
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 27, 2007.

PRESENT

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

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc.(Econ.) (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance)

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

Sir, L.R. Tull, Q.C., M.A (Oxon)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Q.C, LLB.

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

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

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

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY, G.C., LL.B. (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Affairs and Development)(Leader of the House)

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

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc., J.P. (Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office)

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

Hon. A. P. WOOD, J.P. B.Sc., M.Sc., M.Phil. (Minister

Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc., J.P.(Minister of Housing and Lands)

Hon. C. A. MASCOLL, BSc. (Econ.) (Hons.), M.A. (Public Finance) (Minister of State, Ministry of Finance)

Dr. W. F. DUGUID, B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S., FDRCS., J.P.

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

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

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B., (Hons.), L.E.C., (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)

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

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

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

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

Prayers were taken by Rev. Canon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, February 20, 2007.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, February 20, 2007, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

MOTIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, before I move to Government Business, Orders of the Day, I believe that Your Honour is in receipt of a letter from the Honourable Member for St. James North indicating that he has not been feeling well, and requesting your permission for leave of absence from December 27, 2006 to March 13, 2007. I just formally would wish to enter that into the records, in accordance with the Rules of this Chamber. Sir, having

said that, I beg to move that Government Business be the Order of the Day.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let me first say that the House

unreservedly gives the request for leave to the Honourable Member for St. James North.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the following Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of today.

Hon. R.R. FARLEY: The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is now the Order of the Day.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 12 – SECOND READING OF THE POLICE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2007

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I believe that all citizens in this country, while they may not have reason for any direct intervention by or contact with the Members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, recognise the pivotal role that they play in this society, in relation to law and order. This history of the Royal Barbados Police Force is filled with many examples of the finest traditions. It is filled with many examples of heroic conduct. It is also filled with examples of selflessness and willingness to sacrifice for the good of Barbados and Barbadians.

Sir, it has become clear to all Barbados, that over the past few years there has been an acceleration of an unfortunate trend, in terms of the manpower needs of the Force. Mr. Speaker, there was a time in Barbados, when becoming a member of the Royal Barbados Police Force was one of the careers to which a young man or woman would eagerly aspire upon leaving school. It is one of the forms of employment that saw many Barbadians lift themselves out of a low standard of living into a state in either the lower middle class or middle class, also commanding a certain aura of respect in our society. It is probably fair to say that in those days, perhaps half a century ago, a policeman ranked with the standard of a teacher and a reverend.

Mr. Speaker, in recent times, there have been challenges with regard to recruiting young men and women

to the Royal Barbados Police Force. Those challenges are not now mentioned for the first time in this Honourable House. I believe there has been much public debate on the matter.

Sir, the Royal Barbados Police Force has an authorised establishment, with a total authorised number of 1 528 individuals. These individuals would go from Constables, at the bottom, to the Commissioner of Police, at the top, but our current strength is only 1 386. Sir, a person might argue that you are just approximately 140 individuals off, and a person might even wonder if being short by only 10 per cent could present such a challenge in the form an inability to adequately police the needs of Barbados and Barbadians. I want to say, it does.

Sir, of the 143 positions that have not been filled, 95 of them are the rank of Police Constable. This shortage, therefore, has made it extremely difficult for the Royal Barbados Police Force to execute many of its operational and strategic initiatives, but it has also made it impossible, for them to adequately service the things and events in Barbados at which have become commonplace to notice police presence.

Sir, I remind Honourable Members of this House in December 2006, that the Commissioner issued a public statement that the Royal Barbados Police Force would not be able, during the Christmas Season, to provide police officers to service various events, such as fetes, fairs and so on, if they were going to be able at the same time to adequately police Barbados over the Christmas Season.

Mr. Speaker, there are several reasons that have been attributed to the decline in the numbers of the Royal Barbados Police Force. Perhaps, the most publicised reason over the last year or so, has been the fact that police men and women have been leaving Barbados and the Force to take up lucrative positions in Bermuda, Cayman Islands, and more recently, Anguilla.

Sir, I believe it is important to say at the outset, that this is not at all new. I believe that every Barbadian can point out one policeman who has left our shores to go to work in Bermuda. I am told that there was a time, when the more senior ranks in the Bahamas Police Force was heavily populated by Barbadian people, so it should not surprise us that this trend is one that continues even today.

Sir, the current Attorney-General for Anguilla was a former member of the Royal Barbados Police Force, who left Barbados to go to Bermuda, to take up a career as a police constable. I mentioned him because he stayed in Bermuda and eventually went into the Gazetted ranks, followed a career in law and found himself acting as Solicitor-General and Governor of Bermuda from time to time

10.20 a.m.

Sequence 2

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

House 126, sequence 03, 10.20 a.m.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Therefore, it is not a new phenomenon for Barbadian police officers to travel from these shores, and carry with them, the training to their own benefit. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it is no different from a situation, where our nurses seek a lucrative employment outside of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, what we have to say at the outset, is that we cannot prevent our men and women from leaving Barbados to seek career opportunities elsewhere. It has always happened. Perhaps, you might argue that it was happening, I think, when Barbadians left this country some 300 years ago to settle in North Carolina. Perhaps, the motives were different then, but this has always been a feature of the Barbadian society. Certainly, it is a matter, I think, we should take great credit for, because it speaks to the level of training and manpower that we have in Barbados.

Sir, we cannot put a halt to our police officers leaving. We have to accept the fact that the salaries being offered in those jurisdictions are higher, by leaps and bounds, than even the salary that our Commissioner of Police commands in this country. Therefore, it is important to understand that a police constable, who is earning at the lowest level of the ranks in the police force, if offered a job in Bermuda, that can cause them to be paid way in excess of what their own Commissioner of Police would be paid here, then, Mr. Speaker, we should not pretend that we are surprised when they would go.

The fact is that those jurisdictions, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, and Turks and Caicos Islands, are completely unable to attract members of their local population to become police officers, and so they have set about, almost poaching the police forces of the region for young men and women to populate their own police force. It is a trend that, I have no doubt, will continue.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, it should be common knowledge in Barbados that police officers are often seconded to other Government departments. Sir, across many other aspects of Government operations, you will find individuals who are seconded from the Royal Barbados Police Force. This is also a matter that redounds to the credit of the Royal Barbados Police Force and the disciplined skilled individuals that they produce.

For example, the two deputies at the prison are officers that are seconded from the Royal Barbados Police Force. Sir, until recently, the individual in charge of the Money Laundering Authority, was an officer on secondment from the Royal Barbados Police Force. Other members of staff of the Authority are also police officers, on secondment from the Royal Barbados Police Force. I believe in the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, you would find officers in secondment. Mr. Speaker, over the years, many of the officers would go and study law and they would then take up an appointment in the Attorney-General's office, on secondment.

The other factor, Mr. Speaker, that I feel I must mention, is the comparably low salaries that are paid to local police officers. It is a fact that some constables, are keen to explore opportunities in other areas of Government because the starting salaries are higher. Sir, if I say to the Members of this Honourable House that members of the Court Processing Office, court marshals, have a higher starting salary, than a constable entering the police force, that would give an indication of the situation with which we are faced. But not just Court Marshals, there are several other areas across the Government service and outside of the Government service, where entry level people, with similar or the same qualifications, would benefit from a higher salary.

Mr. Speaker, the Royal Barbados Police Force has set about an extensive campaign of trying to recruit young men and women to the force. I have met with many of them. There are many young men and women who come to see me at my constituency office, and I would say to them that there are vacancies in the Royal Barbados Police Force, and would they consider joining the force. Mr. Speaker, I must tell you that almost without exception, they say that they do not think that life is for them.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes, it is a question of not wanting to face up to the stringent discipline that is required in the force. Sometimes, it is that they may have one or two dodgy incidences in their history, and they are a little worried about joining the force. Other young men have said to me they do not want to join the force because it would separate them from their friends. Sir, my understanding of separation from their friends is not that they would be away from their friends because they are working shifts, it is because the lifestyle that they would have to choose now, if they became a police officer, would be inconsistent with the lifestyle that their friends live. Therefore, there are many reasons, not just the salary, why it is difficult to get young men and women to come into the force.

Mr. Speaker, in my discussions with those young men and women in my constituency and from other constituencies who have come to see me, the salary is

probably one of the last things they ask about. It is a very concerning symptom of our society today, where one of the finest and most noble of careers, seems to have lost its appeal to our young men and women.

Mr. Speaker, the Royal Barbados Police Force has put in place, many public advertising campaigns. Sir, you may have seen some of the advertisements. They had television and radio advertisements, inviting young men and women to come and join the force. They have done every career showcase in Barbados, and they have visited schools to try to encourage young men and women to join the force.

In fact, they are even thinking of a police/cadet programme, now, to see if they can introduce young men and women to the concept of being a police officer, in much the same way that the Defence Force has been able to attract a large complement of its officers from young men and women who were cadets. They are trying several innovative measures but, Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that, first, the deficit is not one that is going to be filled overnight, and secondly, for some reason, our young men and women are not too keen on becoming members of the force.

It would be an obvious thing, though, if I also say that the life of a policeman or a policewoman is hard. At sometimes, in the past, you would have heard that all leave was cancelled, and they had to give up whatever private time they had to go to work. They put themselves in harm's way on a daily basis, and at times they are shot at. Sir, all of these are some of the things that, perhaps, might cause young men and women not to find the career as appealing, as in the past. Therefore, we have been forced to look for solutions.

Mr. Speaker, some years ago, in an effort to supplement the manpower needs of the force, a decision was taken to recruit, I believe, in excess of 100 special constables. Sir, that programme worked exceptionally well. I believe there are Special Constables who, sometimes, work in the precincts of Parliament, but we do not even know. There are special constables who serve daily with members of the Royal Barbados Police Force and anyone - unless you are a member of the force yourself - would hardly have a clue, because of the level of professionalism that they display.

House 126, sequence 03, 10:30:14

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, the Special Constable route is one which is different from the normal entry route of a police officer. Sir, the Police Act, as it is currently set out, requires that in order for individuals to be

enlisted into the Royal Barbados Police Force, they must have attained passes in at least three subjects at CXC General Proficiency level, at GCE level or at some level equivalent to CXC or O'level. Mr. Speaker, the special constables generally fall short of that entry requirement.

Mr. Speaker, in circumstances where the special constables have performed on par with the other enlisted members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, they came to be seen as an important and valuable resource. Sir, that brings us to the amendment that we have brought to the House today.

Mr. Speaker, a decision was taken by the Ministry of the Civil Service that we should try to phase out the special constables and try over time to convert all of them to police constables. Sir, some of them would have gone on to do the requisite number of CXCs so that they could enlist in the normal way, but others have not been able to do so. Therefore, the essence of the amendment which we bring before Parliament this morning would allow for the admission or enlistment of special constables into the Royal Barbados Police Force through an alternative certification process.

Mr. Speaker, this alternative certification for special constables has been designed by the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, after numerous consultations with the Royal Barbados Police Force. Essentially, its purpose is to provide special constables with the appropriate skills and knowledge for entry into the Royal Barbados Police Force in circumstances where they do not have the three CXC or the three GCE certificates as is required. This course includes, language proficiency, functional literacy skills, mathematics proficiency and general knowledge. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, has indicated that in their view this programme is more or less equivalent to the existing programme. Therefore, we are asking that the Police Act be amended to allow for this alternative process.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to point out that some of these young men and women who are special constables and who are awaiting the amendment to this legislation so that they could be enlisted, have done outstandingly well at the Police Training School. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I believe that I have intimated in this very place previously that the most outstanding performance at the last passing out came not from one of the individuals who enlisted with the minimal requirements but from one of the special constables who had serious challenges and who could not become a member of the Royal Barbados Police Force in the ordinary course of things. That individual received the Baton of Honour and most of the prizes on that particular occasion.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the time has come to recognise, in a more fulsome way, that while this society directs people in the form of academic qualifications, that individuals are still able to perform, and perform at the highest level, if given the opportunity to do so.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment, as I have said, would allow for the admission of these special constables to the regular ranks of the Royal Barbados Police Force and would allow them to discharge their duties as police officers and to contribute to the law and order effort in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, while talking about the matter of the amendment to the Police Act, I believe that it is important to draw to Parliament's attention the fact that the level of crime in Barbados in 2006, was in fact at the same level as existed in 1987. Mr. Speaker, the level of crime in Barbados rose quite sharply from 1987 to about 1993, then there were drops and it went back up again. Sir, it is to the credit of the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force that the level of crime in Barbados today is at the level that it was 15 years ago. Mr. Speaker, 15 years ago, we did not have the scourge of drugs to the extent that we have it today.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir, please, why do you have to go into the levels of crime now? Do you have to do that, Sir?

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: As you direct, Mr. Speaker.

All in all, Mr. Speaker, the amendment that is before this House today would allow special constables to contribute significantly to the efforts in maintaining law and order. The amendment would allow these outstanding young men and women an opportunity to fulfil their dreams. Sir, in circumstances where young men and women who have three, four and five CXC certificates are not coming forward to join the Royal Barbados Police Force, it is important that we give those individuals, who have a keen interest, an opportunity to serve the country in this way.

Mr. Speaker, far from phasing out the programme of special constables, which was the direction that we had intended to take some years ago, it has been necessary for us to increase the ranks of special constables, particularly given the Cricket World Cup arrivals to our shores in the next few weeks. Sir, we have actually started training an additional 60 special constables so that they could help to fill the deficit that currently exists within the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend this Bill to this Honourable House. I believe it is noble in purpose. I believe that the functioning of the members of the special

constabulary over the last few years has shown that they contribute significantly and that they have an important role to play.

Sir, the Government is committed to seeing the deficit filled. As I said, the Royal Barbados Police Force has tried several innovative approaches to recruit young men and women. Mr. Speaker, we are going to be working to see how the discrepancy or the anomaly of the salary arrangement could be adjusted. I am waiting on the Commissioner of Police for proposals dealing, as a whole, with the overall terms and conditions of the Royal Barbados Police Force. Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner of Police has assured me that he has recruited some consultants to study this area and that he is going to get back to me soonest so that we could take forward an informed plan in relation to this matter.

Mr. Speaker, the terms and conditions of the police are important to us. It is important that we are able to make policing not just a safe but an enjoyable career. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to stray too far from the subject, but on the matter of the conditions of policing which might be connected to the salaries of the police officers, I want to say that over the last few years a lot has been done by this Government to improve the conditions under which the police have been working.

Mr. Speaker, new police stations have been constructed.

House 126 Sequence 4

10.40 a.m.

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: In addition to that, of course, a number of repairs have been done to police stations across the island. There are several new police stations that are on the way and just last Friday, I did the groundbreaking at Tamarind Hall, St. Joseph, for a new Civic Centre. This Centre will include a police station, a project that will take about two years and on a build, operate, lease, transfer arrangement (BOLT) and will cost us about \$16 million. I expect to see construction resumed on the police station at Crab Hill, within the next six to eight weeks, so that the conditions of the police officers, who serve way in the north of the island, would be improved. Sir, a new police station is in the works for Wildey. We are also getting working drawings done for a new police station in Belleplaine.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, we have to look at other things that are being done by the Government, to ensure good working conditions for our police officers. There is an increase in the amount of technology available that takes

some of the drudgery and manual duties out of policing. In terms of communication, we have made a significant investment in communications technology, a figure in the region of \$26 million, to ensure that the Police Force are able to communicate and to benefit.

Asides.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, in terms of training and equipment, the training that is being provided to members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, I would argue, is on par with practically any police force anywhere in the world. We spent a large portion of our budget on training. In fact, that is one of the reasons Barbadian police are so attractive to foreign forces because of the fact that we have so trained them beyond the entry level. We have trained them in many specialist areas, so that when they are recruited in jurisdictions such as Bermuda, that country would be getting the benefit of a police officer, with 10 or 12 years experience, and who would have been trained, not just at home but abroad, in the latest of policing skills and techniques.

Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to labour on anymore, I believe this is an important amendment, first to satisfy

the aspirations of those young men and women, who are currently serving as Special Constables. Sir, this amendment, I am aware, has received the full support of the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force and, therefore, I commend it to Members of this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and as usual, I tried to find some theme or some thread that, as a policymaker, he was trying to impress upon the people whom he represents. In other words, I was trying to determine what was his argument to this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I always have difficulty nowadays, when I listen to Honourable Members on the other side because it seems to me that they have lost the ability to address important issues of policy. Sir, if one were to take the disparate strands of the Honourable Member's presentation - and I know you have asked him not to go into the questioned of how low crime is. I do not know why, maybe you, like I, have doubts about the particular argument that is being adduced, so perhaps we should not go into it.

Sir, if I were to skim the surface of that argument, the natural conclusion, to which any sensible person could come, would be that the Attorney-General is saying to the country, that with less police than are required; with less qualified police than he would like; with police resources

crumbling around us; with the need for new police stations; with competing jurisdictions in the Caribbean attracting our police, we have been able to achieve a miraculous feat of reducing crime in the year 2007, to the level it was 20 years ago. Sir, that, as I understand it, is the argument that the Honourable Member, if you were to pull all of the strands of his presentation together, is seeking to put before this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. Speaker I believe that any argument should have at least some element of credibility to it, and I am not sure that anything the Honourable Member said today, would have lent to that credibility. Sir, perhaps if the former Attorney-General were to come here and were to explain to us why, with all the resources that she has put into the Police Force, such as the new vehicles, the new Police Stations that were being built, all of the new structures and systems that were being put in place.... Perhaps, if the former Chief Justice were to come here and were to say that after several reforms he has put in place, that there must be some reason why those reforms or structures did not achieve this miraculous transition in the area of the reduction of crime, to the extent that has been achievable by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. Sir, I would wait to see how this particular debate pans out.

Mr. Speaker, maybe in their internal discussions, if what Honourable Member for St. Joseph is saying is true - Sir, you did not give him much time to expand on it and therefore we do not have the opportunity to know whether or not it is true - as an example of how to get more with less, how we might be able to transform other areas of public life in Barbados and how we could achieve more.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you know I am always directed by the Bill before this Honourable House, and I go by that. Therefore, we would not go into anything relating to reduction or increase in crime.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I am not against that, I share your view. I would be unimpressed by the argument anyway, so I am glad that you have saved Parliamentary time by directing the Honourable Member's attention to what was before him and not to allow him into a flight of fancy and a frolic into, not only the unknown but the unbelievable. Sir, I am glad that you clipped his wings because as I said, you, like I, may doubt that this is the time for that kind of argument to be adduced, for it was a fantastic argument to be put before the country.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that if it were true, it would be an example to be followed. For example, if the Minister of Tourism and International Transport were to follow the example of the Attorney-General, he would be able to put less into tourism and get back more; if the Minister of Health were to follow the example of the Attorney-General, he would be able to put less into the hospitals and

so on and get back more; if the Minister of Education were to follow the example of the Attorney-General, he would be able to spend less and get back more. Sir, out of all this, I think the Ministers need to listen very carefully to the Honourable Attorney-General, who, with less police, less resources, crumbling police stations, curtailment of activities of police officers, less qualified police than he said he would like in the Police Force, with all of that, has been able to achieve a miraculous reduction in crime in Barbados. Sir, I am saying that would be the thread, but what I think has been absent....

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, what I think has

been absent from the exercise, is that despite the challenges the Attorney-General's Office has outlined to the country, and those challenges exist in relation to all of the so-called 'look-up-to' to persons in the community.

10.50 a.m.

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: He spoke about the parish priest; he spoke about the policeman and the school teacher but there have also been challenges in those areas as well. There have been challenges of recruitment and qualification issues have arisen and, in most cases, the answer to those challenges is to put, in relation to that sector, before the country, a plan to meet those challenges.

Sir, despite the content of this Bill, there is nothing else that the Minister has said to this Chamber that would help us to understand why those challenges exist. A lot of what he has said about young people not wanting to join the Police Force is what you might call anecdotal, that is, there is talk but there needs to be further analysis and investigation as to why it is that young people may not be interesting in entering the Police Force. I believe that a more scientific approach other than talking to people in your Branch Office on Thursdays, might yield some answers as to why the police are having difficulty in relation to recruitment and how to solve those challenges of recruitment.

Mr. Speaker, a public relations campaign about recruitment is one thing but a public relations campaign in relation to the role of police in our society is another. Sir, if you are targeting young people for recruitment as distinct from seeking to raise the standing and profile of the position to which they are to be recruited, then you are going to achieve nothing.

Mr. Speaker, there are certain jobs that carry stigmas to them. You could carry out any number of recruitment drives in those areas, people are still going to have those opinions of those jobs, unless you seek to raise the profile, the status and ranking of those particular job in the society. I believe that is one of the important things that needs to be done.

Mr. Speaker, the Police have complained time and time again, about the deplorable conditions under which they have to function. This Government was given 12 years to solve this problem. It did not solve them at Boarded Hall; it did not solve them at District C, which sometimes I think is in worst condition than when the Government first came to office nor it did not solve them in St. Lucy. Sir, the pledges to establish new facilities at Six Cross Roads in St. Philip to cover an area of a rapidly growing population have not been met and now, because elections are in the air, we are hearing that Tamarind Hall would be done, that Belleplaine would be done and that Crab Hill would be finished. Mr. Speaker, one of the principal pledges of this Government in an area, which has the fastest growing population in Barbados...

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Maybe, I do not know, I have not done the statistics but neither has the Attorney-General because he is not interested in that. We are not going on the basis of a plan, this is election time so Tamarind Hall and Belleplaine would be in the news. It is not time for Six Roads because the Attorney-General has no vested interest in building a police station at Six Cross Roads. Sir, for 12 years, in every Estimates debate - it started back in 1994, we heard the Government was going to take over what is now Emerald City, that it going to be a brand new Fire Station, Civic Centre, Police Station, Welfare Centre and that millions of dollars were going to be pumped into that area because of the need for improved facilities.

Mr. Speaker, nobody can believe that police officers that the Minister wants to encourage young people to become, could be functioning in the condition they are functioning in at District C. Police Station. Sir, it is horrendous! I think the Honourable Member for St. Philip South has an obligation to get up in this Chamber today and explain why it is that he cannot the new facilitate in St. Philip placed high on the agenda of Government. There are massive developments taking place around the area of Six Roads but the Government has no plan in that regard.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I would not say they do not care about him. I believe the Honourable Member does

not care about himself if not, he would not accept the downplaying and the reduction of the priority...

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: (10:56:34) Mr. Speaker, imagine we had a prison riot but, Sir, I do not want to go into prisons because I know you do not want that but I am dealing with police matters. Sir, the prison had problems and within a week, they were able to find facilities at Six Roads to house prisoners and spend millions of dollars to do it but the Government cannot find the resources to establish, in 12 years, a new effective policing facility at Six Roads in St. Philip. Sir, that just goes to show you the priorities of this Government.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to allow the Honourable Member for St. Joseph to pull wool over my eyes because he is very skillful from school in debating and in sugar-coated presentations. I have sometimes been enamoured of them, until he entered this Chamber, and he is not going to do it to me. He might be able to do it to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South but he is not going to do it to me. You must come to the Chamber with a plan to address these problems.

Mr. Speaker, there are reasons why people do not want to be part of the recruitment drive in the Police Force. Sir, if every time you meet the members of the Police Force, they are complaining, and quite rightly so, that the conditions of service, their salaries, the overall benefits they receive and the kind of work they have to do are not fulfilling then, there are no incentives, in and of themselves, for involvement.

Sir, so denuded has been the Royal Barbados Police Force that the very important aspect of community policing has almost disappeared from the map of Barbados. I have always felt, and I have said in this Chamber time and time again and it is part of the belief of the Democratic Labour Party, that the heart and start of policing in Barbados and the role of the police, has to be in communities. I want to know from the Minister, before this debate is finished, since he said certain activities cannot be done by the police anymore, what is left in Barbados for the Royal Barbados Police Force to do; what is the emphasis of policing in this country today? The Minister did not express any concern but I think one would have to be concerned and Barbados must be one of the only places in the world where the police high command can announce to the country that it does not have the resources to police an event.

H126/11:10

Sequence 6

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, that is a very serious statement to make. For example, in the event the promoters of a show or a public activity decide to go ahead and hold the event without police involvement, and I am going to get to that part in a minute as well, the police have already signalled before the event even begins that they do not have the resources to handle the event. That is a very frightening prospect, a very dangerous situation to have on your hands.

Sir, we have Cricket World Cup coming up in Barbados and the police have already announced, before Cricket World Cup, that, for example, on a long weekend they do not have the resources to handle Oistina Fish Festival, the St. Philip Carnival, et cetera. Sir, what is even worse, there are a lot of public facilities in Barbados that if you want to use them, they require the presence of the police.

Sir, if the police say that they are not available, and the owners of the property say that you could rent it, but you would have to have five or ten police, or whatever, that means that those activities are totally curtailed. Sir, you have a Government whose community and cultural development programmes are run by the Police Force, a police force that does not have the resources to cope with the activities, the communities want to hold, but the Minister will tell you that crime is down.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I would expect that kind of comment from the person from whom it came, because he used to talk about 'lick and lockup'.

Mr. SPEAKER: I stopped the Honourable Member at that comment.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, you stopped him?

Mr. SPEAKER: I stopped him at that point.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Do you mean when he was talking about the availability of police?

Mr. SPEAKER: On crime. I stopped him at that time.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, I have gone up to that point, and you want me to go no further. Sir, I have no problem with that.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that those are dangerous trends for which the Honourable Minister must have some kind of national plan to deal with the operational and strategic challenges of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Sir, we feel strongly that community policing is still vital in Barbados. We feel strongly that, unlike the Honourable Member for St. Peter, that the police are in a special category in Barbados, and are playing a far more significant role in a more technologically complex society than it was before. Therefore, there is no reason policemen in Bermuda, Cayman Island and elsewhere should be attractively remunerated, and yet in Barbados that is not the case.

Sir, there are other categories of persons in Barbados, some in the Civil List and some that this Government has created, who had been treated specially. Mr. Speaker, I hope, for the benefit of the society and good accountability, that they are treated that way because of their expertise, ability or whatever. Sir, you have a lot of consultants, even Parliamentarians, drawing salaries every month that are two, three or four times more than a police constable in Barbados draws, in addition to their parliamentary pay and constituency allowances. They are a special category.

Sir, there was a time in Barbados when senior managers in the tourism sector were identified as being in a special category, and were singled out for major redress, in relation to the benefits that they were receiving, and that has snowballed. It has not stopped. There are a number of other categories of persons who have been singled out, and there is absolutely no reason - given the kind of challenges that we face in our society, and some of the challenges that the Minister has identified, despite the fact he said that crime is down - that we should not seek to remunerate and give benefits to the Royal Barbados Police Force commensurate with the contribution that they are making in the society, to improve their conditions of service; to upgrade the police stations in Barbados and particularly, to right all of the wrong things that have been done since 1994, at Crab Hill, Boarded Hall and District C police stations, and elsewhere. Sir, all of the temporary arrangements that have been put in place, which have now become permanent arrangements, in relation to the courts, police stations and so on, as a result of the total incompetence of the Government to get the contractors, which it employed, to do complete those police stations... Sir, that is what it is. There is no excuse.

Mr. Speaker, contracts were given, contractors were employed and the work that they were employed to do was not completed. Sir, there needs to be a full investigation in relation to that.

Sir, when you have that happening in your police force, in relation to their facilities, it must tell you why there is such a dramatic moral slide in Barbados. Sir, you have persons who were employed to do work at police stations, given contracts by the Government, paid, the work was not done or was not done properly, the police have had

to endure those horrendous conditions of work started and not completed, in relation to their personal space, police stations and that kind of thing. Sir, Honourable Members then get up in here and jump up and down about a moral slide.

Mr. Speaker, they know exactly what happened. They know some of the charlatans who were involved in those activities. They were required every day to work with them and accommodate them, knowing that the projects would never be completed; knowing that the Government had gone about it the wrong way and chosen the wrong people, and yet the police were required to accept all of that and say nothing, because they are civil servants.

Sir, it must have stuck in their nostrils, the stench of those bad incompetent decisions, the failure to do anything about it, so that police stations could sit for years in a state of disrepair, even after contractors were moved in to effect repairs. The Honourable Minister does not impress me.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I am going to wait to hear the Honourable Member for St. Philip South. He does not have usually that characteristic of being able to get up and speak as solidly as he should for his constituents, but he needs to explain to me. I do not want to hear from the Minister. I want to hear from the Member of Parliament for St. Philip South. Why it is that the facilities at Station House Hill, St. Philip, are so deplorable and for so long? Why the new complex at Six Roads, which was a priority for this Government, is now not even mentioned by the Attorney-General? Why the facilities available, for example, at District C, not just District C, the vehicles that are available, the equipment that is available to the police who are working in that area, of the fastest growing population are unacceptable? I want to know to what the current Member of Parliament for St. Philip South, on the Government side, has to say about that, because I think it impacts very seriously on the ability of the police to do their work in that part of rural Barbados.

11.10 a.m.

Sequence 7

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

House 126, sequence 08, 11.10 a.m.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, the only thing left for me to say, is that I found it most interesting, I think, at the point where you stopped the Member, when he said that crime now, is as low as what it was in 1987. Sir, we have been fed a diet in this Chamber for the past 12 years. I am not getting into political posturing but it just goes to show why one cannot accept, very easily, the platitudes of the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, because we were

hearing in here that from 1995 or 1996, the crime levels in Barbados had been brought down below any point, in a Democratic Labour Party administration.

The Democratic Labour Party was in office in 1987. The Honourable Member's reference point for the reduction in crime, is not 1995, 1996, 1997 or 2000. Sir, his reference point for an acceptable level of crime in Barbados, is the year 1987. Therefore, I think flies the face of all the arguments I have heard in here, year after year, in every Estimates debate by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, by the distinguished previous Honourable Member for St. Thomas, how much work they had done, how miraculously they had got these crime statistics down, and had a handle on crime, to those bad old days of the Democratic Labour Party. Yet, the reference point of the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, is 1987.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, the Honourable Member is saying from his seat that it was 1987, when the crime started to go up. But we were told every year since 1994 that it was coming down.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have made your point, Sir.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: You do not like that point, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not for me to like it, Sir.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I heard you say I made it. Sir, I am trying to unravel it for your benefit because, I know you would have sat through all of those presentations as well. It is ironic, as I say, that would be the reference point for the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, but it is an appropriate analogy. It is precisely the argument that the Democratic Labour Party has been adducing, in relation to crime in Barbados. If it is true, then it would be laudable. I am saying if it is true, the Honourable Member needs to tell us what resources the police had in 1987, in relation to the resources that they have now, and to carry out that analysis and to explain to us why.

I believe we need to understand that what the Honourable Member is speaking about, is reported crime. There is a lot of crime in Barbados that is not reported, for a variety of reasons. A lot of crime may not be reported because people feel it is pointless reporting it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir, do not let us go into that now. You made your point relating to what the Member said. We do not, as a result, want to go into any debate relating to crime.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I do not mind if the ruling is that we must only talk about the police.

Mr. SPEAKER: No. You made your point relating to what the Honourable Member had said. I am not going to allow you, Sir, to take this debate into an analysis of any Party's whatever, on crime.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, the ability of the Royal Barbados Police Force to fight crime in Barbados, which I assume is their principal objective - fighting crime and getting the level of crime down - unless something has changed in the past 24 hours. Sir, the ability of the police, in the year 2007 is commensurate, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph has said to this House, with its ability in the year 1987.

Now, Sir, despite all of the challenges that the Attorney-General has put before the Chamber, in relation to the police, and I reiterate this point, needs to be very carefully analysed, and studied. The Government needs to carry out another careful analysis as to why it is so difficult to recruit police officers. It needs to carry out an analysis as to why many police officers are attracted to other jurisdictions, because people do not only move from Barbados to other jurisdictions to work, because of the levels of wages paid.

Sir, if you go to many of those jurisdictions and speak to the police officers who work there, whether it is Bermuda, Cayman Islands or wherever, despite the challenges that they face, they do not come back. This is less to do with what they are paid, than to do with the fact that they have already moved on in life, and have settled in those places.

Sir, in many of those jurisdictions, foreign police officers cannot rise beyond the rank of sergeant, so there are no promotion prospects for them, once they reach that rank. Sir, even the rank of inspector because, I think, there is only one Barbadian who has reached the Gazetted Officer rank in Bermuda. Therefore, they know that too, but as I say, there may be other factors that are involved in the process.

The Minister needs to analyse that, and not come to the Chamber and simply tell us that the police are not viewed in the same light and, as a result, the Government needs to reduce the qualification level for entry into the rank of police constable, to deal with the challenges of recruitment in Barbados.

Perhaps, the qualification level before was too high or too stringent. Carry out the analysis and see. Look at where are the pools of recruitment. Analyse whether you are getting the kind of person in the police force to do the duties that the police force now is required to do. Those are

the kinds of questions that, I think, the Government needs to ask itself.

Finally, and most of all, the Government needs to understand that people are not going to be attracted into the police force, under the current terms and conditions of service, such as the physical plant that they have to operate with, the resources and equipment that are available to them, and that in the fight to deal with the problem of crime, we need to have an effective police force in Barbados.

Sir, we would do everything in our power on this side to ensure that the conditions of service of the police in Barbados are given special attention. Sir, we believe that it is about time they are given the attention that they deserve.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I would want to enter this debate and place on record, my personal satisfaction and that of my constituency, when one looks at what has happened over the years, to the condition of service for the Royal Barbados Police Force.

I would first want to say, Sir, that the Royal Barbados Police Force has combated crime in and around Barbados, with great success. One has to be mindful of that, when one looks at what is happening in other jurisdictions across the region.

House 126, sequence 08, 11:20:14

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: When one examines the statistics, one would find that the Royal Barbados Police Force has been very successful, therefore, one has to examine why the Royal Barbados Police Force has been so successful over the years. Mr. Speaker, I believe that has to do with the fact that over the years the resources that were given to the Royal Barbados Police Force have not declined. In fact, I am of the view that every year since 1994, this Government has maintained and increased the resources that were given to the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, we have given the Royal Barbados Police Force a new lease on life. New technologies and new crime prevention methods have been involved. Members have been involved in a number of new training activities, and new management styles have been involved. Mr. Speaker, I must commend the current Commissioner of

Police for introducing new management techniques to improve the lot of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to look at five broad areas in my presentation. They are the areas of recruitment; promotion; rewards and remuneration; conditions of service; and the adequate provision of technology.

Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that over the years, and this is nothing new, we have seen a decline in the number of persons wanting to enlist in the Royal Barbados Police Force, and there are several reasons for this. Sir, this is so because most of our people have been going into other areas within the Civil Service and into other areas like teaching as persons in our society become more educated.

Mr. Speaker, if one has to rate policing with other jobs in the Civil Service, one would find that policing, on the scale of preference, would rate less than five out of ten. Sir, persons would prefer to go into a job that is less hazardous and where there would be less burden on the individual. Therefore, occupations like law, medicine, teaching and nursing would attract more persons than policing because of the nature of the job.

Sir, in recent times, we have also found that most young persons in our society seem to think that shying away from law enforcement was the way forward. Sir, there are some young people today who would not want to go into policing; it is a societal thing. Mr. Speaker, this situation does not attain in Barbados only, it is the world over. It is so in Trinidad and Tobago, in Jamaica, in Great Britain and in Canada.

Sir, we have seen a general trend developing in most developed societies. If one looks at what is happening in the Canadian society today, one would find that they are now attracting persons of Asian background, from China and Hong Kong, into their police force. In Great Britain, one would find that they are attracting more persons of African descent as well as from the Caribbean. Mr. Speaker, Bermuda is recruiting police officers not only from Barbados but throughout the region. Sir, the police forces in the jurisdictions of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have not been attracting the level of persons they would want or that they have been accustomed to over the years. Mr. Speaker, so is the case in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, over 100 vacancies exist in the Royal Barbados Police Force. Sir, the Royal Barbados Police Force has now put in place a programme to recruit special constables, and this is commendable. I have also seen that there are attempts to look at the qualification that is being offered to these people.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to ask the question: If the programme works, what would be done to evaluate this

exercise after a year? It is my understanding that the programme would be looked at, at the end of 2007.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to see a programme put in place that would not only look at the short term method of recruiting police officers, but also at a medium and long term method.

Mr. Speaker, since Canada, that I have cited before, has reached into the community to recruit officers from among the Asian society, I am wondering if it would not be wise for the Royal Barbados Police Force to look at what is happening in Barbados today and reach into the various communities and try to recruit persons from various backgrounds. I think every effort must be made to educate Barbadians as to the importance and the relevance of good policing in Barbados today.

Mr. Speaker, I think that policing is still a worthwhile occupation and persons should be encouraged to go into policing. I think it has to do with the society that we are in at this present time.

Mr. Speaker, the other area that I would like to speak to is the conditions of service. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John spoke to the fact that this Government spent millions of dollars on refurbishing the temporary prison facility at Six Roads after Glendairy Prison was burnt. Mr. Speaker, if the prison was burnt, Government had no choice but to spend emergency money on the temporary prison facility at Six Roads. What should the Government have done? Should we have allowed the prisoners to run wild in the society? Sir, the Government had to spend money somewhere to provide a temporary facility. Mr. Speaker, I believe the society of Barbados has encouraged us to do this, and we are now building a new prison facility.

Mr. Speaker, I am of the view that we should not be playing politics on this topic. Sir, this Government, when I was Minister of Housing in the last term, went to Six Roads and identified a facility there for a civic centre. Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that it has taken so long to establish this facility, but plans are afoot to establish this new civic centre at Six Roads, and the resources would have to be found in the near future for its establishment.

Mr. Speaker, in our term, we have established a civic centre at the Glebe, St. George. Sir, I am very happy that we have set up a new police outpost at the Glebe, and a library as a community service. We are doing a similar thing in St. Joseph. We are also providing a civic centre at Oistins and we are refurbishing the police station in St. Lucy.

House 126 Sequence 9

11.30 a.m.

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, this Government has been refurbishing and upgrading the conditions of all police stations, along with other ancillary services.

Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that when we came to office in 1994, most of the police stations were rundown, in circumstances where some police stations only had one chair or one bench. Sir, over the past 12 years, every effort has been made to have those stations refurbished, where they are all now in better conditions.

Mr. Speaker, when one compares what is happening today, with what happened in 1994, one can say that the Police Force is better off today, than it was in 1994. Sir, today, the Police Force has been outfitted with new vehicles and with better technology, where they can identify what is happening. Sir, very soon, within the next financial year, they would be linked to the Licensing Authority, where the technology would be used to help them to identify those persons, who have valid driving licences.

Sir, these are some of the things that this Government has done and therefore, this Government should be commended for improving the lot of Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, the other area I want to speak to is promotion in the Police Force. Sir, we need to look at how police officers are promoted. I think the system is outdated and needs to be looked at. I think the Commissioner of Police, along with the Attorney-General, should look at how police officers are promoted. Over the years, I have heard a number of comments being made on the issue of promotion. One such issue, for example, is why have some police officers remained as constables for more than 30 or 40 years. I know some years ago, the status of corporal was removed from the Police Force, where police constables would have moved from that of a constable, to a corporal, to a sergeant. Sir, this method needs to be looked at. A number of persons have come to me to ask about how they are promoted. Sir, Government does not regulate how policemen are promoted, promotion is set out in the Police Act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on an important area of policing, that is the policing on our roads. Sir, the police have been doing quite a good job, over the years, but it is a fact that policemen cannot be everywhere, at the same time. Sir, in looking at the year 2006, one would see that we have had more than 8 283 accidents, out of these, there were 22 fatalities, with 132 serious accidents. Sir, these are things to which the Police Force must attend and, therefore, they take up a lot of policing time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make this point and I hope you would be lenient with me...

MR. SPEAKER: I am trying to follow you, Honourable Member.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, if there are 8 000 reported accidents in one year, this would mean that the police officers would have to attend them. Therefore, to do so, would take up a lot of time.

Asides.

MR. SPEAKER: Do you mean they all happen at the same time?

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Not really, in one year, 2006. Sir, the point I want to make is that they take up a lot of time. Sir, I would want to encourage those drivers to understand that we need to be considerate to each other. Sir, furthermore, it has happened that too many times, because a police presence is not there, people take it upon themselves to do a number of foolish things on our roads, and we need to cut it out.

Mr. Speaker, we want to improve our road conditions but at the same time, we want to encourage Barbadians to understand that it takes up a lot of police time, having to attend these numbers of accidents. Sir, these accidents are caused because of the fact that sometimes people do not read the signs or are not careful enough. Sir, I find, over the couple of weeks, that there are many young drivers approaching corners, major roads and dangerous junctions, at high speeds. These accidents are causing tremendous police time and I believe the police duties should be concentrated into other activities.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Royal Barbados Police Force and to say that I am happy with the community policing that is being done at this time. Sir, for the first time, in 10 years, we see policemen in the Glebe, St. George, doing community policing. They are again moving across the constituency. I also want to say that I am very happy we were able to set up a Community Outpost in the Glebe. Sir, very shortly, I hope that other community outposts could be established within the St. Michael area, as well as in other urban areas across Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that this is a special amendment and that it should be treated likewise. Mr. Speaker, over the years, we would have probably discussed this issue, this being probably the third occasion. Sir, it occurred when the previous

Honourable Member for St. Thomas was in this Honourable Chamber, again when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was here, and it is occurring now the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is here.

Sir, on these occasions, the issue of Crab Hill Police Station came up in those debates, where there were promises of what would have occurred there. Sir, on one occasion, we were told there was no need for the Crab Hill Police Station. At that time, I had to remind the honourable gentleman that even though St. Lucy is a constituency where there is not that much crime internally, which would have been committed by the people of St. Lucy, that because of its location and the fact that St. Lucy is surrounded by water on three sides, the Crab Hill Police Station should not have been closed. I suggested that instead of closing the station, it might have been better if a new station could have been constructed at Nesfield because the land space at Crab Hill was not suitable enough for the expansion of a police station. There were also other factors I mentioned at the time, which I do not care to mention now.

Sir, despite this, since 1994, we are now in 2007, and are still discussing a police station at Crab Hill. I heard the new Minister suggesting that work will continue at that location. I think, in the interest of the taxpayers of this country, in the interest of the Government and in the interest and integrity of this Parliament, that the work at the Crab Hill Police Station should be discontinued and that the advice given by the Member of Parliament, to build that new station at Nestfield, should be accepted.

Mr. Speaker, if that work continues as planned, the people in the north of this country would not be happy. I have heard the mouthings, I have heard the accusations and I do not need to or would not include them today, all I would say to the Minister, is to accept the advice from the people in St. Lucy, as this advice is not misleading. If the Honourable Member goes counter to that advice, then the people of St. Lucy would have to speak on these matters but as it stands now, do not try to prove us wrong, when we are right. We know what we are speaking about, we do not need to become involved in unnecessary confusion and therefore the advice should be taken.

11.40 a.m.

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, this amendment here today, will not solve the problem for the Police Force. Sir, I do not honestly believe that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph prepared this. I believe it was given to the Attorney-General and that he did not study the amendment. Sir, I cannot believe that the Attorney-General, who is responsible for the Regional

Police Training Centre, would allow an amendment, under Section 2, that would allow the Ministry of Education to decide if someone is competent to be a policeman. Sir, we spend so much money every year on the Regional Police Training Centre but the Ministry of Education, that knows nothing about policemen, will now tell the Attorney-General that a person is capable of being a policeman. Sir, that is utter foolishness.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that if you have Special Constables, the Commissioner of Police has confidence in them to send them to the Regional Police Training Centre...

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Ministry of Education is not going to saying who can or cannot be a police officer. The fact is that because it is an alternative in the entry requirement to the standard GCE or CXC that the police has enlisted the Ministry of Education to provide their expertise in that matter. Mr. Speaker, it says, "a course of study approved by the Ministry of Education and the Regional Police Training School." It is not that the police is abdicating any responsibility for the training of its officers or for any measurement of its training for the officers to the Ministry of Education.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Regional Police Training Centre has been here for a long time and this amendment is questioning the integrity of the Regional Police Training Centre and when one considers that the Regional Police Training Centre is not used for training policemen for Barbados alone, that it has been wide in its acceptance, it is an insult for this particular amendment.

Mr. Speaker, if the Commissioner of Police believes that someone is competent enough and that the Regional Police Training Centre had done a good enough job, that should be the qualification for the person to be transferred from being a Special Constable to a policeman.

Mr. Speaker, this Section needs to be excluded and the Regional Police Training Centre should be mandated that the conversion is done. Sir, no other institution....

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the entry requirement, that theoretical approach is wrong and that more emphasis should be put on the practical approach. We are only not now recognising it with the Police Force but there are other sections of the discipline forces that from a practical point of view, the entrants are qualified but because of some theoretical approach we are saying they are not capable. Sir, it is utter nonsense.

Mr. Speaker, if the Commissioner of Police believes the person is doing a good job, that should be the requirement and Sir, if the Regional Police Training Centre has confirmed it, that is all is required. Mr. Speaker, this amendment will not go anywhere because I am being told there is a suggestion that you should not have any Special Constables, which means that after this first batch and all are converted, then this is no more help to us.

Mr. Speaker, is this the real reason we are in here today. We are faced with a problem, where people are not going to the Police Force as we used to know. Sir, at one time, the Coleridge and Parry School was known for producing policemen.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that we made some amendments, which tells me that we are not understanding what is occurring in Barbados. Sir, if you tell me that people do not want to join the Police Force and that there is a difficulty, yet, instead of solving the problem, you are increasing the problem. If you telling me that the people who do not want to join the Royal Barbados Police Force, if given an opportunity, they want to go somewhere else and become a policeman, then we need to go to the drawingboard and understand something. We need now in advertising for policemen and policewomen, to include that in it that when you join the Police Force, there is a possibility that you may be able to go to where you want to get.

Mr. Speaker, you have to join the Police Force in order to get a transfer. We must look at this point because you cannot leave Barbados and join the Police Force in Bermuda. Sir, you have to pass through the local Police Force before you get to Bermuda so, if it is an attraction, it should be included. Sir, let me hear it on the television that there is a possibility that when you join the Royal Barbados Police Force that you may be able to join another Police Force. Sir, it does not mean they will automatically get there but there is an attraction that people want to get and you have provided the attraction. Mr. Speaker, I know you might not have thought of it but consider what is happening, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard a lot about statistics, which makes me smile. Sir, it is quite obvious that the new Attorney-General is now a statistician.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is insulting me by calling me an economist but I have said in this House that I want to be an economist. Sir, I will demonstrate in here is that whatever the economists know, that I know more, so do not put me in a category where I want to be different from whom I am. Sir, I want to be who I am, so do not call me an economist.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Attorney-General has now been able to use statistics widely and he has been able to create a formula as it relates to crime. Sir, I want the Honourable Member to deny it when I make the point that in Barbados now, a crime equals a criminal and that a criminal equals a crime.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir, I hope that your formula is not going into any discussion on crime.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: No, Sir. I am not even moving from there. I am giving the new Attorney-General time to dispute that point on a Point of Order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please tell us quickly and move on.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: No, I do not have to tell you. You made the formula so you should explain it to the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please move on.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, if we are to attract young people to the Police Force, we have to look at conditions in terms of salary and we have to look at the building in which they are housed.

H126/11:50

Sequence 11

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, when you consider that in Barbados there are many police stations that are not suitable for human beings to occupy, and where some had to be housed in other jurisdictions, it is clear that is not the example you want to send across Barbados, because the criminals looking on can use that against the police. We have to ensure that we give the police 100 per cent support, that is, we ensure that their requests are granted, we do not bad-mouth them, and unacceptable conditions are improved.

I am saying to the Government of the day, that whatever is needed, to ensure that the policemen of Barbados are respected and their demands met, this side is prepared to support. I am saying that if you want to bring the Supplementary now, this side would support it. Sir, we are not saying it today because we are grandstanding, this is a consistent position by this side. Mr. Speaker, over the years, you have heard us say this, and I am only repeating what we said previously, on this particular matter.

Sir, we also have to consider, if we are having a problem, in terms of personnel for the Royal Barbados Police Force, that we look elsewhere to ascertain whether other law enforcement agencies have an oversupply of personnel, and whether we are utilising that personnel the right way, or whether there is some way that personnel can be transferred to the police force.

It is rather interesting to see the number of policemen seconded from the police force to elsewhere. At the same time we are told that the Commissioner of Police is under pressure, because he does not have the number of personnel to do the job, that he would like, on a daily basis. Yet, we are always hearing about secondments from the police force but not the other way. Something has to be wrong. Is it that the police force is not a priority force?

Mr. Speaker, I have to ask: Why is it, that we have a problem recruiting young people into the Royal Barbados Police Force, yet there is no problem in the prison? That is a very serious question. How can we have a problem recruiting persons to protect the country of Barbados, but we have no problem with persons being recruited to prison? Sir, that is something we have to study to find the reason.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think that it is a matter of pay, because as far as I know, I might be wrong, a police constable's pay is higher than a prison officer's pay at the beginning. In Barbados, we know that it is about material things, so that is a question which has to be answered by the Attorney-General. That is a very serious issue.

Sir, in terms of equipment, we have to ensure that people in Barbados, do not believe it is easier for other departments to get vehicles...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please, please. Could you proceed, please? Have you concluded, Sir?

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Pardon me, Sir? I am still on my feet.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that this section is irrelevant. It would only serve to deal with this problem as it relates to today. There is no future in this amendment, and we will have to come back to Parliament and amend this again. Sir, after we have absorbed the Special Constables, until they are no Special Constables, we need to come back to Parliament to find a solution for recruiting persons to the police force.

I believe, based on the argument used by the Attorney-General of Barbados, the Special Constables have worked well and the system was a good one, I cannot see

how we can bring a system to delete the former system, without recognising that instead of adding to it, we are now subtracting from the integrity of the Royal Barbados Police Force, as it relates to personnel.

I am saying that this Bill needs to be studied again and should be withdrawn. It is not a long-term solution. It will only create problems for the police force. I am asking the Attorney-General to look at it again, and at the same time explain this new statistic, how a crime can equal a criminal.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this debate. Let me say at the outset that I give my full support, unreservedly so, to the matter that has been brought before this Honourable Chamber, by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Sir, it is not a secret to anyone in Barbados, that the Royal Barbados Police Force has been operating under some very trying circumstances, partly because of the reducing number of persons that are available, under the command of the Commissioner of Police. We are here this morning precisely because of that. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph said, while it may seem that this is a very simple amendment to the Police Act, the reality of the situation is that it is necessary. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph also said that recognising the structural problem we have to deal with, the Commissioner of Police and others in the Attorney-General's Office, are working on a structured plan, which will allow this particular matter to be addressed, in a comprehensive way.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, that is not allowed. You have to withdraw that statement. That statement must be struck from the records, all of it.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South were ordered to be expunged from the records by Mr. SPEAKER.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I abide by your ruling.

Sir, I started by recognising that the Royal Barbados Police Force has been operating under some trying circumstances, and all Honourable Members in this Chamber would want to commend the Police Force for the work it has done over the years. I said that we have a pressing problem, and a serious Government would want to deal with the problem at hand. The impression conveyed by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is, this is a measure

that is most deserving for the short to medium term, while we work towards the comprehensive strategy, that would allow us to deal with this issue over the longer term, and he has my full support.

Mr. Speaker, in regard to some of the areas that we would want to commend the Royal Barbados Police Force on, there are two areas, the DARE Programme and that programme is the Drug Awareness Programme, which the Royal Barbados Police Force partners with the Ministry of Education.

12.00 p.m.

Sequence 12

Sequence 12

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

House 126, sequence 13, 12.00 p.m.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Therefore, in a very formal way, police officers go into the primary schools, to teach young persons about the dangers of engaging of the use of illegal substances.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister responsible for Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, I want to commend the Commissioner of Police and his team for the excellent work they have been doing with this DARE Programme. As far as I am concerned, Sir, it is extremely important and they are discharging this function, in a most professional way. The message is getting through, and I want to give them further encouragement to continue to work with the youngsters in the educational system to try to instil good values in them, as it relates to the types of lifestyles that they lead.

Mr. Speaker, the Royal Barbados Police Force has a very wide and extensive programme. Sir, given the development profile of this Barbadian economy, the nature of the crime in this day and age, the sophisticated approaches being used by some criminals, the demands of the communities, and the school system as it relates to the participation of the police force in some of our activities, it stands to reason that the resources of the force are now stretched fairly thin.

Sir, once this is happening at a time when, as the Honourable Member for St. Joseph said that the force is short of 143 persons - that is, based on the established positions, we are 143 persons down - then we recognise how important and valuable, what may appear to be a simple amendment really is to the Police Act.

Mr. Speaker, I said enough to suggest to all and sundry here and outside of this Chamber, that I fully support, and I commend the Royal Barbados Police Force for all the work that they have been called upon to do, in these trying circumstances. In particular, I want to zero in on the work and contribution of the Royal Barbados Police Force to the establishment of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, it stands also to reason that if the resources of the police force are stretched so thin these days...

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that when this is passed, the numbers of persons available to the Commissioner of Police, will increase.

Sir, as you know, the special constables are accountable to the Commissioner of Police. These special constables, as well as the normal policemen, make up the numbers of persons that are responsible to the Commissioner of Police. Therefore, I could not allow that misleading statement to go out, Sir.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, it is because of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that I had to make the very unfortunate statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do not make it again.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: I am not going to repeat it, Sir. Mr. Speaker, the Attorney-General spoke about the established positions in the Royal Barbados Police Force. Everyone knows that the special constables assist the police but the particular established positions the Attorney-General spoke about, did not include the special constables, and that is the point I am just trying to make. Sometimes I wonder what is the difficulty with simple comprehension of issues for the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that I do not understand what is going on in this House.

I want to remind the Honourable Member that I have been in this House, when this amendment was passed for the special constables to come on board. I think the Honourable Member would do well to go and read the Amendment to allow special constables to be part of the police force.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, the rules on a point of order relate to your comprehension, but I thought you were going to say something about that, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, just let me set the records straight. The established positions that are available to the Royal Barbados Police Force, do not include the special constable. Sir, when the Honourable Member for St. Joseph said that there is a shortage of police officers, he was speaking about those established positions for police officers and not for special constables.

Mr. Speaker, I was trying to make the point that I commend the Royal Barbados Police Force for the work it has been doing, in regard to the establishment of the Neighborhood Watch Schemes in Barbados. Sir, at a time when the resources of the force are stretched very fairly thin, it stands to reason that communities could become better organised - of course, with the help of the Royal Barbados Police Force in this case - and more vigilant.

Sir, if persons are prepared to be their neighbours' keepers, in a more systematic and structured way, then, through their own efforts, they would be making a conscious effort to help deal with the security issues that confront the particular communities. Sir, the police could then spend less time, trying to deal with security issues that those communities confront, and would be better able to deal with those issues that do not lend themselves to greater community involvement, as is the case with well-organised neighbourhood watches.

Mr. Speaker, I can stand here as a very proud Member of Parliament for St. Philip South, because the Royal Barbados Police Force has been able to come into the constituency of St. Philip South, over the last six or seven years, and help with the formation of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes.

Sir, these include areas like Long Bay Development, which remains a very striving and active scheme. They have participated with me, in the establishment of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in Green Point. They have worked with a small area close to the Crane Hotel, and we saw the establishment of a small scheme there. They have used efforts to resuscitate a scheme that was in Mangrove Terrace, and we tried to resuscitate the scheme that was in Ruby Park.

Mr. Speaker, while it is reasonably easy for the force to come and help with the establishment of these schemes, it seems to me that not each scheme which is established, has gone ahead and formulated a set of activities, which would have allowed the Neighbourhood Watch Schemes to develop. The force is very conscious of that and, I imagine, they are continuing to work with those Neighbourhood Watch Schemes that are not as active as they should be, especially at a time when the resources of the Royal Barbados Police Force are being stretched very thin.

House 126, sequence 13, 12:10:14

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, when one listens to the Honourable Member for St. John inside and outside this Chamber, he gives the impression that there is doom and gloom in this country, that this Government is a very insensitive Government and that this Government is not taking its responsibility seriously, not only to the Royal Barbados Police Force but to many other groups and Government agencies in this country. Mr. Speaker, I suppose one should expect that from the Leader of the Opposition.

However, we on this side have a duty to remind those on the other side, and those within earshot of what happens in this Parliament, to speak to the record of the Government and in this case the record of support to the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to give the impression that all the work has been done and that there are not other things to do. What I could tell you is that there is an ongoing programme in regard to the greater professionalism of the Royal Barbados Police Force. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John, in true Opposition style, would tell us about those facilities that are to be done, but he would never tell us about those things that have been done and the quantum which this administration would have expended on those things. Mr. Speaker, I could tell you about some, and I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph in his wrap up, would be more detailed than I.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John would not tell us about the vehicle fleet replacement programme that this Government led for the Royal Barbados Police Force, but we would tell the Barbadian public by way of reminder about that vehicle fleet replacement programme. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John would not tell us that in a day and in an era of greater utilisation of technology and in an effort to modernise the practices of the Royal Barbados Police Force that the Government would be spending some \$26 million on an enhanced technological system for the Royal Barbados Police Force. Mr. Speaker, the reality is that in order for the Royal Barbados Police Force to get to the cutting edge of its business and remain there, it must come into the technological age. Mr. Speaker, the enhanced technological system that the Government is making available to the Royal Barbados Police Force to make it easier for them to carry out their business is costing this country \$26 million.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Members on the other side would also tell us about those police stations that are

in need of upgrading, and they have a duty to do that. Mr. Speaker, we also have a duty, finances permitting, to see to it that those police stations are upgraded.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Members on the other side would not tell this Chamber that this administration has built a new station at Speightstown; that this administration has refurbished District 'A' Police Station; that this administration has spent considerable sums on Central Police Station; that this administration has undertaken some work at Boarded Hall Police Station; or that this administration has plans on doing further work. Sir, as I said, this is all part of a refurbishment programme. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph has a duty to tell us about the contents of that refurbishment programme.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John wants me to speak about Six Roads. Sir, I am not speaking about Six Roads, because the Honourable Member for St. John wants me to speak about it, I am speaking about Six Roads and the need for a civic centre in Six Roads because of the expressed need for it. Mr. Speaker, I have spoken already, and I would speak again, of my involvement of the issue of the establishment of a civic centre in Six Roads.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because I am not asking him to speak on anything. The point I made is that they do not listen to him anyway, so I do not even need to hear him on this subject.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member said that was a point of order and he thinks so, then it was a point of order.

Mr. Speaker, it makes me wonder sometimes in this Chamber when Honourable Members from the other side seek responses from Honourable Members on this side. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John is the same Honourable Member who at one point identified the need for a St. John Development Plan and had a polyclinic at the centre of it.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, the reality of the situation is that if an area ever needed a civic centre not only today towards the end of February 2007 but before, and there were calls from this proud Honourable Member for St. Philip South and other Honourable Members for the establishment of a centre at Six Roads...

Mr. Speaker, no parish in Barbados is developing as rapidly as St. Philip. St. Philip is the fastest expanding area

in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, let us take the anticipated housing density in Six Roads alone where Eastern Land Development has started phase one of a very big project. Sir, in a matter of two and a half years that Eastern Land Development housing project at Six Roads would see the construction of just under 560 houses. Sir, as part of that project, you would also see 23 new commercial establishments being placed there within a three-year period, some of which are already located there.

Mr. Speaker, elsewhere in St. Philip, housing developments are springing up and already existing housing developments are expanding. We have the Rices Development that is being looked after by the National Housing Corporation, which would be coming on stream in the not too distant future, which would see the construction of 120 housing solutions. The National Housing Corporation is also planning a development for Marchfield, and shortly the site and services programme would get started there, which should give us another 33 solutions. Over at Workhall, another 46 solutions should be coming hopefully in the not too distant future. In Windward Gardens and at Duncans, that project has been bearing fruit, and the list goes on and on.

House 126 Sequence 14

12.20 p.m.

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I would not have to nudge the Honourable Member for St. Joseph to hard because he is well-aware, like others, that if an area that is designated as a town centre; an area that is a convenient location, not only for a police station but for a fire station; an area that is a very convenient location for the provision of an ambulance service bay; an area that is a convenient location for the reintegration of the Post Office and Public Library... Sir, at the moment, the Post Office operates out of the Emerald City Complex. Therefore, part of the thinking, with the establishment of the Civic Centre, which a lot of thinking has gone into...

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph must be reminded that a lot of thought has gone into the Civic Centre at Six Roads and, therefore, what we have in mind is that, the police station, the magistrates court, the fire station, the Public Library and the post office, would once again be located on one compound.

Let me also state that, in fulfilment of that dream, about six or seven years ago, I formally approached this Government, to acquire some 4.71 acres of land at Six Roads. Sir, many years ago, part of that land was used to house the tax collection agency, in addition to housing Mr. Springer's Service Station. It is a triangular portion of land,

which is already under the charge of Government. Therefore, when people hear the Honourable Member for St. John coming here, talking about the establishment of a civic centre, the Honourable Member needs to be aware that efforts have already been made for the locating of a civic centre at Six Roads. The Honourable Member also needs to be aware that the land acquisition has already been dealt with and that the components, that is, the building plans that will make up the Civic Centre, have already been drawn.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Honourable Member is not even particularly aware of the area we are talking about. Sir, the reality of it is that the planning for the project is well in hand. Therefore, what is now required is for the Attorney-General to move the project further along the path, so that we would see an actual start of work on the civic centre at Six Roads, an area that has a designation of a town centre, and one that is building up nicely, with regard to housing stock.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy sought to suggest earlier that with the involvement of the Ministry of Education, in the Alternative Certification Programme for Special Constables, that this programme is unnecessary. The Honourable Member sought to suggest that it should be left to the programme at the Regional Police Training Centre, to seek to make a determination as to the suitability of persons to come into the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, in this day and age, when we have to be extremely careful about the quality of our human resources, not only the Royal Barbados Police Force but in many other activities of Government, even in this Honourable Chamber, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is seeking to suggest that a programme, which is contributed to by officials of the Ministry of Education, a programme that seeks to do a number of basic things, such as language proficiency, functional literary skills, mathematics proficiency and general knowledge.... Sir, do you understand the modules of this programme? Sir, all the Commissioner of Police and other officials, in their wisdom, are saying is that these persons, who are released to the training school in the six months training programme, would be those who have reached a basic level of proficiency. This would be in lieu of these persons having attained the three or four CXC's, in circumstances where Government has recognised that there are persons who could fulfill the duties as police officers, with great degrees of success, but that they should start with a basic level of proficiency in some areas.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, would this programme be done while they are at training school or before?

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, the Alternative Certification Programme, which speaks to language proficiency, functional literary skills, mathematic proficiency and general knowledge, also provides participants in concepts of team-building, community awareness, techniques for problem-solving and further development of skills in critical, analytical and creative thinking.

Mr. Speaker, the training school has a well-developed programme, one that has been enhanced. Therefore, given the nature of the work of police officers, one would expect that would be reflected in the curriculum at the training school. It is the same thing that obtains elsewhere in the educational system and there must be a continuous attention to the design of the curriculum at the training school.

Sir, like at any other training institutions, on entering, if the work is pitched at a certain level, persons should have a basic level of proficiency. Therefore, what one does not want would be for persons to be going there, who would be at such a disparity in their ability in the basic proficiency, that the programme at the Royal Barbados Police Force does not serve its intended purpose, for all who entered.

Sir, persons could call it a refresher programme or whatever but I give my officers at the Ministry of Education full support for their involvement in seeking to raise the skills and awareness levels of the Special Constables, who go into the training school to join those who have at least three CXC's, so that while they are there, they could work together, they could move forward together and they could exist the system together, with us being firm in the knowledge that they would have done justice to that programme.

Mr. Speaker, the Alternative Certification Programme for Special Constables, is designed to allow Special Constables to cope and to cope more effectively with the work to which they would be exposed, when they get to the training school.

Asides.

12.30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, anyone who can seek to come in here and give the impression that this is a nuisance programme and that you should let them enter the

programme at the Training School, and then they become overwhelmed with the programme because they are not properly prepared for the programme they can adopt that view but I will stay on the side of the Commissioner of Police and the Attorney-General in regard to how those Special Constables are prepared for the programme at the Regional Police Training Centre.

Mr. Speaker, it raises another issue. Sir, as the Ministry of Education, I want to issue a clarion call for more Barbadians to get involved in continuing education programmes in this country. Sir, there is no paucity of continuing education programmes in Barbados but what this amendment brings home in very sharp focus is the need for Barbadians, who have exited the formal secondary school system to seek to have themselves retrained and to make good use of the opportunities that are provided at the O'Level Institute and many of the other Government institutions, be it at Springer Memorial School, St. James Secondary School, Foundation School or be it through programmes offered by the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic at the satellite stations like the Princess Margaret Secondary School and many other institutions. Sir, that more adult Barbadians need to get themselves involved in continuing educational programmes.

Mr. Speaker, I give this amendment my fullest support but it brings into sharp focus that we need to take opportunities of the continuing educational programmes that are available in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close on this note. This Barbados Administration, in recognition of the challenges that the Police Force faces and will continue to face, is seeking, through this simple amendment, to make available to the Police Force, to have persons coming into the Police Force as police officers by giving the Special Constables a better opportunity to do just that. We are also seeking to prepare them better for the programmes at the Regional Police Training Centre. Sir, the Administration also recognises that crime fighting now has been taken to a new level, that there is greater sophistication in how criminals act. We are, therefore, seeking to professionalise the Police Force to bring them into the technological age with the enhanced technological system provided by Motorola in seeking to do just that. Sir, we are not spending small sums on it because we recognise the importance of information technology and communications technology even in the business of policing.

Mr. Speaker, we are also through, the Vehicles Replacement Policy, giving the Police Force better vehicles to do its work. We have been upgrading the police stations but there is still some work to be done in the area, we are conscious of that and more funds will be made available for the continuation of the refurbishment programme.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you will have to conclude now.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, this amendment has my fullest support. I look forward to the Honourable Attorney-General telling this Chamber about the comprehensive plan to deal with the structural problem that exists as it relates to the paucity of police officers in Barbados.

Sir, I am obliged to you.

SUSPENSION

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2.15 p.m. I am advised that in the latter half hour of the lunch period, which is an extension, that there is to be a presentation to Honourable Members by the Accountant-General in the Senate Chamber on the accrual system. I am advised that I am to suspend the House for one-and-a-half hours.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 2.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Speaker suspended the House accordingly.

H126/12:36

Sequence 16

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

RESUMPTION

ORDER NO. 12 (resumed)

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Mr. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that there is a need to look at the police services relative to improving them at all levels. Therefore, the presentation by the Honourable Attorney-General pointing in that general direction, is somewhat welcomed at this stage of the evolution of the police services in Barbados. Sometimes we get caught up in a rut, believing that situations are static. The police service, just like all of the other services, prison, fire, the Court Procssing Office, are all part of a dynamic recoil, of what is happening within the wider Barbadian society.

Sir, there was a time when the Special Constables were brought into the police services dynamic, as a means

of encouraging persons with a lower level of qualification as an adjunct to the police services.

26.14 p.m.

Sequence 17

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

House 126, sequence 18, 2.10 p.m.

Mr. R.D. JONES: Therefore, one cannot hopefully persist in a situation where there needed to be movement of people from the special constable regime into, what you might call, the regular police force, so there is a need, so that the amendment to the Police Act to clean up this type of situation, is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, it does not say that there will not be a need for special constables in the future. It says that it would be horrendous, if one would recruit special constables and keep them at the same level of qualification, which would deny them the opportunity to penetrate the regular police services. I think, that is important. Sir, you cannot keep them there, and from a personal point of view, it is a disastrous construct to do that.

Sir, I am familiar with the situation, having sat some years ago, on the Ministry of Education's Qualification Equivalency Committee, it was called at that time. Now, as it relates to the CSME, it is called the Accreditation Council. The Qualification Equivalency Committee was a forerunner of that. Therefore, in any part of the services of Barbados, you can look at accreditation and equivalencies, and come up with a particular set or package to satisfy peculiar demands, within the system.

Asides.

Mr. R.D. JONES: There have been times in the past, where persons who have not had the requisite qualification, would have had experience, and you looked at particular modules to give them extra certification, which would give them the opportunity to ensure that the remuneration is brought up.

Therefore, from this particular vantage point, I would support such a movement, relative to persons in the special constable regime, as part of the overall police services situation here in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know, exactly, how much police personnel we have in Barbados. My calculations suggest that there are more than 1 500. I do not know if the Attorney-General would suggest the exact figures. If in fact there is a deficit of 143 persons, it means we have just about 1 400 persons within the police services.

It says that if you have critically analysed the manpower needs of any agency, body or department, such as the Royal Barbados Police Force, to have a deficit below the numbers of personnel required for that establishment, you are going to have major challenges, in managing the deployment of human resource, across the length and breadth of Barbados.

Then, that is going to impact on the types of services that you can provide to the society, or that the society demands. Therefore, you have to bring your numbers up, in the shortest possible time, to satisfy the needs of the populace of Barbados.

Sir, I would want to see, outside of what the Attorney-General spoke, such as the advertisements, the things being done in the regular media, and in the newspapers, and the career showcases. They have to find some other mechanisms, which would make policing in Barbados, highly attractive. Sir, there are sociological implications, and one recognises there would have been some impact on the police services in the late 70s and early 80s, when the society was changing.

The police are seen as challenges in a society, in Barbados and in other societies. Persons no longer want to feel part and parcel of that service, because there are persons out there who question the efficacy of what they are doing. They are seen as individuals to be taunted within the community.

In the past, this was not the case. We had persons looking up to the police. The policeman was a master in the community from which he came. Persons felt as though they were all part of the community and the community toasted up its policemen, teachers, firemen, lawyers and doctors and they were all seen as contributing to the development of that society.

Today, if you are part of the disciplinary forces, you are seen as a threat to the society from which you came, and you start to feel that isolation, as part and parcel of your profession. Equally, if you come from within a society where there is a bit of rambunctious behaviour, you are under a severe threat. You are isolated. You are put on the outside. You are no longer one of us.

Therefore, it would not be comfortable at all, for many persons who might not be strong enough in their own personalities, in their whole character, in their own self-actualisation modes, to venture into the police services to say they want to protect and to serve. It would be absolutely difficult.

Therefore, do not let us simply scoff and say that young people do not want to come on board. The

sociological implications are extremely dire for many of them who want to come on board.

I am pleased, nevertheless to note, Mr. Speaker, that there are some young people, who are willing to take on the cut and thrust, and the barbs of those who do not understand that the protection of the citizens of the State is absolutely important, and they have come forward. We see several of them around, Mr. Speaker, providing security services and protection at this Honourable Chamber, from day to day.

Therefore, we have as law makers and policy makers to give them the fullest support necessary, the fullest support possible, recognising at the end of the day that they are not strangers to our land space. They are our brother and sisters, who have trapped into a different profession. If we have respect for our brothers and sisters, we will respect the profession that they have gone into.

Sir, on the other side as well, one has to encourage those police professionals - all of them should be professionals - to ensure that they carry out the highest standards of probity and respect within the society. They also have to stand tall, because they are representatives of the police service. When they walk the streets, by their presence, they should command respect.

Sir, if they fall into a mode, which would suggest that disrespect will flow to them, you are going to have substantial problems, where ordinary civilians in the society will not respect them, if they behave like ordinary civilians. Sir, policemen, marshals, prison officers, members of Barbados Defence Force are ordinary citizens. They are called to a service to which many other persons are not called. They are called to protect, serve, defend, and to act within the custodial services of the country.

Therefore, within that context, a modus operandi of behaviour must be planted within them, so that when people see them, they would salute their good works. This has to be the case.

House 126, sequence 18, 14:20:14

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. R. D. JONES: A person cannot run with the fellows one day in a negative mode, with a negative mindset and with bad behaviour, and because their name is not written in some book, they become a policeman the next day. Those persons have already destroyed their creditability and their respect. Therefore, if they may want to practice a particular modus operandi, there are persons who would know of their particular behaviour, their particular characterisation and their particular personality, and those persons would have no respect for them.

Therefore, those individuals would now have to resort to brute force and brute-handed behaviour to bring about supposedly a change in the behaviour of those persons who knew them. Mr. Speaker, it really cannot work within that particular way.

Sir, there is also a challenge, if we are to get these over 143 persons to become members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, for words, works and actions to exemplify the behaviour of policemen so that others would follow in their footsteps.

Mr. Speaker, we have lost well-trained policemen to the police services of places like Anguilla, the Cayman Islands and Bermuda, but we should not scoff at that. Sir, people only seek to recruit the best. They recruit good teachers from Barbados as well. Sir, nobody would seek to recruit rabbles unless they do not know, they recruit the best.

Mr. Speaker, we must always be in a position to keep our stock of human capital in such a state of readiness that vacancies can be filled from time to time. Our Regional Police Training Centre should be training all the time. Sir, we do not only need to see Barbadians as being able to police the Barbadian space. I am not saying that we should go and encroach on others and take their personnel willy-nilly, but we have to be selective in one way and we have to ensure that our numbers are adequate enough not only to service the traditional areas but also to service the areas of culture, sports and other activities within Barbados, otherwise the task, if something happens, is going to become even more obtuse or even more difficult.

Mr. Speaker, policemen are not the best paid of workers within the Civil Service. There was a time, a long time ago, when one could argue that this was so particularly at the lowest level, but now there have been some erosion, and the study done some time ago has not corrected this erosion. I would therefore want to suggest from this side that a serious look, notwithstanding what has been done before, be taken of the remuneration of policemen at all levels, but more particularly at the levels of Constables, Sergeants, Station Sergeants and Inspectors.

Sir, I am not saying that you could keep placing money to retain, but these are persons, in a changing Barbados and in a changing world environment, who, when they enter a service should at least feel comfortable at the end of the day, for the dangers, the hazards and the challenges that they had to confront. Sir, they should be able to say that they have made it through the day, they have made it through the week and they have made it to the end of the month. When they look at their pay package, they would feel comfortable within their souls, within their being, that the work that they expend there...

Mr. Speaker, nobody calls out the Honourable Member for St. Michael South unless there is a fire within his constituency and then he might send his assistant or somebody.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: If there is a crisis, we have to do it if we are to protect and to serve just like policemen are to protect and to serve. Therefore, at the end of the day, they should feel comfortable with some adequate remuneration, but when you look at it, they are not. Mr. Speaker, one would say that is as a result of the heavy demand on the public purse but there are some workers within the State sector who must be pulled out of the common pool and given a level of remuneration commensurate with the challenges, the hazards and things of that ilk, which they have to face. Mr. Speaker, policemen and women fall quite squarely within that particular category.

Mr. Speaker, they are important because if we have to take them away, all of us would then resort to the level of brutality for which human beings can be noted. Sir, people would resort to the cutlass, the sword and illegal guns as a means of self-preservation and self-protection.

Sir, with the presence under law of the Royal Barbados Police Force, one resides some confidence that in case something happens they would be there to protect, to serve and to rescue. Mr. Speaker, that is a substantial burden that we placed on fragile man. Therefore, if we placed that burden on fragile man, then we should give them something, which would make it possible that their commitment and their work is loved and is adored, all of those verbs in the transitive form that you could attach to them.

Mr. Speaker, I know that persons, possibly within the hearing of my voice, would ask why is the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central speaking in such passionate tones for the policemen. Mr. Speaker, I speak in such passionate tones for the policemen; because I do not want to resort to violence to protect myself, I am not trained in that particular manner. I am not like other Honourable Members who might be so well-trained to protect themselves in that way, so I rely on them.

Sir, if I have to take up the telephone and call the Oistins Police Station or the Boarded Hall Police Station, I do not want them to arrive three days afterwards because I might not be there to witness what is taking place because somebody with a good Undertaking facility might already have my body. I want them to be able to respond with alacrity. I want them to have the equipment so that they can respond with alacrity. I want them to have the facilities that when they leave the comforts of their own home to go to the police station - not that they should be sitting on plush

sofas within a police station - that there would be a comfort of mind so that when they have to go and do their civic task or carry out the specific job, they would feel assured within themselves, based on the level of comfort and care which they feel from the employer, that they would do a good job.

Mr. Speaker, the employer in this instance is the Government. We have always said that Government must be put to higher standard than possibly others. In this instance, as has been shown by the Honourable Members for St. John and St. Lucy, one has seen some failings. Mr. Speaker, do not let us politicise this particular activity, there has been substantial failings relative to ensuring that the policemen and women of Barbados are adequately served as they serve us.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, let us from today onwards reflect on how we treat our policemen and women. Let us give them the tools to do an adequate job, to protect and to serve and to ensure that the lives of ordinary citizens and the people of Barbados are well-protected. Let us also give them the level of respect that they deserve in a challenging society. Let us give them the level of remuneration, which is necessary to make them feel comfortable within their domestic environment. Let us give them the kinds of police stations and the kind of technological and mechanical equipment to make their application to the job adequate and comfortable.

House 126 Sequence 19

2.30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, when we have satisfied those things, we could then say that we have done a good job on the behalf of our policemen and policewomen, and that we would have spent our time in here looking after them well, as we have looked after other citizens of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Rev. the Hon. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would want to make a brief intervention in support of the measure, which we are discussing. Sir, I am not altogether too sure what the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central has just said or has attempted to say but I think he was speaking in support of the measure, and I would want to join with him there.

Mr. Speaker, obviously, it would have to be admitted that this measure is somewhat of a temporary nature and that clearly beyond this, some effort must be made to address the matter of shortages of human resource, with reference to the Police Force, which constitutes a rather

important entity in the whole system of governance and management in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to begin by crediting the Royal Barbados Police Force, where, in a situation of such constraint, as has been acknowledged by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, the Attorney-General Office and Minister of Home Affairs, and as is widely known by us, in circumstances where the Force has been constrained, as has been indicated and acknowledged, the Royal Barbados Police Force has done a highly credible job over the years and especially, in recent times, in pursuing the mandate, which is given to them, with respect to ensuring that civil order is maintained in the Barbadian society.

Mr. Speaker, the response capacity of the Royal Barbados Police Force has not been so diminished to the extent that we suffer, even in spite of the fact that not only is there a shortage of numbers but sometimes a shortage of vehicles, which leads to some decrease in mobility. Sir, with regards to the response capacity, in instances where they are called upon, is such that it is more than acceptable, in spite of those constraints. The ability to exercise control over levels of crime in Barbados is perhaps principally the reason we can still express ourselves with some level of comfort, with respect to those levels of crime existing here and beyond that, when we further compare ourselves to other countries in the region. I want to credit them, therefore, for such a performance.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to their investigative successes, I do not know that we have come to a place in Barbados, as has been the case in some of our neighbouring countries - with some countries being perhaps as equally as developed as Barbados - where the ability of the Police Force to successfully investigate crime and to track down those involved in criminal activities is such that there is a high level of discomfort existing in those places. In Barbados, that is not the case and, therefore, I want to credit the Royal Barbados Police Force for their investigative success.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know that in Barbados there has been any recognisable serious drift towards corruption either, within the ranks of the Royal Barbados Police Force. Sir, although that in any bunch of grapes or apples, you are likely to have one or two, which are spoiled or 'going off', it is not largely the case, as far as I am aware of in Barbados, that there is a high level of corruption within the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, I think these things are important, for when we suggest that there is a circumstance that calls into being serious constraints, such as the case resulting in this measure, then one would expect that those very circumstances would either significantly reduce the Force's capacity to respond, its ability to manage and to control

crime, its ability to investigate successfully and to track down criminals and bring them before the courts, and there may also be some serious drift towards corruption. Sir, I do not know that this is true with respect to any of these, in relation to the Royal Barbados Police Force. Sir, to the extent I do not know any of these that is true, I want to credit them for their performance in obviously difficult circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, if I may briefly submit, I believe there are a number of issues, which one would have to consider, in coming to a discussion such as that which is before us today. I believe we are dealing with the issue of rationalisation of resources and deployment of human resource. Sir that is part of the problem. Therefore, I am not suggesting that there are any deficiencies on the part of the administration of the Royal Barbados Police Force. I want to suggest that, in fact, there are some factors, some societal dynamics, which are part of the reality today, which are influencing how the management and administration of the Royal Barbados Police Force perhaps deploys its available human resource, which is already short in supply.

Sir, I am not laying blame on the doorsteps of the Commissioner of Police or on the senior management and administration of the Force, I am simply saying that the reality in Barbados is that there are now some societal dynamics, which are making it imperative and perhaps, therefore, influencing decisions by the administration of the Force, as to how and where they deploy their human resource.

Mr. Speaker, we have come to a stage in this country, where once what was a social gathering, namely a party, whether it was a house party, a party at some other commercial facility or nighttime show, it has become what is currently more familiar referred to as a fete. There are small fetes, big fetes and 'bashments' and as been cited by the management of the Royal Barbados Police Force, this is one of those circumstances which now makes it almost imperative that there be a strong police presence attending these fetes.

There has been a development in Barbados, in recent years, where the nature of these events and where the behaviour of certain elements in attendance upon these events, would be such that it demands a show of presence and good force by the Royal Barbados Police Force. We, therefore, must now make policemen available, to ensure that we stay in line when we attend these social occasions, such as fetes.

We must deploy policemen in the bus terminals and such places, to ensure that Barbadians, whom we have educated at high cost out of the taxpayers' pockets, would learn the decency of standing in a queue, to get into a bus.

Therefore, the valuable man hours of the Royal Barbados Police Force must be used for such a purpose, when, in fact, the requirement would be, I would think, that persons who are schooled in a civilised society, persons who still has some significant support system, through family structures in Barbados, that coming out of that kind of a socialisation, at the end of the day, if they must be made to stand in a queue, that would only happen if there is a show of force by the police. Therefore, we are using the Police Force to guard people, who are boarding buses.

Mr. Speaker, this speaks to the issue of rationalisation of resources, and to the issue of deployment of that human resources. Sir, again, these are things that are forced upon the Police Force because of the nature of things in this country. We have policemen, in 2007, who must be delegated every day to perform some of the more mundane duties of traffic management, which could otherwise be performed by traffic wardens.

2.40 p.m.

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Rev. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Therefore, we must find someone, who has two or three certificates, recruit him to the Police Force, train him for six months in all the basic aspects of policing and then he is so departmentalised and designated that a substantial part of his duty is to stand at a corner to direct traffic. I do not know that is the best use of police resources and power and after all that investment and training that he or she should be deployed to do this. We have people who are traffic wardens. We have people downtown, who put tickets on your vehicles if you park the wrong place. It seems to me that a little bit of training and a little bit of understanding of traffic flow and traffic movement issues, would put such people in a place, where they could do some of those duties that we are making police stand up to do.

Mr. Speaker, there is an event in Queens Park called Agrofest, which is an important event, and because there are multiple hundreds making their way there, one must of course, encounter two or three policemen at the bottom of Crompton Street and Constitution Road and one or two at the entrance to gate of Queens Park, another one on the road at the back of the hospital and then another one standing at the roundabout. We have about seven policemen helping to facilitate the flow of traffic, valuable man hours being used to perform a mundane function when, in fact, a traffic warden could be asked to do something like that and all it would require is a change by legislation in the duties assigned to traffic wardens.

Mr. Speaker, I am simply pointing to the fact that I believe that part of the problem we are wrestling with is the issue of rationalisation and deployment. It is not simply

that people are looking to go to greener pastures. It is not simply that people are afraid to join the police force, it is because we are using who is available to us to do duties, which could perhaps be otherwise done by other interesting parties on whom we would not necessarily have to lay a heavy obligation, to be certified to a certain level. Sir, it is a question of rationalisation and deployment of the human resource.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, the Honourable Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs would also speak to in his windup the matter of civilianisation in the Police Force. It seems to me, not too long ago, there was some clear thinking that there would have to be a more potent policy, which gave effect to the process of civilianisation in the Police Force. This simply speaks to a policy framework in which many of the duties not performed by trained police officers could, in fact, be dedicated to civilians, who would not require the kind of level of investment and training and the level of time afforded for training that is now given to the average police officer, who is recruited.

Mr. Speaker, it used to be in Barbados that immigration was the responsibility of the Police Force and that has change and we have civilianise the immigration service in Barbados. There are aspects of policing, which I believe still require that the policy of civilianisation be related to. We have police officers still, to a large extent, undertaking some clerical responsibilities. It seems to me that some aspects of communications, with reference to police operations, could be given to civilians, who operate within the framework of the Police Force but not necessary to train police officers.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that some aspects of the public relations function could be given to civilians operating within the framework of the Police Force. Sir, research functions and the issue of gathering statistics, these functions, to me, do not require that you use a trained police officer, even though each of the departments, sections or units, whatever they be designated or called, maybe headed by a police officer, it seems to me that a lot of the actual day-to-day work and responsibility could be given to civilians. My question to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph would be: Where are we with the policy of civilianisation with reference to the Police Force?

Mr. Speaker, beyond that, one of the issue with which we are having to deal comes out of matters of process. We now have an increased scope of work, which constitutes the demand place on the services of the Royal Barbados Police Force. The volume of work, necessary over time, would have increased tremendously. This is true whether you talk about the police in Barbados or whether you talk about the immigration. It is true whether you talk about the nursing staff and even true with reference to

those who are teachers in our schools. Sir, the scope of work has been expanded, the volume of work has been increased and we now have, as we did not use to have, associated with police work and police operations, public relations function. I think there is a Public Relations Department in the Police Force.

We now have police undertaking community policing. Sir, traditionally, you did not have a community policing section within the Royal Barbados Police Force. You have areas of specialisation; you have the Task Force; the Special Crimes Units and you have the Firearms Unit. Sir, and because there is an increase workload and an expanded scope of work and people are specialising in various areas of service within the Royal Barbados Police Force, all of this is adding to what is coming before us today as a situation, which represents heavy demand and limited ability to respond to demand and to supply the service.

Mr. Speaker, in 2007, we are today, where we were not in 1990. There is a volume of traffic on the road and that volume of traffic has increased tremendously. We now have 110 000 vehicles on the road today and that was not the case years ago, therefore, increasing the incidence of traffic accidents to which, in many instances police are asked to respond even though we have addressed that somewhat through former adjustments to the regulations.

Mr. Speaker, the traffic volume has increased, creating a situation of demand, just to be illustrative, we have got a problem with the use of and trading in illegal or illicit drugs in Barbados to the extent that we did not have that problem perhaps ten or 15 years ago, again, adding to the demand which is at the doorstep of the police. Sir, you can never increase the human resource ability of police service to the extent that we have to respond to these changing dynamics in the Barbadian society and in the Barbadian socio-economy. Sir, violence of various sorts, whether it is private and domestic; whether it is public and whether it emanates from one of those other two phenomena, which I have mentioned, is a reality of the day. Therefore, police are called upon to respond in a situation, where the demand for their service has increased tremendously and at a rate of which we could never keep, with respect to making the human resources available.

Mr. Speaker, there are process issues we are dealing with because people, for instance, who drive a certain type of vehicle afoul of the law with frequency, are stopped by the police, reported by the police, cases are not called in court and a driver knows that the police will report him today and that nothing will become of it, so he repeats the offence tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. Mr. President, some of the things we are dealing with are process issues.

H126/14:50

Sequence 21

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Rev.J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Sir, an individual who commits three or four traffic offences every month driving a public service vehicle, is reported by the police, but nothing happens and he does it repeatedly because he gets away with it. Sir, other people do it too, the demand is placed at the doorstep of the police to respond in a situation where the process does not adequately support their efforts.

Sir, we are dealing with issues of deployment and rationalisation of the human resource. I believe we need to treat to the issue of civilisation. We are also dealing with process issues.

Mr. Speaker, I humbly suggest that something needs to be done further about the management profile or structure of the Royal Barbados Police Force. Sir, civilisation is one thing, but in most organisations you would have a pyramid structure, which narrows towards the top. I believe, with respect to an entity such as the Royal Barbados Police Force, we need to see a greater flattening of the ranks. We took out of the equation the position of Corporal, years ago, so that one moves, as the Honourable Member for St. George North said, to the position of Sargeant going beyond what it used to be, the rank of Corporal.

Mr. Speaker, beyond that, I believe we need to do more, the pyramid structure should be flattened to increase opportunities for more people, men and women, entering the Royal Barbados Police Force to feel that promotion opportunity would smile, one day soon, at them. Sir, we need to have career paths within the Royal Barbados Police Force, which are more appealing and more attractive to Constables at the entry level.

Mr. Speaker, a man must feel that though it is a very slim chance, that he might become the Commissioner of Police, there is every chance that he will find promotional opportunity because of the career paths, which are available, for upward mobility, respectability and rewards with the Royal Barbados Police Force, than is the current case. Sir, that pyramid structure needs to be flattened. It needs to flatten itself out, creating career opportunities for people.

Mr. Speaker, that is being suggested very strongly, by those who look to greener pastures, for better opportunity and rewards. That is seen in the evidence of those who, within the ranks of the Royal Barbados Police Force, pursue other areas of academic study to improve their chances of such promotions or to get into other legally

related fields in Barbados. Sir, many of them go to the university to do first and second degrees.

Mr. Speaker, this is currently a temporary measure which I want to support. I know that we are acknowledging, in Barbados, a situation where rewards elsewhere are more lucrative than ours, in terms of police service. I know that there has always been a clarion call for police to be treated in a special way, and to be paid more.

Sir, I suppose that case could be made, but one would have to acknowledge that Government has not been deaf on this issue, one could not go through a debate like this, without making reference to the fact that in this current administration, in recent time, the matter of flexible allowances, would have been brought into play and have been put into practise, and applied to help us to address and respond to the matter of remuneration with respect to the police officers of Barbados.

I heard stories of police officers who make quite a lot of money. I am not saying that this is a motivation, because they are called upon to work long hours and when these allowances do kick in, there are fairly substantial, and people are handsomely rewarded.

Sir, this initiative before us, I believe, is not intended in any way, to preclude a more holistic response to the problem of a shortage of the human resource of the Royal Barbados Police Force, created by a disinclination of young people in our society, both male and female, to come forward.

I believe that there will be other initiatives, which will emanate from the policy bosom of the office of the Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs and the mind of Cabinet. I believe that those responses must also make reference and treat to sociological dynamics, which are quite apart from those specifically related to the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, the image of the policeman is something which has to be addressed. Some of these sociological dynamics are very critical and, perhaps, very influential, in terms of what is happening, with the drift away from the Royal Barbados Police Force and the disinclination.

I believe that we have to treat to the nature of crime in Barbados, police community relations; how people see the police; how people feel about the police and the policeman located in the bosom of the community; and the growing unwillingness of many people in Barbados to subject themselves to an environment where discipline is a strong dynamic, and a strong component of that environment.

Sir, we see a natural tendency developing among many Barbadians, to shy away from situations where the culture of discipline obtains. With reference to the Royal Barbados Police Force, certainly, the culture of discipline is part of the regiment of every day life, and it is not something which is especially appealing to a growing number of Barbadians today. That is one of the sociological dynamics and trends that we have to address.

Mr. Speaker, that is my five minutes worth of contribution and I want to thank you for your patience, and I want to support the measure.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, the learned Attorney-General, in his introduction, made the observation that Barbados has an authorised establishment of the Royal Barbados Police Force of 1 528 persons, and we are at present dealing with a force of 1 386 strong. I think it is clear that we turn this debate over to the fairly narrow issue of vacancies arising for 143 persons.

Sir, in the context of what could be, I think that is it abundantly clear that though there are vacancies, we are not doing as badly as one might be led to believe, if one listens closely to the Leader of the Opposition and his comments. Having said so, I want to say to this Honourable House that there are a number of considerations I think we must realistically look at.

Sir, the police are drawn from, as we all are, a societal pool. We are, in Barbados today and for the last, perhaps, ten years or so, enjoying a trend whereby our economy has been growing relatively consistent. Not only are we seeing consistent economic growth, but consequential upon that growth, there are a number of new opportunities being thrown out there in the society for persons who might otherwise find themselves to be more attracted to a career in policing.

Sir, even as we say so, my certain knowledge and my understanding of what is taking place in the Royal Barbados Police Force, tell me that there are a number of persons in the Royal Barbados Police Force who are, today, benefiting from types of training which lend the individuals an opportunity for an alternative career. That upward social mobility is something which we also have to factor into the equation. It is not just an opportunity, for example, to go overseas to a greener pasture, but right here in Barbados, we all know of persons who would have come through the ranks of the Royal Barbados Police Force, ended up in a career as an attorney-at-law, perhaps, may have found a career in finance or accounting. The point is, those opportunities, by virtue of the tremendous training, which

the police now have, and access to increase training, those opportunities continue to proliferate and multiply.

Sir, I start on that note, because I think that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, asked the question as to whether we recognise the way in which we are failing the police, who are there to protect and serve. One does not dispute that is what they are there to do, and they are doing that well.

15.00 p.m.

Sequence 22

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

House 126, sequence 23, 3.00 p.m.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Equally, Sir, one must dispute that they are being failed. I think that if we look at what is happening in the force today, it is abundantly clear there is training taking place now that, certainly, was not taking place to the same extent, ten years ago, in terms of leadership development and the management of human resources.

Mr. Speaker, you are not locking somebody into a system. Therefore, it stands to reason that an individual who has benefited from that type of training, but who then, as a Station Sergeant, having had access to that type of training, and has an opportunity to marry that training with other practical academic exposure, is given an opportunity then to find a career in management - outside of policing - that individual would seize the opportunity and proceed accordingly.

The society is experiencing economic growth and growth in employment opportunities, many of which did not exist before. Sir, one that comes to mind is the sphere of private investigation and private security. The concept of private investigation in Barbados and, indeed, in the Caribbean is something which, when I was at university, was not heard of, and it is increasing. In fact, there are many insurance companies that are now actively pursuing the route of referring, suspicious types of cases, to a private investigator.

Sir, many persons who come through the ranks of the police force and find themselves involved in types of training, which lend to a career of that nature, may very well feel this is an opportunity for self-employment. One must therefore be very cautious in saying that the State has failed or is in someway failing, because even as persons are building a career in policing, they are also being exposed to levels of training in new areas where they, perhaps, would never have been able to enjoy before. Sir, that applies across the board, in a number of areas, such as disaster

management, traffic management and information technology.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we have to look beyond the idea of just the building. There are, as has been said in this House, a number of instances where we could point, in the last five to ten years, to work being done to improve the accommodation at one police station or another. I would be the first person to agree with you that all is not perfect. Equally, it is true that all cannot be done at the same time and it is pointless to go into a debate on which station was worst, when you can point to a clear programme on station improvement.

I believe that a debate of this nature, also lends itself for us to reflect on the way in which the Force has performed, and to point to some of the credits, because there are not all negatives. In spite of the suggestions of woe, there has been a substantial upgrading of the telecommunications capacity, and information technology capacity of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Equally, a lot has to be said about the quality of community policing in Barbados today. Mr. Speaker, even as we talk about a vacancy of 143 people, we have to be mindful of the fact that there are policemen out there, who are involved in community policing, and they are doing far more than was being achieved, five years ago. Many people do not realise that you can go into a police station and get every single piece of your domestic property identified specifically; that you, as a homeowner, a resident in Barbados can be trained by the police in "target hardening", as they call it, under their Safe Home Operation, so that you learn how to protect yourself from would-be burglars and robbers.

Sir, part of that process must, of course, require a significant input from the manpower. Therefore, even as we point to the fact that we are achieving more, perhaps with less, the point is that there are obviously some efficiency and competency, in the way of which the management of the force is being conducted. I think that is a matter for kudos towards the Commissioner and his senior staff.

Equally, Mr. Speaker, I think that this House has to recognise the substantial work, which is being done by the Police Force, in terms of protecting person who are victims of crime at home, or at risk of crime at home. I would imagine that most of us have come across that situation, as Members of Parliament, when domestic violence threatens. The police now intervene, in a way that they certainly were not doing - and I can say this from my own personal professional knowledge - seven or eight years ago. They intervene and provide virtually every type of assistance up to and including counselling, in some instances.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we are in a situation where, even though there is a shortage of 143 persons, there is a lot about which we can be proud, in the way that the business of policing is being conducted in Barbados.

I have a private concern, Sir, and it is on the question of recidivism, and the impact that recidivism is having on the work and the resources of the Force.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir, but you are going all over. Sir, please, it is a police matter, but you cannot talk anything that relates to policing. There is a Bill before the House that directs us, Sir.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, let me put it differently. I would ask the question to the House. If you have a vacancy of 143 persons, Mr. Speaker, and you are now looking to fill that vacancy, to what extent that your shortage of human resources is being impacted negatively, as a result of that vacancy, or, is it being impacted by levels of frustration, which are visited upon the existing operational staff of the Force, arising from other things?

Sir, we have to understand that the police are not just simply there doing their business and they are not impacted by other things taking place. Therefore, in a legal system - which is a whole system - if you have 3 000 persons arrested in the course of a year, and 55 per cent of them are arrested for the second or third time, then the suggestion to me, is that there is a failing in other departments, which is impacting negatively on the work of the police. Sir, the police have to be the ones out there at the front, on the firing line, to deal with the problem.

Sir, I am very serious when I make the point that there is an issue here about recidivism, which cannot just be wished away. It impacts directly and fundamentally on the day-to-day operational work of the police force. I want to suggest to you, Sir, that in this year alone, there were 280 persons arrested on more than two occasions. Sir, that tells us something about what we are dealing with, because even as we try to fill numerical vacancies, the reality is that there is something there above and beyond the vacancies, which is making the function of policing very difficult, in Barbados.

Sir, this is an issue to which I believe the Attorney-General might wish to speak, but it also an issue that, I think, Parliament has to reflect upon. Sir, to the extent that policing a community is the responsibility of the force, there also has to be a level of responsibility in the prison system, which is putting people back out there. It also has to be a responsibility on the part of the courts. Sir, I think there has to be a way in which we can get these departments of justice to function more cohesively and systemically.

Sir, as I started, I told you that I really did not wish to speak for a long time on this matter, but those are concerns that I have privately. Sir, quite frankly, those are concerns which I think have been lingering around this legal system for a very long time. The issue of the way that the force has been able to continue to perform and consistently do so at a high level, in spite of obvious difficulties of accommodation and numerical structure, is one about which Barbados has to reflect.

House 126, sequence 23, 15:10:14

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Royal Barbados Police Force is to be credited for the work that it is doing, and so I would want to associate myself with the efforts that are being made here today to increase the numbers available to them.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this debate. Mr. Speaker, unlike others who shall remain nameless, I have the Bill in my possession.

Mr. Speaker, I want to look at some of the aspects of the Bill. This Bill seeks to amend section 24 subsection (2) of the existing Act by substituting the following: "Any person who has not attained passes in at least three subjects at General Proficiency in the Caribbean Examinations Council examination at grade 1, 2 or 3 or Ordinary Level at the General Certificate of Education or an examination equivalent to those referred to in subparagraph (A) and (B) or successfully completed the alternative course of study approved by the Ministry of Education and the Regional Police Training Centre."

Sir, I am of the view that this alternative course of study is a course that involves the basics in conjunction with the Royal Barbados Police Force and the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports. Mr. Speaker, the Act is saying that the special constable must successfully complete the alternative course of study approved by the Ministry of Education and the Regional Police Training Centre.

Sir, it seems to me that there was a recommendation that the alternative course of study be done, not along with the course at the Regional Police Training Centre, but be done before. Sir, I know that in some quarters it is recommended that it should be done either at District 'A' or at some other institution and then after that they could go on to the Regional Police Training Centre and do the further training. Sir, what they were trying to get away from is having these two courses running side by side at the Regional Police Training Centre.

Sir, I have heard an Honourable Member from the other side speaking about the shortage. Sir, I want to make the point that the existing Royal Barbados Police Force is under a lot of pressure. Sir, before, special constables were not involved in the more serious tasks of policing and so the existing members of the Royal Barbados Police Force were overly burdened. Sir, what would happen now is that some of that pressure would be eased off those existing police officers.

Sir, what is happening now is that we have members of the Royal Barbados Police Force who work sometimes on their off days as well as overtime. Sir, if we have more police coming into the system and they are properly trained then the burden would be eased, and of course matters of police investigation, even administrative matters, would be dealt with in a swift and timely manner. Sir, I thoroughly perused the Police Act, Cap. 167. Sir, although we speak to enlistment and to qualifications of persons, I have a difficulty with a requirement that remains on our statute books, the same section 24 which speaks to the enlistment of Constables. Sir, section 24 (1) states:

"With respect to the enlistment of Constables, the following provisions of this section should have effect."

It goes on at subsection (2) and paragraph (b) to state:

"No person shall be enlisted who is not of the required height and chest measurement according to a standard to be fixed from time to time by the Governor-General."

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that at this time a particular requirement like that should not be on the statute books of this country. I say that because one might say that it is discriminatory, or that it restricts persons who are interested in a career of policing from joining the Royal Barbados Police Force. Sir, this is an extremely wide discretion. Sir, this is not casting aspersions on the Governor-General, because it is within the Act.

Asides.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, in this modern-day Barbados we have a provision on the statute books, which says that if a person is not of the required height and chest measurement fixed from time to time by the Governor-General, then the person would not be enlisted in the Royal Barbados Police Force. That is what is on our books, as we debate policing today.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that either we remove it completely from of the Act or we seek some way of addressing it by making the necessary amendments to that particular section.

Sir, I would support any attempts to increase the size of the police force. Sir, the personnel at District 'C' have to deal with the St. John jurisdiction, a growing parish, and St. Philip. Sir, both of these parishes are expanding in terms of developments. Mr. Speaker, I have noticed, from visiting the station, that they have cried out for more personnel so that they can adequately address or seek to deal with the problems arising out of those two jurisdictions. In fact, they are arguing as well that there are not enough vehicles to traverse the two jurisdictions.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. James Central touched on the fact, in a very small way, that the Royal Barbados Police Force has expanded where we now have a Financial Intelligence Unit, which is a specialised section of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

House 126 Sequence 24

3.20 p.m.

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, with those specialised sections of the Police Force, the fact that a Special Constable, who can move through or who, at some stage, could be given the opportunity to sit or could one day sit on that Financial Intelligence Unit, which deals basically with white-collared offences, fraud and other matters, now gives persons in the Police Force more opportunities, such as training and exposure in all aspects of the Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue is that if we are seeking to buttress this shortage, we must also create an environment to encourage those officers to remain in the Force. It is a fact that a constable comes in at a very low end salary scale. His salary entrance is not as high as other persons, who are entering the Public Service for the first time. Of course, I heard my friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, mentioning the proper remuneration for constables and other officers and, indeed, the Opposition would support any provision or mechanism that is put in place, to increase the remuneration or terms and conditions of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, I would, respectfully, submit further that the Police Force operates under some very trying working conditions. Sir, the Leader of the Opposition has mentioned the number of stations that are in need of upgrades, and I must agree with the Honourable Member, but apart from that, we must create conditions of work, so that we could have those persons remaining within the Force. In fact, as one example, Special Constables now being appointed as Constables, have to spend tremendous time at police stations.

Sir, with your permission, I would want to say that I visited the Black Rock Police Station and I was amazed to see, written on the steps going up to the barracks, a sign which said: "Danger Zone". Sir, it amazed me that I could have seen a sign which says "Danger Zone", in a police station. Furthermore, the roof to the female barracks has fallen in.

Asides.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central could attest to that.

Asides.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, how do we expect productivity? How do we expect to boost the morale of police officers, when they have to work under such conditions? Sir, even as I speak, the Police Prosecutors' Office is located in a condemned part of Central Police Station. Sir, at this stage, the Hastings Police Station still has an asbestos roof, and police officers are still working there. There is also asbestos roofing at the Central Police Station. Sir, therefore, when police officers become 'fed up' and decide to journey to Bermuda or to the Cayman Islands, then we expect...

Asides.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, the District "C" Police Station is even worse. In fact, I believe my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, would have gone to Six Roads, with a brigade of other persons. I do not know if it was close to election but a promise was made to build a police station, a magistrate's court, along with other amenities at Six Roads. Sir, District "C" station is still there, in the same state as it was, when they made that promise. Sir, this state of disrepair can be found at all police stations, including those of Worthing and Oistins.

Asides.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, that is not the only point, we debated a Health and Safety at Work Act in here, which has not been proclaimed, but from my recollection, the Act did not expressly state that the Act binds the Crown. That Act did not capture the police officers, who are now working under these trying conditions. Sir, I know Honourable Members on the other side would get up and say that the Act does not have to state expressly that it is binding on the Crown, but writings on it from Maxwell and all other writers state that it must be expressly stated in the Act that this Act binds the Crown.

Mr. Speaker, police officers and others were not special people, according to them and, therefore, I am not surprised that the police officers still continue to work in all of the stations, under such deplorable conditions. Sir, there are also problems in relation to accommodation in the barracks at the District “F” Police Station.

Sir, we can come here with the amendment, we can support it but at the end of the day, we must treat the police officers and give them their just due, they work hard. They are now being asked to do extra duties for Cricket World Cup. Therefore, I would suggest that with the added risk, that we seek to give proper remuneration, in terms of police officers working outside their hours.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to say that the Opposition would support any attempt to improve or to increase the number of police officers because of the challenges they face. In fact, we, on this side, will support better working conditions for members of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

3.30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph will now wind up.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we have had a very frank debate. I believe that matters relating to something as critical as the Royal Barbados Police Force cannot be treated in a partisan way. We each have our perspectives but the Police Force is here to serve all of Barbados. I believe it is fair to say that we appreciate the comments of the members of the Opposition, some things, I am sure, they got entirely wrong but we, on this side, have tried to offer some information to clear up any areas in which there was a dearth of information on their part.

Mr. Speaker, there is one of the matters that I would like to take up with the Leader of the Opposition. He boldly asserted that the community policing has now gone into abeyance but the factual position is very much to the contrary. In fact, the level of community policing has increased over the years and, Sir, St. Philip and Christ Church are now the fastest growing parishes in terms of that most vital part of community policing called the Neighbourhood Watch.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to a very vibrant Neighbourhood Watch Programme, each district station has a consultative committee that is established at the station and this allows citizens to meet with the consultative

committee and to air any concerns they may have from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, we also have some very important youth intervention strategies. The Juvenile Liaison Scheme is working extremely well. We have the Drug Abuse Resistance Training that is working extremely well. Certainly, we have just launched a programme in the Ministry of the Attorney-General in conjunction with the police, which is catering towards at risk primary school children, “Charlie the Crime Stopper”. It is an exceptional programme and without the police it could not have been so.

Mr. Speaker, there are community projects by the Police in Haynesville, Crab Hill and Maynards. These community projects seek constant engagement with the young people, primarily men in those districts to keep those at risk young men from going astray. Sir, I have mentioned St. Philip earlier, but Church Village, St. Philip benefited extensively from community outreach programmes by the Royal Barbados Police Force, where that particular district was heavily affected by serious disorder.

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding any challenges that the Royal Barbados Police Force may have had, they have been able to recommit in 2007 Strategic Plan, to placing greater emphasis on the matter of community policing. It is a fundamental tenet of the workings of the Royal Barbados Police Force that all of their efforts would go to naught, if the communities are not involved and, therefore, they are sparing no effort in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to the Honourable Member for St. George North for talking about the condition of the police stations, when we came into Government in 1994. Sir, just last week, I opened a fully refurbished building at District “A” Police Station, which will now house the entire traffic department and provide new barracks for the ladies.

Mr. Speaker, I have done a tour of Central Police Station and I have seen the conditions that are operating there and, there is no point us burying our heads in the sand because some stations are in bad shape. Sir, what is the plan?

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of now disused buildings in Central Police Station. We have just awarded the tender to demolish one building and to move it out altogether and we are currently evaluating tenders for the refurbishment of another significant building in Central Police Station. Sir, this is the kind of thing that mirrors itself all across Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that in my Ministry, we have prepared a comprehensive accommodation plan for the

police. The police have many installations and many of them are quite old. It has been a major challenge to keep them in a state of good repair and we accept that they need to be changed over time. Sir, I would risk to bet that the condition in which the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force are operating now is by far, leaps and bounds better than it was in 1994, when we came to Government.

Mr. Speaker, one of my colleagues have mentioned the almost change of the fleet of vehicles in the coming financial year. Sir, we will see the last tranche of those vehicles being put in the hands of the Police but it is not just vehicles but the other things that go with them that goes towards making their work easier. The Royal Barbados Police Force has just taken delivery of a new scenes-of-crime vehicle. It is a fully equipped scenes-of-crime vehicle that will allow them to do investigation in a high-tech and fully mobile manner. Sir, it is truly an impressive operation. There is also another vehicle that they have take delivery of in the last two or three weeks, which is a mass proud vehicle. I would not go into the details of that vehicle but I believe members of the public would soon see both of these vehicles being pressed into service.

Mr. Speaker, there are matters, for reason of national security and so on, it is not possible to go into but the fact is that over the years, significant investment has been made and not just dealing with the land side of things. Sir, when we talk improving the vehicle fleet, we are also talking about inflatable boats that the Royal Barbados Police Force would shortly be taking delivery of. They even now have two jet skis to aid them in policing our shores and so on.

Mr. Speaker, we have spared absolutely no effort in ensuring that they are given the best of technology so that they are able to do their work in a safer and more pleasing environment.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that when we look at the way they manage their resources in the Royal Barbados Police Force, Sir, they have to be commended. Mr. Speaker, with 1582 police officers and, remember that the police is a 24-hour operation, which requires them to fully staff three shifts and, of course, there is also the Administration Section, which involved the senior Gazetted Officers like Commissioner of Police, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Assistant Commissioners and so on. Mr. Speaker, let us for argument say that 1 500 are to be divided in three shifts of 500. Sir, some would be on vacation, others would be on sick leave and then there are those specialist teams that cannot function in that way. You have the Fraud Squad and the Task Force so, at the end of the day, each shift, whether it is the day shift or the shift called the 'grave yard shift', it has to have in place a full compliment of Police officers to respond to any eventuality that arises to fully staff all of the police stations and installations in Barbados. Sir, that has

nothing to do with the other duties they are performing in terms of sentry duties at the residence of the Governor-General, Ilaro Court and places of that sort.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, there are police on duty at the Law Courts every day.

H26/15:40

Sequence 26

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Sir, when you actually look at the number of policemen, who are available to fill the role as police officers on duty, you are not talking about 1 500, you are, in fact, talking about a significantly smaller number.

Sir, the fact is, an individual who might have a show, for argument sake, at the Stadium, depending on the nature of the show he or she will require a number of police officers, in the region of 100 or more, to police one of those mass events. While some of the officers who were off duty, and officers like the Task Force and specialised forces have to be there as part of their ordinary duty. Sir, when we talk about resources and so on, we have to realise that it is of great credit to them, that they continue to manage their resources in this way.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about providing Special Constables with an opportunity to transition into police officers, we are talking about giving young men and women, who are currently functioning within the context of the Royal Barbados Police Force, an opportunity to do more. Sir, as a Special Constable, you cannot become a Sergeant, you are not going to be able to rise through the ranks and achieve all of your career aspirations., so, it is important for these people who serve as Special Constables, that they do not find themselves in an operation where forever and ever Amen, they remain at that level.

Sir, I reiterate that the fact is, many of the Special Constables did not have the necessary entry requirements. Sir, what we are talking about is a new system we are implementing, through this legislation, to ensure that we are able to satisfy several needs at once. To satisfy the perfectly natural aspiration of these young men and women, who work hard every day within the Royal Barbados Police Force, but find that they cannot realise their dream of becoming police officers.

Sir, with us being short of 96 police officers, at the level of Constable, we are also seeing that these Special Constables who know the police, the districts, routines and who by virtue of being immersed in it, have developed significant skills, we are providing them an opportunity to

fit into the Royal Barbados Police Force and to fill that deficit.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that I need to deal with the matter of the education component. It is one that is very important and I believe we have struck an excellent relationship with the Ministry of Education. I reiterate that the programme of training is going to be done at the Royal Barbados Police Training School. They welcome it and we are already seeing individuals who are Special Constables, excelling with the training in the Police Force.

Sir, this Bill is worthy of the highest commendation. I indicated that there was a view, at some point in time, that we should phase out these Special Constables, but that is a position we have had to rethink. I remind you that I did say that we have, even specially for World Cup, recruited an additional 60 Special Constables, who are currently in training.

I believe that this gives us an opportunity to fill the manpower needs of the Royal Barbados Police Force and, therefore, I want to commend this Bill to this Honourable House. I believe that I have dealt with most of the issues that were raised by Honourable Members on both sides.

I want to give the assurance to the Honourable Member, who spoke about the police station, civic centre, post office and fire station, at Six Roads, those structures are all within my portfolio. I want to assure you there are being given the fullest consideration. Sir, I am assuring the people of St. Philip, through you, that there are receiving the highest consideration. Preliminary work has been done, and I have requested that work be advanced.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. D.D. MARSHALL:, seconded by Hon. A.P. WOOD, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Mr. R. D. MARSHALL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D.D. MARSHALL, seconded by Hon. A.P. WOOD, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D.D. MARSHALL, seconded by Hon. A.P. WOOD, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Police (Amendment) Act, 2007.

15.50 p.m.

Sequence 27

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

House 126, sequence 28, 3.30 p.m.

ORDER NO. 14 – THE VISITING POLICE FORCES (ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP 2007) BILL, 2007.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph. Sir, before you begin, this is a matter again relating to the police. I will not be allowing this Bill to go wide all over again, so stick to what is in the Bill, please.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I believe that over the course of the last few months, as we discussed the arrangements for Cricket World Cup and the security arrangements for Cricket World Cup, it would have become clear to Members of this Chamber that the resources to hand, across the region would, in fact, be supplemented during this period by assistance from foreign donor countries.

Mr. Speaker, that assistance will come in several forms. We are receiving assistance in areas such as health, military support, and police forces. The largest offer of assistance from police forces from a country thus far, is from South Africa. I believe that I have mentioned to this Honourable House that South Africa has pledged to the region, some 70 police officers, who are all specially trained in such areas as explosive ordinance, also known as a bomb squad. They are also trained in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear responses, also known as CBRN. There are specialists teams that I suppose if I said to you the word, SWAT, it may convey an understanding but they are called, Tactical Response Units. Sir, officers are being provided to serve the region, as support, in a large number of areas. Mr. Speaker, we have also received offers from India. I believe India has offered police assistance, in terms of police divers. We have received and have benefited extensively from support from the UK. It is possible that they may offer some police, as well.

In fact, Sir, in the Schedule to this Bill, you will see designated States, including Member States of CARICOM and associate Member States, such as Canada, the UK, France, the Netherlands and South Africa, specified. Therefore, as part of the effort, these external countries

have pledged their support to the region, in terms of specialised police services.

Mr. Speaker, these services, I repeat, are being pledged to the region. And so, during the currency of the games, they may be deployed to any of the countries in which cricket games are being played.

Mr. Speaker, the Members of the Royal Barbados Police Force have worked hard, and have trained extensively for this event. Sir, the fact is that they are prepared, as they could ever be, given the resources that are available to them. It is obvious, I believe that there are going to be some areas of operational deficits, and it is important that we allow for assistance to come in, from abroad.

Sir, the military is covered by the visiting forces legislation. We had visiting forces legislation in Barbados since 1981, and that legislation provides the framework under which the military of another country, may be invited to come into Barbados to function. Sir, within the Visiting Forces Act, there is no provision for members of police forces to come in. Therefore, it has become necessary for us to bring this Bill before the House to allow for police from donor countries to come into Barbados and operate as police.

The Bill also serves to set out the framework under which they would be operating, and the immunities that they would receive. It is patterned, Sir, extensively after the Visiting Forces Act because, essentially, you are describing a similar scenario. We benefited, for example, from the military coming in at the time of the fire at Glendairy, and they came in and functioned under our visiting forces legislation.

We have culled from or used as a basis or template, that visiting forces legislation because it has done well. We have drawn from it, those provisions that we feel are important to the police officers and to the countries, providing those police officers. We had significant discussions with those donor partners over the last year. They have each indicated that they are satisfied with the legislation we are crafting.

Mr. Speaker, I do not plan to be long, but I want to stress a few things. This Bill provides that the visiting police officers will come into Barbados and perform the same duties that they would perform, as police officers in their home country. Sir, that narrowly circumscribes, what they would be coming into Barbados to do. In other words, if you were a police diver in India, when you came to Barbados, you would function only as a police diver. You would not be asked to do crowd control, tactical response, explosive ordinance detonation, none of those things.

Therefore, whatever, you did as a police officer in your own country, is what you will be doing in this jurisdiction.

In addition, Sir, you will have the same rights, privileges and immunities, as a member of the Royal Barbados Police Force, in the performance of your duties. We have specifically provided that they would be exempt from any criminal proceedings in Barbados, so long as it is in respect of actions taken, in the course of their official duties.

Sir, this is an eminently sensible provision. It is one that is important to the donor countries and, quite frankly, it would be important to us, if we are sending an officer to some place else as well. If an officer does something in the performance of his duty, and someone might get killed, maimed, injured or something of the sort, you would expect that person to be immune from any kind of prosecution, so long as that person acts within the four corners of your official duty.

Furthermore, Sir, it is provided that where one of the members of the visiting forces commits a tort, within the scope of that official duty, he or she would be deemed to have been acting as a servant of the Crown. Sir, this is nothing unusual. This is exactly what obtains, if the police are driving, and should get into a traffic accident and injure somebody. Sir, that police officer is acting in the course of his duty and the crown is therefore, vicariously, liable for any tort that he commits. This is quite standard, and makes eminent sense, in this context.

Mr. Speaker, it is possible that there can be some dispute or doubt as to what constitutes official duty. We have very sensibly provided, in this Bill, just as we have in the Visiting Forces Act, that where there is any doubt as to whether an individual is operating in the scope of his duty, there is a basis for submitting it to an arbitrator, who would decide as a third party, whether or not the individual was acting within the scope of his official duty.

House 126, sequence 28, 16:00:10

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: That provision is similar to the one found in the Visiting Forces legislation.

Mr. Speaker, there are usual matters in relation to taxation. These individuals are obviously not taxable in Barbados, that is quite standard. They would pay no duties on anything that is imported into Barbados for their functioning. They would be allowed to carry arms and to use explosive with the specific permission, and under the command and control of the Commissioner of Police.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is important for me to emphasise that the visiting police forces will be operating under the command and control of Barbados' Commissioner of Police the moment they land on our shores. They would be functioning in accordance with his orders and in accordance with his directions in the same way that the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, who are on duty today, are functioning under his command and control. Mr. Speaker, they are going to be functioning essentially as members of the Royal Barbados Police Force in that capacity.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make the point that this particular Bill will expire, if passed, on the 31st May, 2007. It our considered view that this Bill should be in place only for the duration of the Cricket World Cup.

Asides.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, that is found in the very last section of the Bill at clause 24, which provides that it expires at the end of May. Mr. Speaker, this Bill too is Sunset legislation. Sir, it is important for us that we have the benefit of this expertise but the window in which we would need the expertise is a very narrow window, and therefore it makes eminent sense for this to be Sunset legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation is going to be enacted in more or less the same terms all across the region. It would also serve to protect regional police officers, so that police officers who come to Barbados from Trinidad and Tobago will benefit from the same immunities and police officers from Barbados who go to St. Lucia, St. Kitts or St. Vincent and the Grenadines would benefit from the same immunities. Mr. Speaker, this particular Bill has been developed as a CARICOM model, and therefore it is being followed all across the region.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend this short Bill to Honourable Members of this Honourable House. I reiterate that it has been patterned extensively after the visiting forces legislation. It has been drafted after much consultation with the Commissioners of Police from across the region who have all examined it. They are happy with the way in which it is operating. Sir, given that the command structure and the hierarchy of their own forces could not in anyway be compromised, they are satisfied that this Bill would form the basis of a good cooperative arrangement during the course of the Cricket World Cup.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I commend this Bill to this Honourable House and beg to move that it be read a second time.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, seconded by Hon. A. P. WOOD, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. R. D. MARSHALL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 2 inclusive were called and passed.

Clauses 3 - 4 inclusive were called and passed.

Clauses 6 - 7 inclusive were called and passed.

Clauses 8 - 16 inclusive were called and passed.

Clauses 17 - 20 inclusive were called and passed.

Clauses 21 - 24 inclusive were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, seconded by Hon. A. P. WOOD, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, seconded by Hon. A. P. WOOD, the Bill was read third time and passed and cited as the Visiting Police Forces (ICC Cricket World Cup 2007) Act, 2007.

ORDER No. 13

SECURITY ASSISTANCE (CARICOM MEMBER STATES) BILL, 2007

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, it has become important that the region considers its crime and security issues, not from a parochial perspective, but from a regional perspective. Mr. Speaker, for many years, we have dealt with matters such as crime and security purely from a perspective of being a single island and a single political and constitutional jurisdiction. Sir, the only time you would find cooperation among the forces would be occasions where, as a result of comity and amity between the high command of the forces, relationships would develop.

House 126 Sequence 29

4.10 p.m.

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, with the increase of the criminal element being multi-jurisdictional, and especially within the region, it has become important for us to deal with these issues at a regional level.

Mr. Speaker, we have the experience of the Regional Security System (RSS), which deals with how Barbados and the Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States assist themselves, and each other, in terms of interdiction of crime and policing our waters for drugs. Sir, there is the operation of the two aircraft, which is of immense value, as we protect our waters against drug smuggling and things of that like, but that Regional Security System (RSS) did not extend beyond Barbados and the Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States.

Mr. Speaker, it has become clear to us - and again Cricket World Cup could be seen as being the catalyst for the regional approach to the many things that are now confronting the Caribbean - and so we have established a Treaty on Security Assistance among CARICOM Member States. This Treaty was signed last year and a Protocol to this Treaty was executed earlier this month. Essentially, the Treaty is set out in the Schedule. It allows for the region, through its coordinator, to raise up Forces, made up of Police Force or Defense Force, to respond, as a regional effort, to crises in a particular, or in any of the jurisdictions within CARICOM. I mentioned earlier today in this Honourable Chamber, that we have benefited from the combined forces of the Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States, when we had our own crisis at Glendairy. This Bill today allows for a greater regional response.

Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that the two largest forces, both the Military Force and Police Force within the region, are to be found in Trinidad and Jamaica. Sir, arguably, these are also the Forces with the greatest amount of resources available to them. In fact, part of the Cricket World Cup effort sees large numbers of skilled personnel from those two Forces, being thrown into the effort because the smaller territories are only able to contribute proportionately smaller numbers of personnel.

Sir, this Treaty on Security Assistance amongst CARICOM Member States is really an amplification of the Regional Security System (RSS) arrangement. It takes us wider and allows us to pool together resources from Jamaica in the north, to Trinidad in the south.

Mr. Speaker, this Treaty sees a coordinating Secretariat being established. It also sees a coordinator being provided for. It has its funding mechanism and at Article IX, it sets out that this area of cooperation are:

(a) combating threats to national and regional security;

(b) minimizing the incidence of serious crimes;

(c) preserving the territorial integrity of the Contracting States;

(d) conducting search and rescue missions, as a consequence of natural and man-made disasters; and

(e) in any other areas mandated by the Contracting States, which is within the objectives stated in Articles 3.

Mr. Speaker, this Treaty allows us to go beyond crime and security issues and to deal with search and rescue. It allows us to deal with responses in the aftermath of a hurricane, or an earthquake. Sir, I believe that Antigua had a tremor this morning and Trinidad is a country that is susceptible to earthquakes. Sir, this Treaty is wide; it allows for greater regional corporation; it allows us to pool our resources, both financial and manpower, for the greater good of the region.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that, in order for this Treaty to be fully effective, it be enacted into domestic law because the individuals, who are pooled together to do a response, would come into our domestic space to operate and, therefore, there has to be a legal basic on which they could do so. As I said, the Treaty was signed last year and a Protocol to the Treaty establishing an agency called COPACS, was executed on February 14th, 2007, in St. Vincent.

Sir, COPACS is a special coordinating unit and in the Protocol, it is stated to be a temporary institution and that it would be convened by the Conference of States, as and when required. The fact is that we do have a Treaty but we do need to have an operational and command structure, under which the Treaty would function and therefore COPACS would provide a person called a Regional Operations Commander. Currently, as we prepare for Cricket World Cup, we are having the benefit of this Regional Operations Commander, operating across the Caribbean, to deal with planning of how resources would be deployed and the actual deployment of those resources. Sir, it is certainly a mammoth task but we are learning a lot, as we go forward.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend this very short Bill to this Honourable House. It allows us to fully embrace a regional approach to crime and security; it allows us to embrace a regional approach where we see our individual country's skills and manpower resources being deployed at a regional level and for the regional good.

Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful to the Honourable Member for pointing out that this is a very simple and a very short Bill. Sir, I would want to add that it is a very dangerous Bill. This is a Bill that interferes with the constitutional rights of every citizen in the Caribbean. Sir, not only does it interfere with the constitutional rights, this Bill is also more dangerous than that of the Emergency Powers Bill.

Sir, if one would look at the leverage that is being given to these visiting Forces, no one would believe that there could be an Attorney-General, who would come to this Parliament and would say that this is a short and simple Bill but that Attorney-General would not highlight that constitutional changes would have to be made for this Bill to be passed, because of the fact that Government is asking the citizens of Barbados, along with all others who have signed onto this Bill, to give up certain rights.

Asides.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy cannot make such glib statements that we are asking citizens to give up rights, without doing this Honourable Chamber the courtesy, at least, of saying what are those rights. Sir, no citizen is being asked to give up or to surrender any rights at all. The rights that our citizens have are enshrined in our Constitution and under this Bill and under the Treaty, there is no Barbadian citizen, who is being asked to give up any right.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Attorney-General has got up on that point of order. Sir, the Attorney-General said in this Honourable House that prior to the passing of this Bill, the Regional Security System (RSS) was in an agreement with the Security Forces of Barbados and the Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States. This Bill has now been expanded to include Trinidad and many others, which means that it is a separate Treaty. It also means that, unlike the other Bill, this Bill is not Sunset legislation because the previous Bill ended on May 31. Therefore, when this Bill is passed, after Cricket World Cup is finished, this Bill would still be active.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, I want the Attorney-General to tell me why would we have a Bill like this still being active after 31st May, when Government has claimed that we want this Bill to help only with Cricket World Cup, 2007.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member would read the Objects and Reasons, the Honourable Member would see what this Bill is about. Sir, the Objects and Reasons say clearly that:

“This Bill provide for the implementation of the Treaty on Security Assistance among CARICOM Member States, and for related matters.”

Mr. Speaker, the Objects and Reasons do not mention Cricket World Cup. By contrast, the Visiting Police Forces Act mentions Cricket World Cup. But nowhere in this Act have we suggested that this is a Cricket World Cup measure and therefore the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House.

4.20 p.m.

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I was told that the biggest threat we would have to the Caribbean would be World Cup, 2007. The Attorney-General is saying that it has nothing to do with World Cup, 2007. When we have World Cup, we do not need this Bill, that is what Honourable Member is saying. Sir, that is not all. This Bill smacks like the ShipRider Agreement. We have objected as a people against the ShipRider Agreement but yet still you are having visiting troops, who could come into your country and have the same power you did not want for the ShipRider. Sir, in other words, Barbados does not have sovereignty any more because people from all over the world and the Caribbean could come into Barbados and get permission to do what they like on this particular Bill and, Sir, it is dangerous.

Mr. Speaker, this would also allow common space for all the member States because we now have security common space. Sir, you know what is the most dangerous thing. I am not talking about Barbados now because we believe that because we would not do certain things that other people would not do them. Sir, we have in the Caribbean leaders who are prepared to leave their country and go to other countries to dictate who should be the Party in power. What we are doing is passing an Article XI for cooperation between two or more Contracting States. When you see the powers of the forces, one can easily add that these forces can be used to change the election results because the leaders or more contracting forces think alike, you can then call in the force to do as you like.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Sir, no where in the provision of this Bill could any such thing be seen. It is alarmist and pernicious and the comment should be struck from the record.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, when you read Article IX and Article XI, no comment could be struck from the record. Sir, I am saying that we have to be careful because when on reads Article VII and Article XI...

Mr. SPEAKER: What about Article IV.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, do you mean that Article 4 is worse?

Mr. Speaker, this legislation would be passed in all the Parliaments that agree to the Treaty and the Protocol. For example, it means that probably St. Vincent, probably Dominica and probably St. Lucia do not have to speak to anybody in Barbados and can decide, base on what they have done previously, that they do not like certain things and can use Article XI, in terms of cooperation between two Contracting States to decide what action they want to take under Article IX.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that this simple and short piece of legislation is not only simply and short but is dangerous. I believe the powers you are seeking in the particular Bill calls for constitutional changes. You are asking the citizens to give up rights they had previously, and you are inviting other people to take away those rights from the citizens of those countries. It cannot be a simple amendment, Sir. You are asking people to give up their constitutional rights to visiting forces. Sir, this calls for constitutional changes.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I do not have to ask. It is my opinion and I am living with it. Mr. Speaker, this short Bill has certain legal consequences and we, as a Party, have to recognise that we are giving a blank cheque to leaders in the Caribbean, who do not see politics the way we see it. Sir, if the other parliamentarians are happy to pass this Bill, I am not happy with it. I will vote against it because it is a dangerous piece of legislation. Mr. Speaker, on top of this, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph would have to tell this House that if this is not needed for World Cup, why it is needed. Sir, that is the most important question. If it is not needed for World Cup, why are we passing legislation like this in the House? The Honourable Member needs to tell the whole of Barbados why this dangerous piece of legislation has been brought around World Cup. If we had not questioned it, the Honourable Member would have easily given the impression that the Bill, which was passed previously is associated with this and the cause is the same. Sir, because it was questioned, the Honourable Member was forced to say that it has nothing to do with World Cup and that there was no need for Sunset Legislation on this.

Mr. Speaker, if there was no need for Sunset Legislation, tell me the threat that we are preparing for and

protecting against. I need to know because this simple and short Bill is also a very dangerous Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Dr.D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, who introduced this Bill. I have read one of the objectives of the Bill, I have also looked at the establishment of this so-called security assistance mechanism and, I have also looked at the rationale behind establishing the Joint Strategic Coordinating Committee.

Mr. Speaker, while looking at those particular areas, there are two concerns that I have that I must express. Those concerns at the beginning relate to these objectives. I have a problem at Article III, where the objectives of the security assistance mechanism, in a broad definition, says as follows:

“that there is to be expeditious, efficient mobilisation and deployment of regional resources in order to manage and defuse national and regional crises and to combat serious crime...”

Mr. Speaker, we have to be very careful with these types of definitions. It goes on to say:

“...however they may arise.”

Sir, that is a very dangerous element. I need to know and be clear in my mind that I am not going to be passing a piece of legislation that says that two contracting parties can go around bilaterally - without the utilisation of the Joint Strategic Coordinating and Planning Committee - the security assistance in a bilateral way and I am being told, however a threat arises.

H126/16::30

Sequence 31

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: however a threat arises. Sir, this threat to national security needs to be defined. It needs to be defined because I do not know what it means. It could mean one thing for one leader of one country, and it could mean something else for another leader of another country.

In fact, the Honourable Member for St. Peter may have his own view of what is a national threat as well as the Leader of St. Vincent. As a result under this piece of legislation, if so passed, they can bypass the Joint Strategic

Coordinating and Planning Committee, and establish bilateral relationships, so that they could utilise armies to move from one territory to another. That is a very dangerous precedent we are setting in here.

Sir, it is a fact. It is allowable, because if one goes further into the Bill, Article V says that Contracting Parties ... The Committee's functions, function are defined as follows:

4 (a) To monitor the availability and readiness of the resources to the deployment by the security Assistance Mechanism as required.

(b) To monitor and advise on the preparedness of the Contracting Parties to accommodate materially, militarily and service personnel in times of a national crisis."

Sir, even though you have that in place, you moved to Article IX and you gave Contracting Parties the right to bilaterally, without even consulting the Committee, to engage and to define for themselves what is a national crisis or threat however so arises, based on the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support this. I certainly cannot support this as written. I cannot do it.

Sir, it goes on, in Article IX... and the drafting is poor, because where the imperative should have been used, where the Contracting Parties should have been forced by the legislation, it uses "may", instead of "shall", which would have allowed the Committee not to be bypassed by Contracting Parties.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy's contention may not as farfetched, as some may want to believe. Mr. Speaker, for the simple reason, the definitions are not present in the Objectives.

I really do not understand about utilising security forces to defuse a national crisis, however it may have arisen. That is a dangerous thing, Sir. A fundamentally dangerous precedent to be sent by this piece of legislation. It is a dangerous piece of legislation and I will stand by that.

Sir, what does not make sense in the legislation is, when you add, however they arise. Who determines what international crisis? Who determines when a crisis arises? Does the Honourable Member for St. Michael South determines that, if there is a crisis in his constituency? Is that a national crisis? Do you want to contract the Committee?

Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious matter and I will not trivialise it by responding to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South. I will not do it.

Sir, my two concerns are, with respect to the Objectives, we have to have definitions established in these Objectives. We need to understand what is meant by a national threat, and what is meant by tagging on "however they arise". I need to understand that. I also need to understand, why it is that you would have established a set of objectives for a Security Assistance Mechanism that is supposed to be managed and coordinated, through a Joint Strategic Coordinating and Planning Committee, but then you moved to a position of giving the Contracting Parties the right to bypass the entire Committee, that does not make sense to me. It is bad drafting of legislation - based on how this is established - unless there is a more fundamental and sinister motive. Sir, I do not know. That is why I am not going to support this piece of legislation.

Contextually, I can understand what is being considered, but to have this enshrined in law as being a permanent piece of legislation, I think that we are heading down the wrong road, and as a result of that, I will not give this piece of legislation my support.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I heard the comments of the Honourable Members of the Opposition. Let me say today, as we speak, we have Visiting Police Forces legislation. I have asked the Clerks to get a copy. Sir, that Visiting Police Forces legislation allows the Governor-General to request military assistance from a foreign State, having designated State, as a State that can send it for us. I believe that the key to the operation of this whole Treaty is to be found in Article X, which talks about the requesting State. There is another Article that talks about the sending State.

Sir, the fact is, when once this Treaty is enacted into domestic law, it does nothing more than establish a regional machinery, and it makes it possible for us, the Government of Barbados, to contribute to its budget and it makes it possible for us, the Government of Barbados, to participate in its activity.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to you that any assistance coming into Barbados of the military kind, will come under our Visiting Forces Act, which came into force on March 1, 1980, which sets out that the Governor-General may, by proclamation, designate any country as a country to send personnel to Barbados. It then sets out what happens with them, and the Protocol governing their functioning in Barbados.

16.40 p.m.

Sequence 32

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

House 126, sequence 33, 4.40 p.m.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Members on the other side must look at the totality of the arrangements. These arrangements are for regional responses to regional threats. I do not know what kind of threat, they have going through their minds, as they sleep at night.

Asides.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, in 2005, when Glendairy burnt, this country was faced with a national threat.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, because the Honourable Member already told the House that when Glendairy was burnt, there was need for this legislation. The Honourable Member already said that the Visiting Forces legislation was used for Glendairy, so I do not understand why the Honourable Member would make that point, and now try to use this point.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, the point is that in 2005 when Glendairy burnt, we relied on another mechanism. We relied on the Regional Security System (RSS) to provide 120 troops to come into Barbados, to help us maintain law and order at the prison. I made the point quite clearly, Sir, that we have now decided to involve all of the countries across the region, in a similar security mechanism. Currently, Barbados is a part of the RSS, Barbados and the OECS.

Mr. Speaker, the OECS has a regional structure, dealing with their political Governance, but that does not negate the importance of CARICOM. There is CARICOM that operates at the regional level, but you have the OECS operating within their territories. Sir, all that is happening in this case is that the OECS and Barbados felt there was a need to deal with our security arrangements.

Currently, Sir, the RSS operates and maintains the two military craft that fly up and down the region, using their radar, and it redounds to the benefit of the region. I reiterate, Mr. Speaker, that the RSS was limited to those territories and we felt, across the region, that it was important to bring into the arrangement, all of the other countries, especially Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, which have larger resources.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, those countries did not want to participate in the RSS arrangement. They felt we

should leave the RSS where it is, but they wanted to participate in a fully regional effort from the start and, Sir, that is the genesis of this Security Assistance Treaty, for CARICOM.

Mr. Speaker, it cannot be denied that when there is a natural disaster in this region, the countries across the Caribbean stick together. We have sent people into Grenada at the time of their hurricane. Other countries have sent assistance. The time may well come, Sir, when Barbados may suffer from a devastating hurricane and need to draw on assistance.

Mr. Speaker, we have to think that today's military forces are not just men with guns. They have engineer corps and other kinds of resources. Mr. Speaker, the leaders of the region feel it is important to approach these things from a regional level. It is wrong for the members of the Opposition to try to strike fear in the hearts of Barbadian people, and talk about how dangerous this is, how dangerous that is, and try to make somebody believe that two countries are going to come and agree to invade Barbados. Mr. Speaker, that is not allowed in the legislation. If the Honourable Members should read the Protocol.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, because when the two contracting parties do that, they do it without the RSS being active. This is in Article XI.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please. Sir, is not what you are saying relate to Objective 1. The two contracting parties, could that not relate to Objective 1?

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: No. I prefer to deal with Article XI, Sir, where it deals specifically with the case that the Honourable Member is dealing with, Sir, because Article 11 is saying that these two Contracting States can do it, and they do not even have to worry about the RSS.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, Article XI begins by saying that cooperation between two or more Contracting States, and it goes on by saying that notwithstanding the provisions of any other article, two Contracting States may agree. Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding that there is a Treaty arrangement, if between Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, we want to get troops from Trinidad and Tobago to Barbados, we do not have to go through this regional mechanism to do it, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, this Clause preserves the status quo, because if Barbados wanted today to get assistance from Trinidad and Tobago, or St. Lucia wanted to get assistance

from Barbados, as contracting parties, they are able to say, render me this assistance, and the other country can say, yea or nay. Mr. Speaker, that is the status quo, without any treaty.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is clearly stated in Objective 1.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, but guidance is something that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy will not take.

Mr. Speaker, this talk about the contracting parties, the point is, quite simply, that contracting parties can agree, as between themselves for special arrangements, without drawing in the entire community. Sir, this is as it should be.

Mr. Speaker, I will end where I began. We have put a lot of regional efforts in place to deal with crime and security, and we continue to do so. It is in our interest that we should do so, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir, let the House know what is Objective 1, because they obviously have not read it, Sir.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, Objective 1 says:

“...the efficient and timely response to, and management of natural and man-made disasters.”

I thought I had dealt with it when I spoke about hurricanes, and rendering assistance in Grenada.

I also mentioned the fact, Mr. Speaker, that Antigua had an earthquake this morning. I thought that my comments were heard by all but, clearly, they were not. I took pains to mention, the assistance that we rendered to Grenada. Therefore, it is multifaceted arrangement. It deals with a whole host of different things, and I believe, that this framework, allows for greater cooperation between regions, and on a Treaty basis.

Mr. Speaker, with those works, I beg to move that Bill be read a second time.

Hon. J. X. WALCOTT: I beg to second that, Sir.

On the motion of Hon. D.D. MARSHALL, seconded by Hon. A.P. WOOD, the House resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Mr. R.D. Marshall in the Chair.

House 126, sequence 33, 16:50:14

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 4 inclusive were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, seconded by Hon. A. P. WOOD, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

A division has been called for.

The bell was rung.

The question that the Bill do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative, the House dividing as follows:

Ayes: Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY; Hon. R. R. FARLEY; Hon. A. P. WOOD; Hon. N. A. LYNCH; Hon. Miss. H. E. THOMPSON; Dr. the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT; Hon. D. D. MARSHALL; Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE; Hon. C. A. MASCOLL; Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY; His Honour J. M. EDGHILL; Mr. R. D. MARSHALL; Mr. H. F. LASHLEY; Sir Louis Tull; - 14

Noes: Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON; Mr. M. A. LASHLEY,

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK; Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN; Mr. R. D. JONES - 5

On the Separate motion of Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, seconded by Dr. the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Security Assistance (CARICOM Member States) Act, 2007.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government's Business for today's Sitting. I therefore beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, March 06, 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, March 06, 2007 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

House 126 Sequence 34

5.10 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY..... 1

MOTIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY..... 1

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY..... 2

Hon. R. R. Farley, 2.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 12 – SECOND READING OF THE POLICE
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2007..... 2

Hon. D.D. Marshall, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 14; Mr. D.J.H.
Thompson, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 18; Hon. G. A. Clarke, 11, 12,
13; Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, 13, 14, 15, 17; Hon. A.P.
Wood, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

RESUMPTION

ORDER NO. 12 (resumed)

Mr. R.D. Jones, 21, 22, 23, 24; Rev. the Hon. J. J. S.
Atherley, 24, 25, 27; Hon. K.D. Symmonds, 28, 29, 30;
Mr. M. A. Lashley, 30, 31; Hon. D.D. Marshall, 32, 33;
Hon. A.P. Wood, 34.

ORDER NO. 14 – THE VISITING POLICE FORCES
(ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP 2007) BILL, 2007.. 34

Hon. D.D. Marshall, 34, 35, 36; Hon. A.P. Wood, 36; Mr.
D. St.E. Kellman.

SECURITY ASSISTANCE (CARICOM MEMBER
STATES) BILL, 2007

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL..... 36

Hon. J. X. Walcott, 38, 42; Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, 38, 39,
41, 42; Dr.D.C. Estwick, 39.

SUSPENSION..... 21

ADJOURNMENT..... 42

Hon. Miss M.A. Mottley, 42; Hon. R. R. Farley, 42.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ATHERLEY, Rev. the Hon. J. J. S.

CLARKE, Hon. G. A.

ESTWICK, Dr.D.C.

FARLEY, Hon. R. R.

JONES, Mr. R.D.

KELLMAN, Mr. D. St.E.

LASHLEY, Mr. M. A.

MARSHALL, Hon. D.D.

MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M.A.

SYMMONDS, Hon. K.D.

THOMPSON, Mr. D.J.H.

WALCOTT, Hon. J. X.

WOOD, Hon. A.P.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

Prepared with the transcript; for checking against the recording and the Minutes.

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while preparing this report from the edited transcript. The text has not been altered except where stated.

Q1. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q2. Suspension of Standing Orders. The seconder's line is labelled 'Hon. R.R. FARLEY' but carries only the procedural sentence 'The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.' The words of the seconding appear to be missing. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Order No. 12, Mr. D. J. H. Thompson. One of Mr. Thompson's speeches is labelled 'Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON'; elsewhere he is 'Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON'. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Order No. 12, establishment of the Police Force. The Attorney-General gives the authorised establishment as 1 528 and the current strength as 1 386, 'approximately 140 individuals off'; Hon. K. D. Symmonds later speaks of 'vacancies arising for 143 persons'. The two figures give a difference of 142. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 14, Committee. The clauses are called as 1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8-16, 17-20 and 21-24; clause 5 is not recorded as called. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 13, second reading. The second reading is seconded by Dr. the Hon. J. X. Walcott, but the next procedural sentence says the House went into Committee 'On the motion of Hon. D.D. MARSHALL, seconded by Hon. A.P. WOOD'; no sentence records the question on the second reading being put. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Order No. 13, division. The list of Noes runs on into a speech heading in the source, so that 'Dr. D. C. ESTWICK; Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN' prints as a speaker label and 'Mr. R. D. JONES - 5' as the speech. The Noes were Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, Mr. M. A. Lashley, Dr. D. C. Estwick, Mr. D. St.E. Kellman and Mr. R. D. Jones. Please confirm the layout.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, 27th February, 2007, with Mr. Speaker, His Honour I. A. Roett, in the Chair; prayers were taken by

Rev. Canon Ivan Harewood. The Minutes of 20th February were confirmed, and Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley recorded the request of the Member for St. James North, who was unwell, for leave of absence from 27th December, 2006 to 13th March, 2007, which the House granted. Standing Orders were suspended for the rest of the day.

Under Order No. 12 the Attorney-General, Hon. D. D. Marshall, Member for St. Joseph, moved the second reading of the Police (Amendment) Bill, 2007. He said the Royal Barbados Police Force had an authorised establishment of 1 528 but a strength of only 1 386, and that the Police Act required three CXC or equivalent passes for enlistment which special constables generally lacked, and the amendment would let those who had performed on par with enlisted officers join the Force. Mr. Speaker held Members to the Bill and would not allow debate on the level of crime. Mr. D. J. H. Thompson questioned the Attorney-General's claims about the Force's ability to fight crime, and Hon. G. A. Clarke, Member for St. George North, said resources for the Force had increased every year since 1994.

Mr. D. St.E. Kellman said the amendment would not solve the Force's problems and objected to the Ministry of Education deciding who was competent to be a policeman, drawing a point of order from the Attorney-General. Hon. A. P. Wood, Member for St. Philip South, supported the Bill; Mr. Speaker ordered certain of his remarks to be withdrawn and expunged from the record. The House was suspended until 2.15 p.m. to allow a presentation by the Accountant-General on the accrual system.

On resumption Mr. R. D. Jones, Rev. the Hon. J. J. S. Atherley, Hon. K. D. Symmonds and Mr. M. A. Lashley spoke. The Attorney-General replied that the number of officers actually available for duty was significantly smaller than 1 500. The Bill passed through Committee, clauses 1 to 3, and was read a third time as the Police (Amendment) Act, 2007.

Under Order No. 14 the Attorney-General moved the Visiting Police Forces (ICC Cricket World Cup 2007) Bill, 2007, explaining that foreign police would assist during Cricket World Cup, South Africa having pledged some 70 officers, and that the Bill, a CARICOM model, was sunset legislation expiring at the end of May. It passed without debate.

Under Order No. 13 he moved the Security Assistance (CARICOM Member States) Bill, 2007, extending regional security co-operation beyond the Regional Security System of Barbados and the OECS. Mr. Kellman called it a dangerous Bill that interfered with the

constitutional rights of every Caribbean citizen and gave a blank cheque to regional leaders; Dr. D. C. Estwick asked that a threat to national security be defined. Replying through several points of order, the Attorney-General cited the 120 troops of the Regional Security System brought in when Glendairy burnt in 2005, and read Objective 1 on

natural and man-made disasters. On a division the Bill passed by 14 votes to 5 and was read a third time. On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, seconded by Hon. R. R. Farley, the House adjourned until Tuesday, 6th March, 2007 at 10.00 a.m.