can communicate with other government agencies and with each other in carrying out the job they are supposed to do. The Ministry of Public Works and Transport has, as one of its agencies, the Licensing Department. That Department and the police must communicate on a daily basis, so I am quite sure that the purchasing of this equipment will enhance the relationship between the Licensing Department and the Royal Barbados Police Force. In other jurisdictions the Police Department has this type of cooperation with the Licensing Authority and when a police officer is out on duty, he has access to the Licensing Department in those countries. Therefore, I believe it is high time that we should be in a position to do the same thing.

Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention that on many occasions people who want to get information on persons would call the Licensing Authority and give the impression that he or she is a police officer. Therefore, if the police have such equipment they will be able to communicate with the Licensing Authority by tapping into their mainframe computer.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes people drive around this country without a valid driver's licence or no insurance for the vehicle and when the police pull them over and ask for their name and address, sometimes they are given fictitious names and addresses, but if they have this equipment, they will be able to have the information at their fingertips, and if this person is wanted by the police in connection with an offence, the police could there and then arrest the person, so to upgrade the communications between the Police Department and the Licensing Authority to give them this kind of relationship is very important.

The Police Department, the Ambulance Services as well as the Central Emergency Relief Organisation (CERO) have to have that kind of relationship as well, especially now that we are getting into the rainy season. A few years ago when we had that big flood at Weston, St. James the police were to and fro trying to get things done, but at that time the telecommunications system was not effective enough, so I am quite sure that when we have this new equipment they would be able to get these things done in a quicker fashion.

Sir, I do believe that this equipment would also enhance the relationship between the police on land as well as on the Coast Guard boats. We all know that a lot of illicit and contraband things are happening in our territorial waters. Barbados is a very flat country and we have different ports of entry where people could come ashore at night, so having police vehicles in different parts of the island and with a better telecommunications department, they would be able to respond quite readily to these situations.

Sir, once again I want to congratulate the Commissioner of Police and his staff for the fine job they are doing in this country.

I thank you.
12.10 p.m.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution to provide financial resources in order to enhance the safety and security of the citizens of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I note with interest that it is to provide finance, to establish the Barbados Public Safety Wireless Communication Network and that means, given all that money is to do, is instructive. I know what the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central has sought to do is clear. He has raised concerns by reference to the 1984...

Mr. R. D. JONES: On a point of order. That can only be an interpretation because of the lack of knowledge. At no time did I try to whip up fear in anyone in or outside of this Honourable House.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Honourable Member is getting confused with the intention but the effect was to whip up fear. The Honourable Member has made reference to the book 1984 by George Orwell and spoke about the Government, how this all-seeing eye is watching us but let us remember there is another quotation which comes from the Bible, which balances out this matter.

Sir, in the Bible, let us remember the quotation where it said that men love darkness more than light because their deeds are evil. We have a major debate going on around the world between rights and security. Those who would say that the State, by whatever action it takes to enhance security, is to intrude into the rights and privacy of citizens, that is the fear of the Honourable Member. The Honourable Member is suggesting that by this action or by some incremental step, the Government would intrude its long arm into the lives of law-abiding citizens.

Sir, the concern I have is that by failing to take appropriate steps, we would have failed to protect the majority of our citizens from those who are on the other side of that equation, those who love the dark because their deeds are evil.

Sir, let us not fool ourselves that we live in a world in which there are many and major threats to our security, both from within and without. In fact, I am sure that the Honourable Member would be among the first persons to be critical of the Government, the Police, or of whoever he could criticise, were an event to arise, whether it is a motor vehicle accident, flooding, or a fire in his constituency and that through the lack of simple communications, the authorities were not in a position to redirect resources from one part of that island to the area where his interest lies.

Mr. Speaker, this is about ensuring that we discharge our responsibility. Sir, what is the most basic responsibility of a Government? The most basic responsibility of a Government is about the security and protection of its citizens. That is the basic reason why people have banded themselves into communities and into states for mutual protection and security. Sir, what higher purpose could this Parliament be put today, other than to ensure the safety and security of our people.

Sir, let us not fool ourselves. From time to time, depending on the circumstances in their combat with the State, citizens would come to an agreement where to draw the line between giving up our individual rights or privacy, *et cetera*, and what they want out of the State as far as security is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I, therefore, do not share the paranoia which the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central has demonstrated in discussing this matter of enhanced communication. I do not know why the Honourable Member would fear the ability of the law

enforcement agencies, to be able to more readily exchange information, whether it is voice, video or data communication.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Sir, sometimes an argument cannot be based only on anecdotes but supporting evidence is what is important. Sir, let us not forget the victims.

Sir, for example, a few weeks ago in the United States of America, an 11-year-old child was kidnapped. That would have been just another missing person in that country, were it not for the set of circumstances which had it that surveillance cameras which had been mounted by the business for its own security, happened to have caught the action on camera and, therefore, the law enforcement agencies were able to move in and to capture the suspect.

Sir, we could cite other examples of how modern communication and Information Technology has been able to prevent a crime or a major situation from occurring, or at least to detect or to identify the perpetrators, and to be able to ensure that the confidence of criminals is shaken by way of having the ongoing suspicion that they will, in all probability, be caught.

Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that we provide the resources to allow our excellent Police Force to be able to operate in a modern era. Sir, across a whole raft of public sector and private sector activities, we need to use Information Technology more intensively, whether it is by the sale of tickets for cricket.

Sir, I cannot imagine that any modern Information Technology was employed because it would not have taken so long to roll out a number of tickets. These are days when all over the world, one can buy tickets using information and communication technologies. We need to utilise information and communication technology more intensively whether it is an inquiry by Government, persons making application to the National Housing Corporation for housing, whether it is information on Transport Board's bus routes, *et cetera*.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot exempt law enforcement from the need to make use of technology as is available. Sir, what is this system going to bring? It would allow us to ensure that our 14 police stations, as distributed across the island, are able to be used to their optimal capacity, to allow the Police Force to fully meet its motto "To Protect, to Serve and Reassure".

Sir, with these 14 police stations having no reliable means of communication at present, this would help them to be centrally controlled and to be able to dispatch in circumstances as they should arise.

12.20 p.m.

Sir, I am pleased that this programme, as outlined by the Honourable Leader of the House, includes the matter of a tighter integration communications framework involving the Fire Service, the Ambulance Service, the Defence Force, CERO and other emergency response agencies.

I am also particularly pleased that this system will offer the kind of communications capabilities which we associate with the 911 North American system which uses the geographic information system of mapping, caller ID and various measures so that an ambulance can go to a particular location even if the medical condition of an individual does not allow him to give specific directions.

Sir, this is not an esoteric matter, but one that boils down to how much a Barbadian life is valued at the end of the day. This is about the policeman on the beat because while Honourable Members are asleep, men and women of the security agencies protect this country. We know that there are individuals on foot and vehicle patrol and the ability of those officers to call for help on a secure network is a matter between saving lives, foiling a crime attempt and helping victims in the wider society.

Sir, I am not getting into the high matters which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West wants to take the debate into. I am happy that the people in the constituency that I represent can go to sleep safer and sounder knowing that as a result of improved resource allocation to the Royal Barbados Police Force, CERO, the Defence Force, the Ambulance Service and other agencies, stand a better chance of living a long and full life in this country.

Sir, from time to time, police officers check a driver's licence and car registration, but at the end of the day, of what use is all that if immediate responses are not forthcoming? We see reports from advance jurisdictions as far as information technology is concerned and sometimes an individual is wanted in the country and elsewhere and, as a result of a routine stop, the officer is able to turn it into a situation where someone on the wanted list is apprehended.

Sir, this is about the practical day-to-day activities which the average public does not understand or appreciate until he or someone in his family becomes a victim. We are not waiting to reduce it to those proportions but are taking the steps now in order to ensure that we are able to operate effectively. This is about great utilisation of information and communications technology for purposes of fighting crime.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados needs to do this, not for its own sake, but as a fully integrated member of the international community, it inherits both its benefits as well as its problems. If there is one thing that the greater movement of persons across international borders will create through

tourism or business, is a greater movement of crime and criminals across borders.

Sir, it may be the matter of deportees, the fact that we are a tourism destination and that persons may pass through to create international crimes, or the fact that persons may seek to use the island to hide because they are wanted internationally. At the end of the day, we live in a world which requires that we employ all the information and communications technology which can assure us that we can be aware of all those things of which we need to be aware.

Sir, we will face the most stern test of our capacity to implement security measures in the Cricket World Cup to be held in 2007. On that occasion, we will have our largest numbers of tourism and business visitors in terms of persons coming to ply their trade as cricketers. We will have persons from diverse parts of the world involved in one form of politics or the other, and the reality is that we will be required, both on a crowd controlled basis as well as in terms of our ability to respond to emergencies and to make sure that our ambulance services, our medical services generally, our police services and CERO in terms of any possibility of a crowd control problem or a mass casualty situation.

12.30 p.m.

Therefore, this is a solid investment which will also go towards ensuring that we are able to meet the commitments that we have made.

Sir, we, as a nation, have decided that we want to have this event and, therefore, putting these measures in place will not only benefit the residents of my constituency but it would also benefit the residents of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central's constituency, even if he does not fully support the measures that are to be taken.

Sir, this is an essential step to allow the State to discharge its first and most basic responsibility to protect its citizens and to ensure their security.

I would urge Honourable Members not to go the route of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central who, inadvertently, said but, nevertheless, would give the impression...

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: ...who through his personal fears may have influenced others, who fall under his sphere of influence, to believe that their right to privacy is in anyway being compromised by the Government getting involved in what the Honourable Member referred to high-tech stuff and "Big Brother" watching. I do not have any fear and I support this Resolution. I do so with the blessed assurance that the safety of each and every Barbadian from fire and crime is

greatly enhanced by the measures taken here today. This is an excellent use of \$26 million of the public's resources.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this Resolution and I commend it to my colleagues in this Parliament.

SUSPENSION

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg that this House be suspended until 1.30 p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House be suspended until 1.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.
12.33 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give this Resolution critical support at this stage, because I think that it seeks to upgrade the communications capacity and the efficiency of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

I give this Resolution my support because I believe that in the face of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME), any attempt which allows the development of digital communications capacities will argue well for the harmonisation of police practices and procedures, in the face of free movement of labour and capital within the CSME. Sir, that is the point, and it is from that perspective I therefore give this Resolution my support.

However, Mr. Speaker, I will not be ostrich-like. I have had many years of living in industrial countries. I have had the opportunity firsthand, Sir, to see digital and special technologies that employ the use of voice, the use of video, and the use of line communication utilised in many different ways. Unless there are specially administrative and legislative structures put in place, these technologies, undoubtedly, Sir, can lead to possible abuses where you can have the invasion of privacy, and the breach of trust and confidentiality of individuals.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of elucidation, just for the record yet again. These technologies that we are referring to here are in no way surveillance technologies. They are simply communication technologies. If anything, others can spy on you with this technology except for the fact that we have chosen to use digital technology that has a secure inscription to be able to minimise the opportunity for that happening. Sir, this technology does not give the police the capacity to enter surveillance on anyone at all. It really does not.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, again, I speak from my personal experiences. Technology is adaptable. There is no technology now that cannot be interfaced and upgraded. Therefore, do not speak to me about a technology at this time, without understanding that when you talk about digital technology, there are minimal applications and adjustments that can be made.

The point is, Sir, as long as the requisite administrative parameters are put in place, I feel comfortable because I believe in the integrity of our Royal Barbados Police Force to follow all of the prescribed Laws in Barbados, so I do not think that there is a divide on that matter.

Mr. Speaker, I however want to take this debate into another realm. This is a resolution that looks at a loan which is supposed to be secured from the Bank of Nova Scotia in Barbados. It is a foreign loan meaning that:

- All loans under the Financial Administration and Audit Act must go into the Consolidated Fund of this country.
- All foreign loans must be paid out of the foreign reserves, so it impacts on the net international reserves of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, it is from that extension that I intend to look at the relationships with respect to those components. As a foreign loan, Sir, this loan affects the foreign component of the national debt, and by extension, it affects the national debt. It will also affect the net international reserves, and the capacity of the country to earn those net international reserves, as it now will be affected by this foreign loan.

There is a direct link, Mr. Speaker, between the country's foreign earning capacity and by extension, the capacity to service this loan, on top of all the other loans that were borrowed, over the last six to seven years in Barbados. It is from that context that I will make my full submission.

I will also want to make one link, Sir, and it is not one that I made myself. It is one that the Prime Minister made himself, amazingly, a few days ago, that there is now a link between servicing your foreign debt and the fiscal deficit in Barbados. I intend to raise all of these components in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, this loan contributes to the national debt of this country. The national debt now stands at \$3.5 billion as of 2004, and we can check the *Annual Statistical Digest* of 2003. This is an increase of more than \$1.1 billion in nine years. Interestingly enough, the foreign component of

the debt, Sir, within the same nine-year period was increased by \$1.5 billion. Again, the reference is in the *Annual Statistical Digest* of 2003.

1.40 p.m.

I would like the Honourable Leader of the House to explain to this House why it is that with a growing national debt and a foreign component of that national debt, that the Prime Minister in the Budget debate indicated was 72 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product which he said was untenable and he had to reduce it, that they would now go to borrow a foreign loan from a local bank that would have the opposite impact with respect to the percentage of the national debt to the Gross Domestic Product?

Sir, in the face of the Local Loans Act which was amended in 2002 to allow a further \$400 million to be borrowed from domestic sources, I would also like to find out why it is that the loan could not be achieved from a domestic source in Barbadian dollars, or why it is that it could not be raised by Government securities, by the floating of a bond or by other mechanisms of Government paper in Barbados.

These are critical questions that need to be answered because we are increasing our national debt at a time when we do not have foreign exchange earning capacity. Therefore, the Honourable House needs to be given an explanation because this strategy does not make sense, as far as I am concerned.

Mr. Speaker, what gives me real concern here is that when I looked at the *Annual Review* of the Central Bank for December 2003... I was not too sure whether I was reading it correctly or not, so I had to read it about three to four times. We have the situation in Barbados of a Government going to borrow US\$13 million, but the Central Bank document is saying that the foreign reserves that we have to repay the loan with is money that is coming into Barbados from further loans, from public sector inflows, private sector inflows and from other corporate activity.

In other words, we are borrowing money, putting it in reserves and then we have to turn around and use that same borrowed money to repay money that we are borrowing, so I cannot understand why is it that we would take a stance to increase the burden of debt service on Barbadians when Government could have issued local paper. I need to understand that because it does not make sense.

I would now relate this to the statements of the Honourable Prime Minister a few days ago when he said that we must have a deficit check otherwise we cannot service our foreign loans. What I found to be interesting here is that we are not earning foreign exchange, yet we are increasing the foreign loan component of the debt. If you could explain

that one to me, Sir, I would be happy because I certainly do not understand it.

On top of that, Mr. Speaker, I cannot understand how a Government could have increased the deficit of Barbados from 2.1 per cent in 1993 to 2.6 per cent of Gross Domestic Product in 1995; to 2.8 per cent in 2001; to 3.8 per cent in 2003 and greater than 6 per cent in 2004. While that was happening they are increasing the national debt and the foreign component of the national debt and continues to increase it in the face of declining reserves and declining earnings from tourism which is the only sector we have that is raising significant foreign exchange.

Sir, in interpreting this loan, I had to interpret it in the context of how it is going to affect all of the policies, programmes and strategies that are going to be used to stabilise Barbados' economy. That is exactly how I intend to interpret this particular situation.

Mr. Speaker, what is also troubling me – again I relate to the Prime Minister's statement, not mine – is that this loan of US\$13 million is not going to necessarily be considered as off-budget expenditure. I raise this because the Prime Minister of this country is on record of stating that if we do not reduce the deficit that he created, we will have problems servicing our national debt and our foreign component. If that is so, I must have an explanation from the Honourable Members on the Other Side why it is that we have off-budget financing to the tune of...

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, if you have a high deficit, your deficit will retard your capacity to repay your loans because the Government will be competing with the consumers and the private sector for capital. That is why it is important to understand the relationship. Sir, I get all of my reports and I want to be sure that we are all together. Mr. Speaker, they are all here under the heading of Parliament of Barbados, House of Assembly, so I do not have to lay them in the House as they are already documents of the House.

Mr. Speaker, between March 2, 1999 and August 24, 1999, there was a supplementary for \$62 million. Later that year between November 1999 and August 15, 2000, the total supplementaries were \$82 million. Between October 29, 2001 and October 10, 2002, the total supplementaries were for \$111 million. Between October 23, 2001 and August 20, 2002, the total supplementaries were for \$70 million. Between September 17, 2002 and April 25, 2003, the total supplementaries were for \$89 million.

Sir, when I total them, they come to over \$499 million off-budget. Therefore, I cannot accept that any deficit that is

suggested by any Honourable Member of this Honourable House is a true reflection of what the deficit is and it is going to have a devastating impact on the capacity of this country to service its foreign debt. To make matters worse, they have gone and taken a foreign loan when they could have issued Government paper by floating a bond or using debentures to raise the money.

In a debate in here, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South castigated me for the millions of dollars that are in the bank, so I am wondering if that money is sitting down there, why it could not be accessed to help finance other projects. This is why I am saying I have my concerns, but we will deal with those matters in another forum coming very soon.

Mr. Speaker, I have no problem in principle with enhancing the communications capacity of the Royal Barbados Police Force. The problem I have is the fact that if this country is facing a set of unstable macroeconomic dynamics that can explain a high fiscal deficit of over six per cent, a high national debt, a high component of a national debt – these are international financial structures, not mine – and on top of that there is a balance of payment component...

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: I will explain it to him now. It is a high trade deficit which is a visible trade deficit.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: The Honourable Member on the Other Side would not understand what I talking about, so I would have to educate him, so he can take his book out of his back pocket.

Asides.

1.50 p.m.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I have already said what I had to say, which is, that this loan enhances the foreign component of the national debt and that given the deficit problems that we now have, it will make worse our debt-servicing capacity. I have said that given the present situation, Government is now financing that debt from foreign loans, from domestic borrowing and from the Central Bank by increasing the borrowing capacity of the Local Loans Act, 2002.

I am saying that those conditions are unstable and are extremely dangerous for Barbados. I, therefore, in principle, would say to the Barbados Labour Party's administration that while I give support to the Resolution, they went about it the wrong way. They should have issued local securities or should have raised the money from some of the funds in the

local banks and I would have felt more comfortable if it was done in Barbados currency because a foreign loan must be repaid in foreign exchange, and foreign exchange that is only being raised by tourism at this point in time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but admire the Honourable Member who just sat because he can use both his mouth and his hands very well.

Mr. Speaker, according to Standard and Poor's, Barbados is the best managed economy in the Caribbean and in Latin America. We have never heard about the Honourable Member as being an expert in the field of economics or accounting.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, Honourable Member. The Honourable Member is entitled to his views and no imputations, please. Surely you should get to the Resolution at hand.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I would have to stand by the records of Standard and Poor's that Barbados is a well-run economy and that despite the fact that the Honourable Member is troubled, ordinary Barbadians do know that this Government has borrowed large sums of money over the last four years but that Government has spent this money wisely.

Mr. Speaker, the Resolution which is before us is important, and we do support the Royal Barbados Police Force's efforts to improve and to enhance their communications capacity. I believe that all of us should support this important move, since it is not only beneficial to the Police Force but to all Barbadians.

Sir, despite the Opposition is saying that, on the one hand, they would support it, on the other hand they are asking how are we going to get the money. Sir, the money has to be found somewhere and whether or not it is borrowed on the foreign market or on the local market, it is still borrowed money.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the link between the Police Force and other Government agencies, such as the Licensing Authority or other Police Departments across the country, is outdated and, therefore, an attempt to modernise the telecommunications system and to bring it in with modern trends will help to improve efficiencies. It will not only help us to manage better the traffic but to solve crime in a more timely manner.

It is important for us to note that presently the Police Force has a direct link with the Licensing Department and can monitor the records of the department's Traffic

Division, to know who has or has not paid his or her road tax. I must say that records have shown that there is a growing number of persons who are driving around Barbados without adequate road tax. This is a concern to Government and every effort would be made to improve this deficiency.

I believe that with the new technology available to the Police Force, this would help to minimise, to a large extent, those defaulters. I believe the way forward would be to link up the various police departments with other Government agencies but I hope that, in the near future, the department would not only be linked with the police departments but also with the court system as well.

Sir, there are a number of times where the courts give judgments which cannot be readily enforced. Therefore, we are hoping that through the communications system, we would be able to link up with the courts, especially as it relates to traffic offences. This would help us to put in place anything which the courts might judge to be of importance to the system.

It is also important to note that we have a direct link with the police as it relates to overall communication and not only that of the various road traffic offences. We have an ongoing committee which deals with road traffic problems. We are currently looking at the Road Traffic (Amendment) Act and the Highways Act, which would be amended during this term.

Mr. Speaker, we also would be looking at other ways to improving efficiency and I would like to compliment the Police Force at this time for taking the initiative to help arrest some of the traffic problems we now have on our roads. They have been doing a good job and need to be supported in their efforts.

Sir, the Licensing Department is gearing up to do many things to improve its efficiency. For example, we are hoping that the disc on the windscreen of vehicles could be improved because sometimes they can become faded. We are also hoping that a new system, one which could be more modern than that of a number of years ago, would go a step further by improving that efficiency.

Sir, in some parts of the world, there is a system where persons could see when someone has not paid for his or her vehicle by looking at the rear number plate. We are studying that system where a small gadget could be attached to the number plate, in order to detect the respective year for the payment of one's vehicle, so that if in the year 2005, that gadget is yellow, then the police would be able to detect persons who do not have a yellow sticker, which would mean that person has not paid for that respective year. It is not ready at this time but we are looking at this system to improve the Licensing Department.

2.00 p.m.

It is also important to note that the police makes tremendous input which helps us to fashion and modernise our Laws. Mr. Speaker, as it relates to accidents, this new technology will help the police to respond faster.

I am concerned with the length of time it takes for accidents to be cleared from the road as a fender accident may take hours to be removed from the road. Sir, we are looking at the relevant legislation to improve this situation. I think in all cases we do not need the police as, in some parts of the world, the onus is on drivers of the vehicles to move them from the road. In our congested streets small accidents cause a lot of delay on the roads and I hope the new technology can minimize the congestion caused from accidents.

We want to appeal to pedestrians not to jaywalk across the street and to use road traffic signals. It is important for us to send a signal to the public that it is an offence to jaywalk and that the police has authority to caution persons who continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, over the last two years a number of persons have been struck by vehicles because they did not use the correct crossing or they crossed without due care and attention. We want to ask the public to be more responsive in terms of looking at stop lights which are now modernize.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please use the same care and attention and stick to the Resolution before the House.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, all these amendments that are to come before the House should relate to the new technology that the police will put in place. As we go forward in improving the technology for the police, it will help them respond to the number of accidents and this communications system will also help in detecting deviant persons who do not pay road taxes.

The Honourable Attorney-General said that the money will be used to purchase equipment, hardware and software for the police and this will also improve their communications technique. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the requisite training will also be done to assist the police in using these new techniques.

Mr. Speaker, I see this link to the new technology as important to help not only the police force but Barbadians at large.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I will attempt, in my own way, to refocus the debate and put it where it really belongs. Sir, this is not an attempt to reflect on your ruling but this debate is primarily about communications, security of our citizens and the better management of our security forces as it relates to our society.

I could also pretend to be an economist and create a basis for talking around the issue of economics because this loan falls in the economic realm. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West will have every opportunity in the next few weeks to further pretend to be an economist. Suffice it to say, the recent vote of confidence recently given to the Barbadian economy by the various agencies will set the platform for the debate we will have then, as it relates to the economy of Barbados and we will simply have to wait our turn.

2.10 p.m.

Sir, I want to focus on this debate as it relates to the communication, security and the better management of our security forces relative to our society.

Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the Honourable Attorney-General, her office and the Royal Barbados Police Force for a step in the right direction regarding the provision of resources and technology for our security forces to move them towards a level that is needed at this time, not only in Barbados but in the rest of the world. Therefore, it is important to understand that we are moving in the right direction.

Sir, we can talk about how this money is being raised, where it came from and whether not a bond should have been floated. I believe that all these issues would be clarified in due course by those who are more knowledgeable about such issues. This debate is about putting our security forces, particularly the Royal Barbados Police Force, in a better position to create an environment that is secure for citizens and visitors. I want to again compliment the Honourable Attorney-General and her office for the work that has been done.

Mr. Speaker, a few weeks we debated an issue relative to the Royal Barbados Police Force. I did not hear the Opposition speak to the reduction of crime in this country and the issues that are pertinent to this debate as it relates to the Royal Barbados Police Force and to the better management of the security forces in our country which are central to this debate.

We are living in a time when our neighbours are seeing substantial increases of reported crime being committed against their own citizens and they have employed outside resources to deal with it. Barbados can boast of a 17 per cent reduction in crime in the last year, a 60 per cent decrease in crime against visitors over the last decade.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: I want to make it abundantly clear that the focus of this debate is to put our security forces in a better position to create a more secure society for our people. I am concerned for all Barbadians and visitors and I will not

join in this paranoia about "Big Brother" looking into everything and the issue of surveillance as opposed to communications equipment if there is a line that can be drawn.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, any piece of telecommunication that is abused could be used as an instrument of surveillance as well. We all should be concerned about people's civil liberties and where the world is going, particularly the unilateral movements to the north of us. As far as I know, I do not think that the police in Barbados or any part of the world need to use this telecommunication if there was a "Big Brother" looking on.

I understand that every piece of electronic equipment we have in our possession can be used as a tool of surveillance if we so desire. I also understand that when cellular phones are switched off, they can roam into some level of communication. I do not think that we should be overly concerned about this telecommunication equipment for the Royal Barbados Police Force and believe that it is going to be used to monitor every Barbadian.

Sir, if we are going to be monitored, we do not have to be monitored through this equipment that is being bought. We can be monitored anywhere and at any time. Let us not panic and get overly concerned and seek to believe that Barbados is not protecting anyone's civil liberties.

I do not believe, and I am not sharing in the paranoia that the Opposition would like to create in Barbados. That is what he is seeking to do in here. Mr. Speaker, even when the Opposition supports a resolution, they create some level of paranoia in this society and I am not joining them in that.

Sir, I am concerned about what the Opposition said in this debate today. I believe that the work of the Royal Barbados Police Force has been outstanding in the last four years. I also believe that this initiative would enhance the work of the police, particularly in the tourist industry.

It has been said, in this Honourable House, that during the high season of tourism that we have had an increase in police patrol in the major tourism belt. That resulted in the reduction of the reported crime against tourists in our society. I believe that well-trained police officers are an asset to how we market Barbados to potential visitors to our country. I am concerned about the way people have dealt with this issue, of the 60 per cent reduction of crime against tourists.

Mr. Speaker, I have a fundamental problem with how an agent of the Opposition, a hotelier in Barbados, sought to press the panic button in Barbados when we reported that there was a reduction in crime in Barbados. We were talking about a 60 per cent reduction in crime against

tourists in Barbados and the gentleman went to the media and said that the statistics were incorrect and that we are not telling the truth. Sir, the statistics came from the Attorney-General's Office and from the Royal Barbados Police Force. If we cannot have confidence in our law enforcement officials and in our Attorney-General's office to produce the facts on reporting crime, where are we going?

Mr. Speaker, more fundamental than that, to create a state of panic in Barbados for all potential visitors to this country and to suggest that the figures reported on the reduction of crime are incorrect, I cannot consider this behaviour to be patriotic by anyone who does these things. I think that all Barbadians should distance themselves from that type of rhetoric as it relates to how we seek to manage crime in our society.

I believe it is important when we market our tourism sector to be able to say, not necessarily in a direct way all the time, that we have a safe and secure environment for our visitors. Mr. Speaker, when we go overboard and seek to tell people that Barbados is not a safe place by our words or deeds, I think that we are doing Barbados a disservice and the citizens of this country an injustice.

Sir, it is documented that the physical safety and security of visitors are of paramount interest to visitors to Barbados. Mr. Speaker, when potential visitors were asked what are their major concerns when travelling to a destination outside of their own country, they said that safety was their major concern.

Sir, safety and security are the prime concern of all visitors travelling outside of their countries. Since this is the case, it is important that we create a society in which people have confidence in our law enforcement officials and the information provided by those officials.

Therefore, I am concerned that when we reported the crime statistics against tourists, a particular hotelier, who is known to be an agent of the Democratic Labour Party, said that those statistics are incorrect.
2.20 p.m.

Sir, I believe we need to stop seeking to create panic in this society on issues like where we are going, like what was done by a man who is an agent of the Democratic Labour Party.

Again I say, Sir, that positioning ourselves for our law enforcement officials to have the best and newest technologies is where I believe this debate should have been from the beginning, again, Sir, not to reflect upon your own rulings, if it is to become an economic debate, because we will have the opportunity to do that.

I therefore, Sir, want again to compliment the Attorney-General and her office, and the Royal Barbados Police Force for the outstanding work they have done on this particular Resolution for raising money to acquire this telecommunications equipment that places our police officers, and the other members of our disciplinary forces at the cutting edge of technology, and putting them in a position to be up-to-date, as in many other parts of the world, with the type of technology that makes our society more safe and secure.

Therefore, my compliments, again, to them. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to support the Resolution before the House because, for me, it forms an important part of the Government's policy to equip the police to do their job and, really, that is what this Resolution is about.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central raised, not without being what my mother would call in the popular vernacular, "a larma" being translated, Sir, into good English as an alarmist, did bring an alarmist element to the tone, tenor and timber of his speech. I do take the point that in a modern society, which is really how he should have framed his argument, where there is an abundance of sophisticated technology, that there is the potential for the abuse of that technology to monitor the ordinary citizen in his private activity, in a way that people would find intrusive.

Sir, had he spoken that way, one could have accepted his arguments but he was so alarmist in his approach, that I could not support the tone of that speech. It is interesting, Sir, that the use of technology is intervening, not quite the right verb but, certainly, is intruding on every aspect of our lives and there is no escaping it.

The technology like Max, for instance, which allows, even if you call an incorrect telephone number, for a person to immediately call you back and say, "You phoned me?", even if you cannot say who "me" is. In fact, I made the error of dialling an incorrect digit, trying to reach somebody whom I knew and within minutes, a woman whom I did not know called me back and, very aggressively, asked me, "Was you phoning me for?" and I said, "But who is me?" Therefore, we cannot escape where technology is taking us.

I think we must caution against a speech in this Chamber, relative to this particular use of technology, by suggesting that the police are going to apply the technology in a way that points to surveillance, rather than to telecommunications and interdepartmental communication.

In fact, I believe that there is a need for the police to be able, not only to effectively communicate amongst

themselves, but to communicate directly, rather than via the telephone, with agencies such as CERO, the Barbados Defence Force, the Police Stations, the Fire Station, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Licensing Authority and the Prisons. These are critical agencies for the defence and national security of the country, and they have to be linked by way of modern technology, whether it is computer or other systems, that allows these critical agencies to communicate effectively with one another, in the event of national emergency or crisis.

Sir, I very much support the loan for this technology to the Royal Barbados Police Force, to facilitate them dealing with issues of crime, national safety and security, and personal safety and security.

I return now to the point at which I started, which is that this equipment will help the police to better do their job and to serve the public. I want to commend the Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East for bringing the measure to the House, despite the criticism. It fits into a number of other initiatives that the Government has taken to ensure that we have a modern police force, equipped with the skills and ability to deal with crime, in a society that is sophisticated, where they are dealing with persons returning from metropolitan countries, who have a level of criminal sophistication that we are not accustomed to dealing with, and where there is a sense at the national level, that issues relating to crime and personal safety have to be addressed expeditiously and with a degree of seriousness.

It therefore fits with a number of other initiatives. Specifically, since 1994 there have been measures taken to improve the terms and conditions under which members of the Royal Barbados Police Force serve. Such improvements have impacted on allowances, salaries and general terms and conditions of service. It has made a difference at the level of the individual officer to what they earn.

We saw recently, Sir, one of the measures passed by this Honourable Chamber taking effect in a very practical and meaningful way. When I was on the Backbench and, in fact, when I was on the Frontbench prior to 1999, I repeatedly called in this Chamber for compensation for certain categories of civil servants who are at risk in performing their jobs.

You will recall that a constituent of mine, who was a prison officer, was killed in the exercise of his duties in the prison, while at work. It brought home sharply to the country, Sir, the point that these persons serve in high risk activity. They put their lives and limbs on the line to protect the wider society, often without the degree of insurance coverage that they need.

I started from that time, Sir, to call in this Chamber for the implementation of a policy where persons, such as prison officers and members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, if killed in the line of duty, their families would benefit from adequate policy cover.

Certainly, one of the provisions which has most enhanced the terms and conditions under which policemen serve, is the coming into effect of that policy initiative. It fell to me, as acting Attorney-General, to make a statement when a young police officer lost his life in the waters at St. Philip. We were able to say to his family that there now exists a provision whereby they can get a lump sum valued at five times his annual salary to help those family members who are adversely affected by his loss.

It is a critical improvement to the terms and conditions under which policemen serve, the knowledge that when they go off to put themselves at risk to ensure the security of the nation, they can know that if something tragic occurs, there is some degree of financial security over and above any personal insurance which they might have for their families. 2.30 p.m.

Sir, there was a time when you telephone police stations in Barbados to hear officers say they have no transportation and would not be able to come to a scene. I know the Government has systematically ensured that the garages and the repair workshops of the Royal Barbados Police Force have been improved and re-equipped and that a new fleet of cars has been bought to ensure that when people call, they would not hear that they do not have any transportation and that they cannot get to the scene right away, only then for the police to turn up six hours after or a day or two later.

That situation is now becoming a thing of the past because the police are being equipped to serve the nation that is calling on them to deliver the service, so it is not just this telecommunications and it is not only the terms and conditions, it is things such as access to a car that can make all the difference between whether a policeman can perform a service and duty or whether he is unable to do so.

Sir, when we came to Government in 1994 police stations all across Barbados were in near derelict conditions. Again systematically, one by one, with the last police station, Crab Hill in St. Lucy, being advertised for repairs and refurbishment, all of the police stations almost without exception have been repaired and refurbished. Sir, sometimes the police had to be relocated and new accommodation had to be found for them in order to facilitate the refurbishment of the station they were in. New police stations were built as well. Again that speaks to an improvement in the terms and conditions under which police officers serve.

I am speaking in this way, Sir, because we live in a society where people forget very quickly what has been done and where it is commonplace for people to say that the Government has not done anything for the police, for the nurses and so on. These are the kinds of comments you hear because people do not look at the cumulative effect or the cost, for instance, of what it has taken to refurbish police stations from the north to the south of Barbados or what it cost to make a new fleet of cars available to police officers and to keep them full of gas and on the road, or what it means when you bring new allowances how that alters the state of Government financing whenever you make a financial change to somebody's general terms and conditions.

I believe, Sir, that in the regrading exercise once the negotiations are complete – because I understand that everybody is not entirely happy – there will be substantial upgrading of the financial terms and conditions under which the police serve and their take-home package will be substantially improved.

Sir, there are a number of issues over and beyond what the Government has done to improve the general terms for policemen to which I would also wish to speak in the course of my remarks today. There are still a number of issues which the police needs to address in communities in Barbados, such as exist in St. James South, St. Michael North West and other constituencies across the country, if there is to be goodwill between the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force and members of the community.

In my view, there is still a degree of distrust between members of the community, people who are called low-income, lower class, disadvantaged whatever you frame them, and members of the Royal Barbados Police Force. Therefore, I believe that the police have to systematically go into these communities and thus create a higher level of trust.

We complain that there is, in our society at this time, a sufficient number of people who witness crimes or have knowledge or information about the commission of crime, but who refuse to report it to the police. That is so because they are afraid for their own safety and well-being because they do not feel that the information which they give will be held confidentially nor do they feel that they themselves will escape the wrath or visits from the police. Therefore, if the police are to be better allowed to do their job, then that trust has to be built in the communities where people see police cars most often.

Mr. Speaker, there are still too many young children who are abusive of persons not just those in authority but of police officers, which is the next generation with whom the police would have to deal. The police cannot reduce crime effectively unless they are perceived by members of the society as friends rather than foes. In this regard, if trust

needs to be built, if the level of community policing needs to be improved or other measures need to be taken to change that public perception, then the time to do it is now.

Equally, in my experience as a parliamentarian, when people come to talk to me about jobs and career options, even where they have the requisite height and the requisite certification, the Police Force is not regarded as a career option.

I heard the last Commissioner of Police say that they were having difficulty in recruitment. I do not know if that remains true but certainly some analysis needs to be done to determine why it is that policing is not regarded as a career that certificated persons would want to take up.

There was a time when policing, like teaching, nursing and other professions, was regarded as a profession that people wanted to go into. Policing, nursing and teaching were careers of first choice. I do not believe that the conditions and terms under which police officers work are so disadvantageous that the salary scale would stop people from joining the Police Force relative to other sections of the Civil Service. Therefore, we need to ask ourselves if it does not fall back to that same trust issue to which I was speaking earlier or if it speaks to another matter, and if so, what that matter is and how it is to be addressed.

I believe that it would be useful for the Chamber to be told one of these days what is the nature of training and the on-the-job training that applies to police officers. We have crimes that are becoming more sophisticated. There are crimes which are committed by using technology. We have white-collar crimes of various types.

Therefore, one wonders if the initial training period to which police officers are subjected are sufficiently long for them to be able to garner the wide range of skills that a police officer needs in today's society. Police Officers, whether they like it or not, assume the role of a quasi social worker who have to address several issues at the level of the community where they interact with various individuals.
2.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that the training programme presently structured, is long or varied enough to facilitate that kind of multi-disciplinary or multi-skilled training which a police officer coming into a modern society needs to have. Therefore, if we are not going to have it, the question remains, what training programmes are police officers given to give them a wider skills-base than they would have initially entered the Force with, and skills in what area?

I do not think that this Honourable Chamber has ever had the benefit of that kind of information, and certainly the

wider society might be interested in knowing what kind of training our police officers have had.

Sir, that does not mean, especially over the course of the last 18 months where we are witnessing an obvious reduction in crime statistics, it would seem to me, at the level of society, a diminishing in the level of fear and discomfort that the average citizen had, relative to crime, safety and that individual's well-being.

Sir, I would wish to congratulate the present Commissioner of Police for what appears to be a very good start to his new post. I hope that he would continue in that way, and that the confidence the society has in him because of the way in which he has come to his post, the way in which he has started to perform, that confidence would not prove to be misplaced but that in terms of his performance level, he and the Royal Barbados Police Force would grow from strength to strength.

Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me, even in praising the Commissioner of Police and having heard him defined his agenda, if I did not encourage him to take on board the whole avenue of environmental crimes that he has heard me speak of before.

I understand that with a police force that is not up to the kind of numbers that one would consider ideal, and perhaps with recruitment difficulties, and with a public perception that a stabbing and throwing a snow-cone cup out of a moving vehicle are not qualitatively similar, that there tends not be an emphasis on environmental crimes. Sir, there is a range of environmental crimes that put the society at risk in very much the same way that a stab wound, or the fear of one, tends to affect the wider society.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have given you a lot of rope again but you are going a bit away from this Resolution that is before the Honourable House. You are talking all around but you have not said much in relation to the Resolution. I do not think I can allow you to continue like this.

The Honourable Member has five minutes more.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, I do not propose to collide. I am much obliged to you.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this debate much earlier than expected because I was not looking for such an abrupt end to the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. James South.

Mr. Speaker, I treat this particular debate this afternoon as a very important one, and like the Honourable Member for St. James South, I think we need to view the equipping of the

Police Force with modern communications equipment as part of Government's commitment to give the Royal Barbados Police Force all the necessary support to allow it to function in a more professional manner.

Mr. Speaker, much has been said in this Honourable Chamber when we had a fairly exhaustive debate on crime and on the level of the Royal Barbados Police Force in the last number of years in some case, to go beyond the call of duty, to ensure that the crime rate in Barbados was brought down. Yes, they have achieved some success but there is still further work to be done.

Mr. Speaker, with that in mind, it is extremely important that the Government continues on its current path to equip properly the Royal Barbados Police Force. The Honourable Member for St. James South has made mention of some of the things they would have done, sometimes to make life for police officers more comfortable but I would just say that we on this Side, have recognised the important work the Police Force has to do in Barbados and, whenever possible, we would continue to provide the necessary resources to the Police Force, to make it better equipped and for it to function in a more professional manner.

Mr. Speaker, mention was made earlier of the need for pertinent information which can redound to the benefit of the Royal Barbados Police Force and for that information to be shared between that entity and the number of other entities in Barbados, so that the business of responding to emergencies could be more quickly done.

Sir, more important too, the information should be allowed to be shared at a very rapid rate to prevent, in some cases, unwanted events from taking place. Sir, the provision of modern communication technologies and equipment to the Royal Barbados Police Force can be seen in a beneficial way along those lines.

Sir, mention was also made in relation to response to disasters such as the relationship that should be maintained between the Police Force and the Centre for Emergency Response Organisation (CERO), and the sharing of information of persons who were susceptible to committing crimes of varying types. The Honourable Member for St. George has mentioned the information which is collected by the Licensing Authority, which could be of benefit to the Royal Barbados Police Force as it relates to traffic management and to dealing with the likely offenders.

Mr. Speaker, I said that there has been a downward movement in the crime rate but from time to time one can hear sections of the community, for example, in the Honourable Member for Christ Church East's constituency, that is the Inch Marlow Neighbourhood Watch Programme,

and I would imagine that would be the case with other Honourable Members of Parliament, where these persons who are living in the different pockets of the community would want to have a discussion on how life could be made more tolerable by reducing the incidences of crime in their respective areas.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that in my constituency, I have had no fewer than four discussions during the last term and one so far this term, and that the Royal Barbados Police Force was properly represented at those meetings and have made significant inputs.
2.50 p.m.

When they were finished, residents were better prepared to take greater charge of their surroundings and they were doing it with the knowledge that the Royal Barbados Police Force stood ready and willing to respond when called upon. Sir, I see the Royal Barbados Police Force with this modern equipment as putting them in a better position to respond in shorter time when called upon.

Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said about the manner in which these funds are to be secured. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West continue to make considerable noise about how this Administration makes financing decisions in respect of major projects. They want to give the impression that the Barbadian economy is caught in an international debt trap.

Mr. Speaker, if you listen to the uninformed commentators from the Democratic Labour Party, one would get the impression that there is some inability on the part of the Barbadian economy to honour its financial commitments and that the external debt service obligations are such that this economy cannot expand and that we are not in a position to put the relevant structures in place in order to deal with the economic challenges that lie ahead and nothing could be further from the truth.

Mr. Speaker, when we engage in a serious discussion on the structure of the national debt, we need to be conscious of the use of funds which have been borrowed. We also need to look at the performance of the economy and its ability to repay that debt.

I am going to quote from the Economic and Financial Statistics of January 2004 because the Honourable Member for St. Philip West kept saying that the debt situation in Barbados is out of control, that there is the possibility that the economy could shrink and that we are caught in a debt trap, *et cetera*, and I want to speak about the facts.

Mr. Speaker, between 1986 and 1994, the total debt of this national debt moved from \$1.3 billion to \$2.5 billion; between 1994 and 2003 the national debt moved from

\$2.5 billion to \$4.2 billion. Sir, between the 1986 to 1994 period, the increase in the national debt was in the order of 92 per cent and between the 1994 and 2003 period as at the end of October, it was 69 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have to rehearse for anyone in this Chamber what the Democratic Labour Party Administration would have done to this economy during the early part of the 1990s to this country because it is topical. This is why in every successive election this Barbados Labour Party will continue to be returned by the people of Barbados because they will never forget the wickedness and the terror that was unleashed on them by the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, between 1994 and 2003 we had many years of consistent, good economic performance and we have always been in a position to make good our debt service obligations whether to an external or internal source. Sir, in the period before 1994 and 2003, even when the economy was suffering from the September 2001 events and the downturn in the international economy, this Government held firm in its posture to make sure that persons in Barbados were not disadvantaged but we cannot say the same for the Opposition.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I want the Honourable Member to refer to page 192 of the Annual Statistical Digest of 2003 where it indicates what has been the real growth. Sir, it lists from 1991 to 2002.

I will start from 1994 where the real growth in GDP was 4.6 per cent, the highest recorded since the Barbados Labour Party has been in power. We only reached the level of 1994 for one year in 1998 when the GDP was 4.4 per cent and from thereon we had a negative slide to the point where it was minus 2.8 per cent in 2001, minus 4.0 per cent in 2002 and it goes on. Sir, I do not know to what the Honourable Member is referring.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I will continue.
3.00 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, as it relates to this Resolution before the House, I did allow some argument to take place and comments to be made but, surely, we do not want to get into that when there is a substantial Resolution before the House. There is no problem with using such to help prove an argument relating to the Resolution but it cannot stand on its own.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me also thank you for the attitude that you have given me to address a matter of this import.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. We do not have a quorum, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: It has been drawn to my attention that we do not have a quorum. Clerk could you ring the bell, please?

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for any latitude that you might have given to this Honourable Chamber so that we can clear the air from some of these statements that we heard from the Other Side. I would abide by what you have said and there will be a wonderful opportunity in the not too distant future for us to examine the structure and ability of this economy to withstand any challenges that lie ahead.

Sir, I want to introduce some important elements at this early stage so that those inside and outside of this Honourable Chamber will get some understanding of how the debt of this country was built since 1986 and what the respective Administrations were able to achieve by way of macro-economic performance with the use of the funds borrowed.

Sir, there was a stark contrast between what the Democratic Labour Party was able to achieve between 1986 and the early 1990s and what the Barbados Labour Party was able to achieve between 1994 and the present time.

Mr. Speaker, I now refer to the importance of communication of the Royal Barbados Police Force. One of the things that excite persons in any society is crime and we recognise that. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South continues to impress on Barbadians the importance of keeping the crime level down for the promotion and further development of the tourism product in Barbados. That is unmistakable and cannot be disputed.

Barbadians have been able to express themselves in many ways and achieve a reasonable quality of life. Mr. Speaker, what allows for that quality of life is that they go on with their legitimate business with little or no fear. We want to do it within our communities and when we move across communities. To the extent that is the case, we need to ensure that our Royal Barbados Police Force and those who are responsible for maintaining order and safety in this society, that they are well equipped to do their work.

Mr. Speaker, this Government recognises the impact of crime on many aspects of our development and we will continue whenever it is possible to make the Royal Barbados Police Force as comfortable as possible.

Sir, it would be foolhardy on the part of any administration to think that other segments of the society are

becoming more and more sophisticated and part of that sophistication is being fuelled by the use of information and communications technology. There is a situation where we hear about the sophisticated methods being employed by the criminals. We are hearing about the linkages that are being created between those who are prone to commit crimes within and across national boundaries.

The police should have the ability to stay ahead of those criminals who operate with a higher level of sophistication and mandates that any administration who is serious about its work should equip the police with modern information and communications technology to make the Police Force more technologically efficient, ready and relevant.

This Administration recognises that and we will do everything within our power, financial resources permitting, to ensure that the level of operation within the Police Force is improved. We owe it to ourselves and this country's development to make sure that the Police Force is well equipped.

I also want to use this opportunity to laud the present Honourable Attorney-General and the former Attorney-General for the unswerving commitment to the task at hand to make sure that the level of crime in Barbados is reduced. I want to give the Honourable Attorney-General the assurance that the Barbadian public is in full support of efforts like this to make sure that the Police Force does the best possible job.

3.10 p.m.

Sir, it is important that an extremely good relationship between the Royal Barbados Police Force and the Barbadian public is maintained for the production of information, and for the dissemination of information, in a timely manner which can be used to help solve crimes in a short time.

I would want to encourage her along those lines to make sure that the public relations effort of the Royal Barbados Police Force continues to improve, and that they continue to win the confidence of the Barbadian public, to ensure that information can be readily obtained and that the public builds its confidence in the Royal Barbados Police Force, so that crime-solving could become a less difficult task.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude at the point where I began that I am fully in support of equipping the Royal Barbados Police Force with this modern communications equipment. It certainly will take the Royal Barbados Police Force a long way into becoming a lot more professional and in so doing, help to further reduce the crime level in Barbados, so that this country can continue to be the safe and lovely place where we all would want to continue living.

I thank you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to close this debate and to thank all Honourable Members who have spoken. Indeed, it is fair to say that it has enjoyed the support of both Sides of the House. I think that deep down all of us are cognizant of the fact that Barbados enjoys a favourable position, in relation to matters pertaining to safety and security, as compared to other countries, regionally and, indeed, wider afield.

In that vein, while we in no way would wish to become complacent about the recent successes, and I believe, it was the Honourable Member for St. James South who also reflected on the fact that there appeared also not just to be a reduction in recorded crime, but also a diminution in the level of fear being expressed by the average person in the population.

While we would not wish to become complacent about that, it would be unfair of me if I did not share with Honourable Members of this House, particularly that we are within an earshot of persons in the Gallery whom we cannot see, that the police have continued the positive trend in the management of crime and, generally, in their preservation of law and order. The figures for January 2004, show a further reduction of 15 per cent in recorded crime.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, on top of what was achieved, the average last year of 17½ per cent, January 2004 shows a further reduction of 15 per cent. Mr. Speaker, on top of that, the trends in relation to certain crimes like firearm offences, crimes against visitors, *et cetera*, show also that level of reduction.

In relation, Mr. Speaker, therefore, I believe that the entire society continues to be grateful, not just to the police but to the whole Barbadian community because, as I have maintained, in matters pertaining to these, that it takes the entire society, in order to be able to achieve the type of reduction in criminal activity that we have seen in this country. And, yes, we would like to see it go down even further, but that will require further efforts on our part, including addressing some long-term issues pertaining to values and reducing opportunities for crime, *et cetera*.

It is also significant that the strategy of the Royal Barbados Police Force does not only relate to crime management from the point of view of treating to reports and incidents when they happen, but there is a major conference with the Royal Barbados Police Force coming up in March, next month, which would treat to the issue of community policing.

We recognise that it is only through the building of strong relationships with communities, and working alongside members of the communities in wholesome

activities, that we can continue to see further reductions in crime, rather than go the way where the system is, in fact, under a serious threat and is in a period of crisis.

I want to place my gratitude to the Commissioner and the Gazetted Officers and rank and file Members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, the Special Constables and, indeed, even the Island Constables who ever so often are forgotten in these types of debates.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that our responsibility as a Government is to give the police the tools they need to get the job done. We believe we have been systematically trying to do that as far as our capacity to do so has allowed us. We have done so with the fleet of vehicle replacement and, as I said, that will be ongoing.

We have done so with the upgrading of the mechanical workshop. We have done so, Sir, in relation to the provision of bullet-proof vests and other types of equipment. Every year, we spend at least \$1.5 million in equipment needs alone for the Royal Barbados Police Force and in some years, more than \$2 million to \$2½ million.

We have done so, Mr. Speaker, in relation to our ability to ensure that matters pertaining to their safety and security are paramount as we seek to ensure that they have the appropriate tools. As I said at the outset of this debate, the one gaping hole, the one weak part of how we have treated to the Royal Barbados Police Force has been in ensuring that they receive the modernisation of their telecommunications network and infrastructure. Indeed, the appropriate equipment will not only allow the Royal Barbados Police Force to operate at a higher level, but will also ensure greater protection and security for each individual member of the Royal Barbados Police Force in his or her line of duty.

I believe, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that this Resolution represents a statement of confidence in the work and the capacity of our Royal Barbados Police Force. Indeed, Sir, in other jurisdictions of the Force, or leadership of Police Forces in other law enforcement agencies cry out for lack of support, in respect of tools to get the job done.

This Government has kept faith and has sought to elevate the Royal Barbados Police Force to a stage which reflects, not only their maturity, but indeed, the potential to reach the competence that we know is theirs to reach. We have also in allied areas ensured, for example with the Forensic Centre, that the level of access to greater forensic tools is also available to them. Mr. Speaker, we take this responsibility to properly equip the Royal Barbados Police Force very seriously.

I do not intend, Mr. Speaker, to be drawn into the red herrings that have been thrown in the debate, and to that

extent, Sir, I will let them pass and float today, since fish swimming is obviously a popular metaphor these last few days, but suffice it to say, Mr. Speaker, that the point was made, in relation to why the Government is securing this loan in foreign currency, as opposed to local currency.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition knows better than I being qualified in certain areas, that first of all, this sale is one that:

1. Has been denominated in US currency.
2. Even if we were to raise the loan in Barbados dollars, we would still have to secure the foreign exchange to pay the contract.
3. The interest that was available, in respect of a foreign currency loan was considerably lower than that which would have been available to us if we had denominated the loan in Barbados currency.

Mr. Speaker, to that extent, we are also ensuring that the Government is not forced to carry a larger interest cost than that which they would otherwise have had to carry, in respect of a loan raised in Barbadian currency for this type of equipment.

I also would wish simply to say, Mr. Speaker, and this is important, that of the \$26 million being spent, only \$2.2 million relates to civil works.

3.20 p.m.

The majority of the funds are going in the architecture that is necessary to be able to link the five sites, the equipment that is necessary for us to use in the emergency 911 system and the automatic fingerprint ID system.

The largest bulk of it is for the voice communications system which, as I said, would entail the 750 portable radios, the 150 mobile radios for vehicle tracking and the computer-aided dispatch all of which would bring the quality of policing in Barbados to a level that more reflects the other aspects of our development in terms of the technological improvements that we have seen in other elements of the society.

Mr. Speaker, much has been said in here in relation to "Big Brother", surveillance and all of these types of things. Mr. Speaker, I can only give this House my word that what is before us today relates to telecommunications equipment as opposed to surveillance equipment. The two types of equipment are different. The purpose for which this loan is being raised is to improve the communications between police officers. It is not to do with surveillance, gathering of information or anything of that nature. It is to make sure that each policeman wherever he or she is in Barbados personally, in a vehicle or otherwise, has the capacity to

communicate back with the central command operation to be able to receive instruction.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the encryption that is associated with the system becomes necessary to ensure that no one has the capacity to monitor the movement of police officers to be able to pre-empt them in the course of their operations, as some entities in this country have the capacity to do. While they may use it purely for purposes related to tracking news, there are others who would use it for nefarious or criminal activity and put the lives of men and women of the Police Force in jeopardy.

Mr. Speaker, in this post-911 world, it is easy to become absorbed with the security panic that is reflected in popular Presses emanating from the United States of America. While Mr. Speaker, we have to be absolutely cautious in minimising any risk of there being a serious incident, we have to be mindful of bolstering our security such that that risk is minimised. Therefore, this Government has not embarked upon a knee-jerk response in this post-911 world. We have been systematic in seeking to treat any actions we take as being related to the risk that we face in the particular circumstance.

Mr. Speaker, when we were in the process of bringing what was perhaps one of the pieces of legislation that would create a framework for some of the strongest powers given to any entity in this country, namely the Counter Terrorism Act of 2002, this Government took the precaution by commissioning a study to ensure that any provisions which we brought in any counter terrorism bill would be consistent with the level of fundamental rights and freedoms as provided under the Constitution of Barbados.

This is in contra-distinction to a number of other jurisdictions where they proceeded without reference to whose civil rights they were breaching and continue to do. However, we took the position that we have a history certainly in the latter half of the 20th Century in a modern Barbados of seeking to respect the individual rights of our citizens and respecting the sanctity of the individual dignity that inhered in each person.

Mr. Speaker, to that extent, we went to the cost of securing specific advice through a consultancy and a report in relation to ensuring that any counter-terrorism act or any other provisions whether in money laundering under the money laundering regime or normal criminal justice regime would seek to coincide with the fundamental rights and freedoms as provided by the Constitution of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, that is not to say that there would not have to be things that would have to be done for the good order and for the maintenance of peace in the country.

Section 49 of the Constitution of Barbados allows that and contemplates that at times a legislature would have to pass legislation to treat to these issues, but suffice it to say that when you do so there are safeguards that are associated with that type of legislation to protect against the abuse of any system that goes beyond the normal framework in relation to how it treats to its citizens.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we were very clear on the need to respect human rights and civil rights whether it relates to the prisoners who were being kept in Guantanamo Bay and who continue to be kept there in serious condition and in circumstances where they have not been afforded or availed the opportunity for trial and for due process as we have come to know in the development of the criminal justice system in the modern civilised world over the course of the last century.

Mr. Speaker, this Government is sensitive to these things and would continue, certainly in the governance of this country, to ensure that we adhere wherever possible to those things so long as they do not undermine the security and the capacity of the country to move forward. Mr. Speaker, thus far we have not been faced with that challenge and I am grateful for that small fact.

Mr. Speaker, this would usher the police into a new era in relation to their communications and I trust and hope would also ensure that along with the training which has been afforded to them in all areas, we would see an even higher level of performance than that which they have already distinguished themselves regionally.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to this Honourable House that I am grateful for the support that has been reflected on both Sides of the House because, as I have said in here before, there are certain matters that ought not to divide this House. The peace and security of Barbados is one of those matters which shall remain foremost in my mind when I speak to keeping these matters above partisan divide.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful and therefore beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, just before we call the next order, may I say that through prior

arrangement, we have arranged to brief Members of both this House and the Other Place at 5.00 p.m. in relation to the matters pertaining to Barbados' invocation of dispute settlement mechanisms with Trinidad and Tobago in relation to the maritime delimitation and fisheries matter. Therefore, with the concurrence of the House, I propose that whatever we do that we seek to break at 4.45 p.m., even if it is necessary to defer the continuation of that matter until next Tuesday.

Mr. Speaker, I am not seeking in any way to constrain the debate in this House. I am just giving Honourable Members the assurance that we have persons who are currently on the island and, therefore, a time of physical constraint as to when they may be able to appropriately brief Honourable Members of both Houses because the Government believes that it is a matter of such national significance that Members of Parliament ought to be given the fullest possible briefing in relation to these matters.

I am obliged to you, Sir.
3.30 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY, the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply. Mr. R. D. MARSHALL in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee of Supply.

ORDER NO. 9 – RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$15 076 225 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2003-2004, AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 10, 2003-2004, WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION AND THAT THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 46 BE INCLUDED AS SET OUT IN SCHEDULE II TO THIS RESOLUTION

HEAD 16 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND THE CIVIL SERVICE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$24 035

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, this is a very simple matter in relation to the Personnel Administration section of the Ministry of the Civil Service, under Subprogramme 083, which relates to expenditure that is

required to meet the cost of car parking expenses. This is an expense that previously had been placed with the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, which is now proposed to be passed onto the Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs and the Civil Service.

Sir, as you would appreciate, this matter relates to terms and conditions of service, as well as to the efficacious operation of the offices. The Personnel Administration Division has been out of its permanent home at Collymore Rock for sometime now and has operated in Bridgetown. Of course, in relation to the difference between central Bridgetown, where it has operated in the heart of the City, contiguous to the premises, there is no car parking space as is available for members of the public doing business and the staff, as in the same way that it was when the Personnel Administration Division was at Maxwellton, Collymore, St. Michael.

I am pleased to note that the permanent premises for the Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs and the Civil Service are almost completed, near to the National Insurance building but in the meantime, the expenses of the operation of the Office in its temporary location, must be met. Therefore, this Parliament is being asked to supplement the Estimates under Head 16, in the sum of \$24 035 to meet the cost of car parking expenses which relate to the operation of the Personnel Administration Division.

I beg to move that Head 16 stand part.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 22 – MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$50 422

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, the amount is for the Telecommunications Unit to facilitate the arrangement of additional staff members, and I can assure you that these additional staff members are desperately needed.

Mr. Chairman, since the Government has made a determination that it would facilitate the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector, certainly much would have been said and would have been expected of the Telecommunications Unit. Sir, notwithstanding the fact that there was a need to provide institutional strengthening for it, over the period of time it has worked very assiduously in helping with the forward movement of this liberalisation process.

Mr. Chairman, arising from the determination of the Memorandum of Understanding, Schedule 1, signed by the parties involved on October 16, 2001, has called for the

establishment of a new Telecommunications Act, which was proclaimed on September 30, 2002.

Sir, with the establishment of that Telecommunications Act, the way was more or less paved for the necessary and highly desirable changes to take place in the telecommunications sector. Pursuant to the Telecommunications Act was the need to bring a number of regulations on the statute book, and one of the more important tasks of the Telecommunications Unit within the last number of years and certainly after the passage of that Act, was the drafting of these regulations with a view to having them gazetted.

Sir, with a small team, the Telecommunications Unit has been able to produce no fewer than 22 regulations, up to the end of January. There are a further eight regulations waiting to be gazetted.

Mr. Speaker, these things are all necessary to facilitate the repositioning of the telecommunications sector but more importantly, to allow for the appropriate systems to be put in place for other investors to come into the telecommunications sector, so that we could all achieve our long-awaited dream of a fully-liberalised sector, come August 1, 2004.

Sir, the Telecommunications Unit, as the Minister's "right hand" and "left hand" in shaping the telecommunications policy that would guide the forward movement of the sector, has been able to publish a number of important policy guidelines and fact sheets, which deal with various aspects of telecommunications.

As I said, this is an all necessary prerequisite for a fully-competitive environment in the telecommunications sector in Barbados by the assumed date, July 31, 2004.

Sir, previous to the establishment or the repositioning of the Telecommunications Unit, the business of monitoring our national spectrum was not done in as an organised fashion as will now be obtained, since the Telecommunications Unit has been able to produce a master document called the "National Spectrum Plan". It is a very carefully crafted document and from hereon in, would facilitate the very ordinary use of our national spectrum. It is a very valuable economic resource.

Sir, this national spectrum would allow for the orderly use of the spectrum. It would also allow the Government, through the issuance of licences, to facilitate those persons who want to use any part of it.
3.40 p.m.

The Telecommunications Unit has also been able to help in consultation with the provision of the mobile

communication licences which were issued in August 2003. In recent times we have been hearing a lot about it because Barbadians have finally begun to see the light in competition being engendered in the telecommunications sector. One company had a massive fanfare to introduce itself to the Barbadian market. Another company has used a less glamorous approach but the real beneficiaries in the telecommunications market will be the Barbadian consumers and we are thankful for that.

We have also seen licences for the use of spectrum issued to CBC, the Caribbean Media Corporation. We have also seen Cable & Wireless issued with a new domestic telecommunications service licence on November 3, 2003.

Mr. Chairman, as I speak and consistent with the Government's aim to introduce competition in the domestic market, we recently agreed to the composition of an evaluation committee which will, in short time, review four proposals and within the next few weeks we expect that an announcement would be made as to which of the four companies will be allowed to compete with Cable & Wireless in the provision of services in the domestic market. Sir, we are driving towards full liberalisation of the telecommunications sector by July 31, 2004.

Sir, it is informative to note that now that we are moving to a fully liberalised telecommunications sector, that the work of the Telecommunications Unit will change in such a way that it will require a more comprehensive monitoring function to be carried out at the Gun Hill Station.

As part of our efforts to have it strengthened institutionally, we have to provide a 24-hour monitoring operation from that station which will require us to get more technical persons and equipment into the system to do the job in a professional manner.

In order to issue the licences, the work programme of the telecommunications section will include the development of an online registry to enable customers to register their desires to have licences via that method.

Mr. Chairman, in the not too distant future, the Telecommunications Unit will be seeking to develop a website to highlight the work of the Unit as a public educational effort. The website will display, amongst other things, information about the Unit itself, the various policies and regulations developed by the Unit, the Spectrum Master Plan and Handbook, *et cetera*.

I encourage all persons who have an interest in this sector to avail themselves of the Spectrum Master Plan and Handbook. With the increase in workload and the changes to the nature of the work of the Telecommunications Unit – we

would appreciate the need for further institutional strengthening.

Recently, the Ministry of the Civil Service approved the request for the addition of technical officers to the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities to go directly to the telecommunications sector. We have already three officers and this request will now allow us to now have one Chief Communications Officer, one Telecommunications Officer and one Secretary as part of the institutionally strengthening of the Telecommunications Unit.

Sir, we have been fortunate to attract the services of the present Chief Communications Officer who has considerable technical knowledge, having worked for many years as a senior officer at British Telecom. At the level of policy formulation, regulatory and management issues, he is at the top in all these areas. This creates a problem where we have to use him in all these areas and before he drops, we need to have additional support at the senior level.

3.50 p.m.

I can assure you that with the coming of a Deputy Telecommunications Officer, there will be high level of specialisation at the top and the Chief Telecommunications Officer will continue in his present vein confident in the knowledge that the dream he has for bringing the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector to its rightful conclusion can be realised and that the Telecommunications Unit, which will be called upon to do many things, will be sufficiently strengthened to perform in the most professional manner.

The Telecommunications Unit will also be called upon to maintain registers for public inspection of a number of things, hence the need for us to get more technical officers to go into the field to conduct the various inspections and regulatory administrative functions. Sir, by maintaining registers of customer equipment spectrum, installers, public and radio communications, ships, aircraft and amateur, citizen bands station, video clubs and TV antennas, the reach of the telecommunications will extend very wide.

In respect of inspection and administration, one of the key things that the Telecommunications Unit will be doing is monitoring and managing the National Spectrum Plan to ensure compliance. We will also be inspecting all radio and television stations, video shops, sellers' and dealers' premises, administer the numbering plant and collecting licence fees from activities that should attract fees.

Another function of the Telecommunications Unit will be to monitor the radio frequency radiation and generally enforcing the Telecommunications Act, 2001.

Sir, the Telecommunications Unit is deserving of these additional members as additional responsibilities

will fall on it. Therefore, it has to reposition itself, institutionally, to ensure that it can carry out these functions.

Mr. Chairman, with those few words, I beg that this Head stand part.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 25 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT– \$2 290 000

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Members on the Other Side have given me an allotted time of five minutes to introduce this Head and I will proceed accordingly.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: The amount of \$2.29 million requested is to cover three items. The first item is the construction of a processing bay to facilitate the transshipment of fish at the Bridgetown Public Market; the second one is to commence work which is required in relocating vendors at the Fairchild Street Market to Golden Square to free up that facility for the construction of a new market and the third item is for an amount of \$1.54 million to make the payment to China State Corporation for approved variations during the renovation of the Cheapside Market.

Sir, it is no secret that one of the key issues in the agricultural sector relates to agriculture, health and the safety of food. This is part and parcel of the need for all nations involved in the production of agricultural commodities to pay closer attention to sanitary and photo-sanitary measures in order to protect the well-being of our citizens and visitors. Sir, as it relates to the involvement in international trade, respect for sanitary and photo-sanitary measures is a criteria which will certainly allow for the continued participation in international trade.

Mr. Chairman, for some time now there has been the transshipment of fish caught by long liners from the Bridgetown Fisheries Complex. Consistent with the Government's commitment to enhance and paying closer attention to agriculture, health and food safety issues, an initiative is afoot to provide a processing bay for those fisherfolks who are involved in the business of transshipment of fish from the Bridgetown Public Market.

Sir, previously the fish being offloaded by the long liners has not been handled in the best sanitary conditions and very soon these conditions will come to an end because

we recognise the need to support this very important area of the fishing sector, that is, providing a more enabling environment for those who want to help us in our efforts to export fish.

4.00 p.m.

This new processing date is the Government's response to the requests made of it, by those long-line fishermen to give them a facility that would allow for the better handling of the fish which is being transshipped.

Also, Mr. Chairman, there is a very fashionable quality assurance programme. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South can speak volumes about quality assurance schemes in the context of agricultural help in food safety. The particular one I am talking about is the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point or what we call HACCP. It is vitally important that people who are involved in the handling and processing of food, seek to introduce such a quality assurance scheme.

With the establishment of this processing Bay, and based on previous conversations that we have had with the long-line fishermen, and I could imagine that these would have continued since I have left the Ministry of Agriculture, that they want to continue to lead us in our efforts to increase the level of expectation of fish. They understand the standards that would be expected of them, and the handling practices that will be expected of them. I could assure you that raising the level of handling practices will see the introduction of the HACCP introduced in operations from the Bridgetown Fishing Complex.

Sir, all we are doing here is making the adjustments and putting the necessary systems in place so as to facilitate an expansion in the expectation of fish caught by our fishermen. Barbados needs to look even further afield and consistent with the direction in which the industry is heading. From a regional view point, Belize has done it at reasonable expense, and that is breaking into the European market. Guyana has just gotten the approval to export fish, and fish products to the European market. Of course, what it required of them is to develop the infrastructure for the fishing industry.

It also required them to make necessary amendments to the legislation, all with a view of reaching the standards that are expected internationally. Of course, you can get into the European market only when representatives from the European Union come to your country and do the necessary inspection of your facilities. They make an evaluation, and an assessment of your handling practices and, if you have schemes like the HACCP in place, that will help.

Therefore, Barbados needs to move to the next point and following the leads set by Belize and, as I said, Guyana,

get the necessary certification and go ahead, and Jamaica has been extending significant resources, in ensuring that its fish and fish products can be exported to the European Union. This is the direction we are heading. We are saying that the processing bay to be constructed at a cost of a \$¼ million, is critical in this regard.

Mr. Chairman, I turn now to the need to relocate the vendors from the Fairchild Street to Golden Square. One may argue that this project is slightly behind time, but it is extremely important. I said, from this very position, or a little to the right, that I am totally in favour of the efforts to redevelop Bridgetown, both upper Bridgetown and lower Bridgetown.

The work that is going on in lower Bridgetown is to be admired. I also said that it is nothing short of disgraceful that an entity which we all would have gone into at some stage when we were youngsters, to make procurement of something – those of us who would have gone to school down this side, or those who would have come into town – that there should be a major overhaul of the Fairchild Street Market. I do not think anybody would disagree with that. There are certain landmarks that stick with you throughout life, and the Fairchild Street Market happens to be one of them.

Sir, we need to move with some alacrity now to make sure that the vendors are relocated, to free up that area for the reconstruction of the market. This is the first phase of the project, removal of the vendors, and setting them up at Golden Square. This is a temporary arrangement but we need to make sure that they are comfortable, nevertheless. What we do not want is to move the vendors to an area that is not easily accessible, or one that is not close to the bus-stand in Bridgetown.

While I was there, we looked for many a site and the decision was that we would settle for Golden Square and we will make the necessary changes there from a physical viewpoint, to ensure that the vendors can be relocated. Certainly, we can start on the reconstruction of the Fairchild Street market.

The last item, Mr. Chairman, is the \$1.54 million as I said, which will be the payment of the outstanding monies for the China State Corporation for improved variations to the Cheapside Market.

Mr. Chairman, in the same tone that I spoke, in respect of the Fairchild Street Market, persons before me would have spoken about the state of disrepair which existed at Cheapside. All Barbadians would have agreed with this Administration that, as part of its programme to improve the market infrastructure in Barbados that Fairchild Street should have been included for rehabilitation.

We have a spanking new facility which we are all very proud of, the construction of the Cheapside Market which, at the original time, would have predated some of us in here. Once again, that is a landmark in lower Bridgetown. Through the provision of that facility, I can assure you that many a family, those from the country, and those from the town, would have been able to prosper.

We recognise the important and very strategic contribution up to this day that the vending class plays in this country. That is why it is extremely important that whenever we get the opportunity that we make the conditions under which the vendors have to ply their trade as comfortable as possible.

4.10 p.m.

I was extremely pleased to be part of that project when I was elsewhere. Consistent with the plans to develop lower Bridgetown, the Cheapside Rehabilitation Project fits neatly into those plans. The work has been done. The market is fully operational and now we are seeking to get this \$1.54 million to make good our outstanding liabilities to the China State Corporation for the approved variations to the project.

Mr. Chairman, with those few words I beg to move that Head 25 stand part.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I beg to second that.

The question that Head 25 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 31 – MINISTRY OF PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT – \$124 324

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, this matter seeks Parliament's approval for a supplementary expenditure for the sum of just over \$124 000. This supplementary relates to two items. First of all, the expenditure falling under the Head of Maintenance of Property is for the upkeep of vehicles, insurance and equipment, the upkeep of equipment, including their computer network, maintenance cost regarding air, noise and water equipment, purchase of replacement parts and the annual calibration cost of equipment.

In this particular context, there was an under provision for the petrol required by the Environmental Engineering Division which is the Division which undertakes a series of inspections of an environmental nature around the island. Any complaints concerning air pollution, noise pollution, matters relating to inspections in connection with applications to the Town Planning Department and related matters are dealt with by the officers of the Environmental Engineering Unit, therefore the provision required is for petrol.

Some \$80 000 was provided for under this Head for several other items of maintenance of property. The new requirement is for an additional \$56 000 to meet the expected expenditure up to March 31, 2004.

Additionally, the other item relates to Other Personal Emoluments. During the course of the financial year, approval of the Ministry of the Civil Service was obtained for the creation of a number of posts. These are a secretary, a clerical officer and a senior clerk. Therefore the funds which were voted under that Head of Personal Emoluments is not sufficient to meet the expenditure expected to be incurred up to March 31, 2004, therefore an amount of some \$67 473 is required to supplement the expenses under that Head.

With that explanation as to the reasons for this supplementary, I beg to move that Head 31 stand part.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: I beg to second that.

The question that Head 31 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 37 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORT – \$12 500 000

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, the amount being requested under this Head of some \$12.5 million is required to assist the Barbados Transport Board with its operating cost to the end of the current financial year.

Mr. Chairman, it is customary for the Government through the Ministry of Finance to provide the Barbados Transport Board with an annual subvention of \$4.93 million. However, over the years this has proven to be insufficient to cover the operation cost of the Transport Board when added to the revenue that is generated by the Transport Board.

Over the last five to 10 years and certainly in the most recent part of that five to 10-year period notwithstanding the fixed cost elements in the cost section of the Barbados Transport Board, the respective Boards have been trying their utmost to introduce a set of cost containment measures while, at the same time, seeking to enhance the revenue generating capacity of the Barbados Transport Board.

Mr. Chairman, I do not think that anyone in here would argue that the Barbados Transport Board does not play a very important role in this country's functioning. However, like any other government entity, it is a statutory corporation, but we do recognise that the Barbados Transport Board operations can be made a little more efficient.

That is what would have driven the respective Boards in the last five to ten years to seek, wherever possible through the introduction of cost containing measures to reduce the level of expenditure. For example, the Barbados Transport Board introduced numerous changes in its administrative and financial management which realised in the 2002/2003 financial year a saving of about \$2 million when compared to the previous years.

The Barbados Transport Board, as part of a package of the difficulties it was experiencing, completed an extensive review of the routes network taking into consideration the demographics of the population, the distribution and the effectiveness of competition in addition to a recent market research finding. They used those results in order to help them with the revisions which were made to the routes. All of this was designed to trim expenditure.

4.20 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, on the revenue side, the Board sought to engage the services of a corporate communications manager, as well as a public relations company, to develop the marketing strategy and to give a proper marketing public relations programme which would take into consideration things such as the restructuring and rationalisation of the routes network, aimed at increasing the ridership and getting the buses at the correct times, *et cetera*.

Sir, this work will continue but, as I said, there are a number of inescapable costs to the Transport Board which will, from time to time, require it to look outside of its revenue-generating capacity for support.

Mr. Chairman, it is against that background that we come to this Honourable House to seek parliamentary approval for the \$12.5 million to help with the operating cost of the Transport Board.

Mr. Chairman, with that explanation, as short as it might be, I ask that Head 37 stand part.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, I was hoping for a longer run-up and introduction to this part of the Supplementary because by any stretch of the imagination, it is difficult to conceive how Government could have allocated a mere \$4.9 million to the Transport Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003, and is now seeking a supplementary to the order of \$12.5 million.

Mr. Chairman, we need to be told more, and that is the problem with this Parliament. We are being asked to support initiatives in the interest of the wider good of the people of Barbados but yet we are not getting the kind of information that would make us comfortable that what we are supporting is actually as is.

Sir, that is the problem that we in Opposition are having. For example, I have been perusing the document in regards to the Transport Board. I am aware, given what I have been able to have assessed, that on a daily basis in the year 2001, there were 146 buses which were available and that in 2002, the availability of buses fell to 135. In March, 2002, on any given day, we had a maximum of 120 buses available, but what is hurtful about this is that throughout the Transport Board's Annual Report, we are being told that to satisfy the peak demand, the Transport Board has to have 186 buses.

Sir, are we to believe that this \$12.5 million would have gone towards the purchase of new buses? Apparently not. Therefore, what are we doing with this \$12.5 million as a supplementary to the Transport Board? Sir, that is the kind of information I would have hoped that would have been given to the Parliament of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, that is what is really needed and, unfortunately, we should have been given more details with respect to the operations of the Transport Board. This is why I would now seek to tell the public of Barbados that we definitely need to make a decision with respect to where do we stand in providing transportation across the length and breadth of this country.

Mr. Chairman, we accept that it needs to be subsidised. I know that recently a kite has been flown as to whether or not there should be an increase in bus fares, and I think that Government has been testing the waters to determine whether or not it would be prudent at this time, in light of the containment of incomes, wages, the escalation in food prices, the pending increases in water rates, in food prices, and in transport, that perhaps it might not be a politically prudent thing to do at this stage in terms of requesting an increase in bus fares.

Mr. Chairman, again in another document we were told that there has been an attempt in the Ministry to go to the Fair Trading Commission for a justification in the increase in bus fares.

Sir, there is much confusing information especially with respect to another Government entity, the Barbados Water Authority.

Sir, when we look at the page 24 of the Annual Report of the Transport Board, we would see that substantial losses have been made.

Tax Losses

"The Board has unveiled tax losses of \$60 288 329 available to be carried forward and applied against future taxable income. The losses and their expiry dates are as follows:

Year of Income	Amount of Losses	Expiry Date
1996	5 449 531	2005
1998	8 453 984	2007
1999	1 405 330	2008
2000	12 218 657	2009
2001	18 195 359	2010
2002	14 565 468	2011

Sir, we in Barbados have to ask some very serious questions because it does appear to me, and I suppose to most Barbadians, that the private component of our transportation system, such as the ZRs, ZMs, and others, have been making profit. Therefore, the question is why are we not seeing a better performance and not just a question of profitability.

There is no need to have profitability within the Transport Board system because we all agree that there is a certain social component to the delivery of this service, and that it cannot be treated as an economic good. This we have to accept but the extent to which we are willing to subsidise the transportation sector in Barbados must be determined by a major discussion or a debate, with respect to the real issues that are involved in the provision of this service.

Sir, I do not want this to appear to be a partisan statement. It is, in fact, a concern about where we are taking the industry and how we intend to manage the transportation sector in the future.

I have my views because, as I have before said, notwithstanding those who have criticised the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Programme in the early 1990s, there were some major positive initiatives that were, at the time, taken, of which the emergence of locally-owned became owners and operators of the transportation system in Barbados at that time.

It is also similar to what has happened in the delivery of food service where we saw vendors in small Suzuki vans plying their trade. We saw the upsurge in construction and the emergence of several small businesses in the provision or delivery of restaurant services.

4.30 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I, therefore, feel that this area of economic activity offers a special opportunity for the process of economic enfranchisement to occur in a meaningful and positive way in Barbados. I do not want persons to confuse the delivery of permits, say for taxi operators, to be interpreted as an initial attempt to broaden the ownership base in Barbados but I, like some other persons, feel that there were some other motives involved.

Sir, the Transport Board does not have to be privatised but the size of it could be reduced to an effective minimum

level of efficiency. As I have said before, there is no reason why small Barbadians could not get involved in the effective and efficient delivery of transportation services in Barbados. We have to accept that the elderly, school children and the disabled would be in need of subsidised bus fares. I think we need a major debate with respect to where we are taking the industry and the question of empowerment.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I understand the politics of the Estimates and while it should be an informative, educational exercise but depending on how Government calls the Heads, it could also be a mundane, routine exercise.

Mr. Chairman, can we provide the 186 buses required to meet peak requirements? I am looking at the Annual Report 2001/2002. We are two years behind time but the evidence says that we can provide more effective transportation with these 186 buses.

Sir, when you check the report you would see that the Transport Board has about 213 buses of which 135 are available. Therefore, we need to look at another component of the operation of this sector. What is it that is causing us not to have more buses available on a daily basis in Barbados? Does it have to do with the ownership structure of the industry?

Sir, I want to cite an example of what happened in the distributive sector five to ten years ago in Barbados. Mr. Seale and other major distributors in Barbados recognised that they could allow the employees to own the means of transportation. They effectively did so by allowing the employees to secure loans to purchase the units and allowed them to manage these entities.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, nobody can put words in my mouth. This Administration does not have the political will to do certain things and is always looking to the Opposition to make comments on which they then hang their hats.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has five more minutes.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, we need to determine the optimal side of the Transport Board. We can manage it as a Government and plan for a comprehensive transport sector in the foreseeable future. In the absence of doing this, we will consistently have to deal with these types of issues in Barbados. Sir, there is a need for a mature approach in this whole process.

I thank you, Sir.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, in the interest of time, I beg to move that Head 37 stand part.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmation without division.

HEAD 46 – MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND PUBLIC UTILITIES – \$87,444.00

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, Honourable Members in the Chamber would remember that the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities was recently established. It has definite responsibility and this can be gleamed from the way the portfolio was put together.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West spoke a moment ago about the importance of taking a detailed look at the public component of the transportation system in Barbados and coming up with a group rationalisation to determine the optimum size of the Transport Board relative to the size of the private sector operators in the field.

Sir, I raised that issue to make the point that there are certain definitive tasks that the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities will be called upon to undertake. The Ministry also has responsibility for the Barbados National Oil Company Limited, Barbados National Terminal Company Limited, the National Petroleum Corporation, the Barbados Water Authority and the Telecommunications Unit. One can see from the portfolio, the strategic importance of establishing a Ministry of this kind especially at this time.

Sir, this sets the stage for us to get a greater appreciation why we need to strengthen, from an institutional viewpoint, the secretariat at the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities.
4.40 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, this request for a sum of \$44 962.00 for Personal Emoluments; \$5 582.00 for National Insurance contributions and \$35 900.00 for a vehicle is warranted. The Ministry has recently been established incorporating the full staff from various sections that existed up to that point. We are now trying to make a determination as to what would be the appropriate staff complement for a secretariat for this Ministry.

The Ministry of the Civil Service has acceded to our request for additional staff members to strengthen the secretariat at the Ministry. There is very important work to be done and I am certain that we will get an opportunity to discuss it at a later stage.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 46 stand part and that the explanatory notes to Head 46 be included as set out in Schedule II of this Resolution.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that.

The question that Head 46 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg that we revert to the Order Paper for Statements by Ministers, as it is proposed that the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs make a formal Ministerial Statement to this Chamber regarding the matters pertaining to the maritime dispute with Trinidad and Tobago. Sir, as I indicated, it is anticipated that after that Ministerial Statement that we adjourn the House for today and that we will go downstairs to be able to take the formal briefing for Members of both Parliaments, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: With the House's permission, we will now revert to Statements by Ministers. The Honourable Member for St. James Central.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY THE HON. KERRIE D. SYMMONDS, M.P. ACTING MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE 17TH FEBRUARY, 2004

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, as you are aware the Government of Barbados yesterday took the step of formally instituting arbitral proceedings against the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, under Annex VII of the 1982 United Nations' Convention on The Law of the Sea.

In these circumstances I therefore consider it my solemn duty to share with all other Honourable Members of this House the relevant facts and circumstances which have led to this decision.

The history of the bilateral relationship regarding the marine space that separates us has been a long one. In this regard, there has been, during colonial times, a mutual co-existence under imperial legislation which provided for a three-mile territorial sea in respect of each of our countries. In addition, there has been a long history of traditional fishing activity by Barbadian fisherfolk in waters up to the three-mile limit off Tobago.

In 1979, Sir, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Prime Ministers of Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago which committed both countries to co-operate in areas of mutual interest, and mandated the commencement of negotiations relating to a Bilateral Fishing Agreement between our countries. In addition, the Prime Ministers also agreed to cooperate on matters relating to the protection and preservation of the marine resources of both States.

As the Honourable Members are aware that the evolution of international law led in 1982 to the adoption of an International Treaty, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Each State Party to this Treaty is entitled to a 1-mile territorial sea over which it has jurisdiction, and in addition to 200 miles of Exclusive Economic Zone.

In areas where States are separated by less than 400 miles, as is the case between Barbados and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the fixing of a maritime boundary assumes great importance, and is normally achieved by a process of negotiation. In those instances where the two countries cannot come to an agreement, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provides for the dispute to be settled by a compulsory and binding dispute settlement process of an international nature, under the provisions of Part XV of UNCLOS.

Mr. Speaker, this House must take note of the fact that Barbadian fisherfolk have always fished off Tobago from time immemorial. No one else has fished there, not even Tobagonians whose pattern of fishing takes them just offshore. Barbados, therefore, recognises the existence of traditional fishing rights of its Barbadian fisherfolk to fish in the maritime areas off Tobago where they have fished historically from as far back as the memory of man doth run.

In the past four years, Barbados has sat with delegations of Trinidad and Tobago through a total of nine rounds of negotiation and two Joint Technical Working Group Meetings. The nine rounds of negotiations, Sir, spoke to the linked issues of Maritime Boundary Delimitation and Fisheries, while the two Technical Working Group Meetings addressed the broader issues of stock assessment and sustainable management. During this time, there has been a consistency of our position, that is Barbados' position, that delimitation is an indispensable prerequisite in the negotiating process and is inescapably linked to fisheries negotiations.

Barbados has also consistently maintained that issues of conservation and management of fisheries stocks are a critical component in the maintenance of our pelagic resources.

I have also as a matter of duty, Mr. Speaker, to speak to the matter of the 1990 Venezuela\Trinidad and Tobago Maritime Boundaries Agreement.

Sir, that Treaty purports to arrogate unilaterally to Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago vast parts of the maritime territory of Guyana and Barbados. That Treaty not only affects our maritime territory, but also has potentially serious adverse consequences, by implication for vast parts of Guyana's land territory *vis-a-vis* Venezuela.

This Parliament is asked to take note of the fact that Barbados has consistently maintained that the Venezuela/Trinidad and Tobago Treaty is neither binding on nor relevant to Barbados or any other third State.

In view of the factual matrix that I have just outlined, I also have the duty to inform this House that yesterday morning, the morning of Monday, February 16, Prime Minister Patrick Manning and a Ministerial Team, at his request, visited Barbados to meet with Prime Minister Arthur and his Ministerial Team.

I am obliged to inform you that at that meeting, Prime Minister Manning raised the matter of maritime delimitation efforts between our States.
4.50 p.m.

Prime Minister Manning stated that, as he had promised in Nigeria, his Cabinet had reviewed the 1990 Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago Maritime Boundary Agreement, and had taken the view that Trinidad and Tobago could not act contrary to that Treaty, as it was law. However, I want to make it clear, Sir, that this Treaty violates international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, of which Trinidad and Tobago, as well as Barbados, are both parties.

The 1990 Venezuela, and Trinidad and Tobago Treaty is highly prejudicial to Barbados in that via that Treaty, Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago had tried unilaterally to steal a large part of Barbados' maritime territory. A significant part of that territory lies even beyond the 200-mile maximum limit that Trinidad and Tobago is allowed to claim, under the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea.

The 1990 Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago Treaty not only violates the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea on a number of grounds, it also does not apply to or affect any third country. I reiterate, Sir, it has no relevance to Barbados. In this context, I regret to inform you that Prime Minister Manning stated that Trinidad and Tobago was not willing to voluntarily enter into any maritime delimitation treaty with Barbados that contradicted the 1990 Treaty with Venezuela.

Prime Minister Manning also stated for the record that he believes the maritime delimitation issue was intractable. I must further inform that Prime Minister Manning indicated for the record, that his Government did not see a resolution

of a maritime delimitation dispute as a prerequisite for the resolution of the fisheries dispute between Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago.

Prime Minister Manning also tabled the view, Sir, that while Trinidad and Tobago was prepared to meet on the maritime delimitation issue, at the same time that it met on the fisheries issue, it was not of the view that the issue of maritime delimitation was linked to fisheries. This was the first time that Barbados had officially heard a Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago express this view.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade has taken legal advice on this matter, Sir, and two issues arise. The first is the unwillingness of Trinidad and Tobago to act contrary to the illegal 1990 Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago Maritime Boundaries Agreement and secondly, the fact that the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago does not consider maritime delimitation to be a fundamental prerequisite to resolve the fishing problems between our States.

Both constitute a dispute under the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea and are inescapably interlinked by fact, and under international law. Given that Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago together have tried for many years to resolve the problem of fisheries and maritime delimitation without success, the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea provides Barbados with a juridical basis to invoke compulsory and binding international dispute settlement, via the provisions of Part 15 of that Convention.

Mr. Speaker, the Government remains mindful of the fact that the exercise of traditional fishing rights is an exercise of earning a living for the fisherfolk of this country. We are also mindful of the fact that even while actively engaged in the negotiating process, Trinidad and Tobago has, on several occasions, as recently as February 6, 2004, arrested fishermen who were fishing in Barbados' historical waters, as they have traditionally done.

It is regrettable to have to note in many cases these arrests were accompanied by either a breach of the quick notification process agreed between our respective negotiators, or were accompanied by a failure to supply charges or coordinates, as to the alleged location of the relevant vessels. The arbitrary process still leaves open the question of provisional arrangements for fishing until a solution is identified.

The Government of Barbados will, therefore, as a separate step, explore the possibility of making an application for an arbitral tribunal, under the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea, Article 290, to

institute provisional measures, in respect of the vital historic fishing rights of Barbadian fisherfolk. It is anticipated that provisional measures and arrangements could be implemented in time for the next session commencing in November of 2004.

In light of the advice received, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade has referred the matter to the Cabinet of Barbados, which has mandated that:

- A. Barbados formally breaks off the negotiations on maritime delimitation and, consequently, breaks off the negotiations on fisheries, and
- B. Move speedily to invoke compulsory binding international dispute settlement provisions with Trinidad and Tobago under Part 15 of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea.

I am also under a duty, Sir, to inform this House that by Diplomatic Note sent at 5.15 p.m. yesterday evening, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was formally notified that Barbados had initiated compulsory binding international arbitration, under the said Part 15 of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea. Simultaneously, Sir, copies were sent to the UN Secretary General, and the President of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea Tribunal.

It must be stated for the purpose of accuracy, Mr. Speaker, that this matter, as reported, has not been submitted to the United Nations and I want to repeat that for emphasis. As reported by the Press, this matter has not been reported to the United Nations but, in fact, to an *ad hoc* arbitral process, under the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea.

Further, should the Government of Trinidad and Tobago agree, the Government of Barbados would prefer,

Sir, to have this arbitration located in a neutral third CARICOM Member State, provided that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago would agree.

I would wish, Mr. Speaker, to assure the House that the mandate of Cabinet was received, only after the fullest and most careful review of the current status of Barbados' negotiations on maritime boundaries and fisheries and after extensive consultation, Sir, with our team of international law experts.

In this regard, I think it only fitting that I publicly take this opportunity to express my thanks and that of the Government of Barbados to our chief negotiator, Sir Harold St. John and his negotiating team, as well as to the senior staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and, Sir, last but not least, to the Attorney-General and members of her staff who worked above and beyond the call of duty to defend Barbados' interest in these most difficult times.

I thank you, Sir.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government's Business for today's Sitting, for reasons previously announced. With that, I would wish to move that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, February 24, 2004 at 10.00 a.m.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that this Honourable House be adjourned until Tuesday, February 24, 2004 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
4.59 p.m.

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