
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 11, 2013

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 11, 2013.

PRESENT

The full list of Members present is to be inserted from the Votes and Proceedings. Members identified from the record of this Sitting:

His Honour M. A. CARRINGTON (Speaker)

Her Honour Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON (Deputy Speaker)

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN (Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C. (Leader of the Opposition)

Hon. R. D. JONES, J.P. (Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation)

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C.

Hon. R. L. SEALY (Minister of Tourism)

Hon. F. J. STUART (Prime Minister, Minister of National Security, the Public Service and Urban Development)

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE (Minister of Health)

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT (Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development)

Mr. J. D. PAUL (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE (Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY (Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth)

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER (Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS

Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW

Mr. SPEAKER: Good morning. Good morning, all the members. This House is now in session. Members, I have with me the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, May 14, 2013.

MINUTES

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that those minutes be taken as read.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, I am in receipt of the accounts and statements - the financial statements for the month of September 2012 as prepared by the Accountant General.

PAPERS

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay the Barbados International Business Promotion Corporation - Investment Barbados Annual Report 2012. Mr. Speaker, I am also commanded to lay the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council (TVET) Annual Report April 1st, 2009 to March 31st, 2010. I am, Sir, also commanded to lay the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council Annual Report 2010–2011.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay the Consolidated Statements of the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. for the year ending March 31st, 2008 and the Consolidated Financial Statements of the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. for the year ending March 31, 2009. The non-consolidated financial statements of the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. for the year ending March 31, 2010 and the Exchange

Control Authorised Dealers and Depositaries Amendment Order 2013.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Air Transport Licensing Authority Annual Report for the years 2010–2011.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of today's sitting.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is the order of the day.

Mr. CLERK: Order Number One, Sir, in the name of the Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs, to move the second reading of the Police Complaints Authority Validation Bill 2013.

ORDER NO. 1 – POLICE COMPLAINTS AUTHORITY VALIDATION BILL, 2013

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Attorney-General.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to you. The Police Complaints Authority was established by Act of Parliament in 2001. The functions of the Authority under Section 5 of the Act are to monitor the investigation by the police force of any complaint with a view to ensuring that the investigation is conducted impartially, to supervise the investigation of complaints or other matters in accordance with section 7 of the Act, to undertake the direct investigation of complaints where it thinks necessary, and to review complaints in accordance with section 21 to 24 of the Act. It further provides that subject to provisions of the Constitution relating to the powers of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and the Police Service Commission, the authority is not subject to the directions or control of any other person and the exercise of its functions under this Act. That is a very important part of the legislation, sir.

The authority comprises a chairman, a deputy chairman and two other persons, all of whom shall be appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Minister. One person who shall be appointed by the Governor-General in his absolute discretion. One person is

a former gazetted police officer of the police force who shall be appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Police Force Association and the head of the Civil Service ex officio. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman shall be attorneys-at-law of at least 10 years standing. It further provides that the Governor-General shall appoint a member of the authority to be its Secretary. No person shall be eligible to serve as a member of the authority if that person is or was during the last five years a member of parliament, a candidate for election to membership of the House of Assembly, a member of the police force, a member of the Barbados Defence Force or declared bankrupt or moved against by creditors.

The present members of the Police Complaints Authority are Justice Leroy Inniss QC, Mr. Chairman; Mr. Michael Blaze, Deputy Chairman; Henderson Marshall, JP, Member, Secretary; Michael Beckles, Deputy Chairman; Cecil McCarthy QC, Member; Mr. Grantley Smith, Ex-Officio Member; Raymond Ford, JP, Member; Mr. Charles Blaze, Member.

Whilst preparing the instruments of appointment for the current members, it was noted that during 2011 and part of 2012 that the appointments of two members had expired - that is the appointment of Mr. Blaise and Ms. McCarthy. Thus we are here this morning with this validation bill to validate the actions taken by the authority to ensure that any actions taken which would have included the two or four mentioned members - we can, assuming that this bill is passed in the House of Assembly this morning, validate the actions of the Police Complaints Authority from October 6, 2011.

However, I could not just move this bill and say nothing about the work of the authority and a few things about the police force and crime generally in Barbados. What I have found since becoming Attorney General of this country and my relationship with the Police Complaints Authority is that the nature of complaints generally to the authority has not been serious complaints. And indeed, if I take the nature of the complaints before the authority as a barometer to the conduct of the Royal Barbados Police Force, then I would say that as Attorney General, I am generally very satisfied with the conduct of the Royal Barbados Police Force - that is if I take the nature of the complaints that we are seeing before the Police Complaints Authority.

Generally what happens is that citizens are free to complain directly to the Police Complaints Authority or, as it happens from time to time, citizens complain directly to the Office of Professional Conduct in the Royal Barbados Police Force and these complaints are then referred to the authority for investigation. Generally then what happens - unfortunately, and I say unfortunately because one of the areas that we are examining is that the Police Complaints

Authority then have to rely on the other police themselves to conduct certain investigations and then report back to the Police Complaints Authority. And from time to time that has caused some distress, or for want of a better way of putting it, with the Police Complaints Authority because of the time lag that it takes to have investigations completed. And indeed I dare say that members of the public are sometimes a bit concerned about the length of time that it takes to have investigations completed.

In that regard, we are presently looking at the legislation to see how we can have it amended to enable the Police Complaints Authority itself to conduct more investigations - that is, they will not have to rely on the Royal Barbados Police Force itself to conduct many of the investigations that are now conducted by the Royal Barbados Police Force. In that regard, it would also be necessary for us to look at the composition of the staff of the Police Complaints Authority. Presently, it is staffed by an investigator and an admin officer, a clerk typist and a maid - so a very small staff. So if we, as I am going to propose to cabinet in the not too distant future, want to give the Police Complaints Authority more power to investigate matters on its own, then we are going to have to also look at the composition of its staff to ensure that it can indeed carry out the functions that I would like it to carry - that is, be able to investigate more complaints on its own.

But I think it bears repeating that generally the nature of the complaints that we have seen since I became Attorney General have led me to feel some comfort in the conduct of the Royal Barbados Police Force, if I take the complaints, the nature of the complaints before the authority as a barometer. We recognise that in a force of 1 200 plus individuals that from time to time you will have complaints. And we owe it to the public of Barbados to have an apparatus in place that they feel comfortable that they can go to and not only make complaints but ensure that complaints are investigated and handled impartially. And that is what, as a government, we would like to see happening. And that is why I am committed to examining the legislation to see where there are areas of weakness that we can address.

So, as I said, Mr. Speaker, this bill to me is quite simple in terms of validating the actions of the authority from October 6, 2011 to date. But of course, I would want to spend some time on what is happening in this country with respect to the police force and indeed with respect to crime generally. Just last weekend I saw in one of our daily newspapers that one of the members on the other side suggested that crime was up in the country, there is a link between what was happening in the country and poverty generally, et cetera. So I think I must say something about what is truly happening in this country.

If I can give you some information with respect to murders, which is seen as the most serious crime in Barbados - last year there were 21 murders, which was down from 2011 where there were 27, and 2011 was down on the year 2010 where we had 31 murders committed in Barbados. I should say of the 21 murders that we had last year, 18 were solved, which is a pretty high rate for solving murders. If I use what is happening in some of our neighbours - in St. Lucia in 2011 there were 50 murders committed, there were 48 in 2010; in St. Kitts-Nevis there were 34 in 2011, there were 20 in 2010; and in St. Vincent there were 25 in 2011 and 23 in 2010. I use the countries in the OECS as a barometer. I will not use the larger neighbours like Trinidad and Jamaica. I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that in fact our murder rate in Barbados is still one of the safest in the Caribbean. But we, of course, are working to ensure that where possible we can put machinery in place and put programmes in place that we can reduce murders further in this country. To date this year, and as we used to say when I was a youngster, not good to date this year, we are doing quite well in that regard.

The reality is though, and there is no hiding from it, during 2012 we had a spike in crime - we had an increase in overall crime in spite of the fact that, as I said, the murder rate was down considerably. We had an overall increase in crime of about 2.5 per cent. But that distortion was in particular because of burglaries and robberies. And it is my information and belief that this was in fact linked significantly to the cash for gold trade. And you know, sir, that we came to Parliament earlier this year and brought a piece of legislation modernising our precious metals act to address that situation. And since the passage of that piece of legislation, we have in fact seen a reduction in robberies in particular, where persons were being deprived of their jewellery. So to date, we are fairly satisfied - not comfortable, but we are fairly satisfied - that the piece of legislation that was passed in this House earlier this year is already seeing some significant impact in our community.

So we have moved to address that, so that if all goes well this year and indeed, as I said when I was moving the Precious Metals and Secondhand Metals Act 2013, if we do not see the type of reduction in robberies that we are happy with, we will take further steps if necessary. We are looking at this situation. We will continue to look at this situation because we are very concerned about what happened during 2012.

We are also concerned about the number of young men in particular. We have teenagers - many teenagers - who are coming before the criminal justice system and many young men between the age of 20 and 29, and we are looking at various strategies to ensure that many more of our young people stay out of contact with the criminal justice system.

Just yesterday, I was in my constituency and a member of the staff of the Crane Hotel said to me, Mr. Brathwaite, we are still having some issues with respect to harassment of visitors on the beach. That is an issue that we recognise. It is not a new issue; it is an issue that we have always had in Barbados. And we recognise that in fact we have to do more to tackle it. In particular, when today correspondence and information flow is so instantaneous and we have little control over the nature of information that flows out of our shores. So what may be a one-off instance may take on a significantly different character when it flows on Facebook and the Internet, et cetera. So we are moving to reduce incidences of harassment.

And I know that my colleague and friend from Christ Church will not wish me to sit down without saying that in fact he had some concerns about what was happening in St. Lawrence Gap. When it was brought to my attention, I immediately contacted the Royal Barbados Police Force, who assured me that there was a stepping up of vigilance in the St. Lawrence Gap area. So I hope that we should see - or that we are seeing - a reduction of matters that were taking place in the St. Lawrence Gap area. And there are other instances across Barbados. And I am sure, sir, that given the fact that you live in the beautiful parish of St. Philip, that from time to time you will see patrols of police and members of the Defence Force going around our country and in particular going to the areas that are frequented by visitors to Barbados, because we want to ensure that our visitors are as safe as possible and indeed free from harassment.

Another area of concern is an area of fraud. We are very concerned about the area of fraud and in that regard we recognise that we need to improve and increase our resources, because fraud is not an easy matter to detect and to prosecute. Quite often it means that the investigating officer has to go into an organisation, understand its systems, understand its accounting system, understand its computer system, and then try to detect how the fraud was committed - and it is a learning curve quite often for our officers.

Maybe I should use this opportunity to say that even my good name, Mr. Speaker, has been used by some unknown person to defraud a member of this community quite recently, and therefore it is an area that personally I am very concerned about. And I see you smiling. I am not sure why, Mr. Speaker - which part of the comment brought a smile to you, sir. And it certainly cannot be the reference to my good name. So personally I can speak to the fact that fraud is an issue and we are seeing - I am advised - an increase in the amount of fraud. But as I said, we recognise that we need to have additional resources and additional training and we have started on that.

If you will permit me, there are many areas that I want to bring this Honourable House up to date with respect to the work of the Royal Barbados Police Force. One area that from time to time we have been hearing about for years is the issue of recruitment. As I speak to you today, sir, there are 32 Barbadians presently enrolled at the RPTC College. I believe that their programme should finish in September this year. Of the 32 Barbadians, 30 are males. And I emphasise that because we have had a challenge, as you know, sir, with respect to finding qualified young men who are interested in policing as a career. And it may seem like there is a gender bias, and there is a gender bias, because we found that there is a need to have more young men. The reality is that there is no shortage of young women who are interested in policing, but frankly, sir, there are some duties that young men are more willing to undertake than young women. That is a reality. It is not being biased by any means - it is just the reality of what happens on the ground. And of course, it is our responsibility to ensure that we have the right balance in the police force in terms of male and female. So as I said, I am very happy that we seem to be making some inroads in terms of encouraging more of our young men in particular to come to the Royal Barbados Police Force. I recognise that it is a dynamic institution. It is not just about the police officer you see walking the streets.

There are many more skills that one have to be utilized. There's a scenes of crime officers, there are forensic officers, there's personnel. It's a multifaceted and dynamic organization, and I want to commend those young people who are presently in training. And indeed it is to my knowledge that we have several more young people who are waiting to be called up for training. Unfortunately, I believe that come September that we may not be able to take any more recruits until early next year because it is our hope that we can do some work to the roof of the college which is in need of some repair and has been in need of repair for quite some time. And I think the roof presently is an asbestos roof and we know that we need to move away from that type of roofing. So my message is that I think that we have turned the corner in terms of finding more young people who are interested in policing. And I want to commend those young people who are interested. I want to commend those young people who are presently being trained. And I want to commend the management of the Royal Barbados Police Force for moving swiftly to address that deficiency that we've had for several years in this country.

We are doing more with respect to our young people. As you know, Mr. Speaker, we have the juvenile liaison scheme. That continues to function. As the summer is approaching, we normally have a summer camp for four weeks where topics include conflict resolution, exploring importance of teamwork, the practice of respect for self and others. We bring in these young people and we bring them

into classrooms and we of course, you know, with young people you must have a sports component. And the Juvenile Liaison Scheme also has had and I'm sure we will have it this year, our Christmas program where again we bring lots of young people and encourage them to live positive lifestyle and a lifestyle free of crime. Let me signal my appreciation to Corporate Barbados for assisting us with our Christmas party and needless to say look forward to their continued support as Christmas will be approaching over the next couple of months.

When I was a youngster, I remember that the Police Boys and Sports Club was a place that always seemed to be alive. And we want again to transform the Police Boys and Sports Club. We presently are working on a proposal to bring that back to life. We're boys and girls from across Barbados, but in particular from the immediate environs, will come to the Police Boys and Sports Club at Bay Street. Again, to play volleyball and netball and basketball, but to [Inaudible.]

engage in positive activities and engage with police officers as a means of reaching out to our community. And speaking of community, we are still using our community policing efforts. We are still encouraging more of our officers to go into the communities to work with the youngsters in the various communities. We would like to place more officers on the ground. We do recognise that it's a challenge from time to time because, frankly, sir, in spite of the fact that you might have 1 200 officers or so, at any given point in time, you may very, very only have about 600 available. When you consider holiday, training courses, study leave, sick leave from time to time, in spite of what seems like a large force, we do have challenges in terms of bodies on the ground. But that's one area, the area of community policing, that we believe that we need to place more emphasis on and we will continue to do so.

Hand in hand with that is the fact that we will continue to encourage more neighbourhood watch programmes across Barbados. As I've said from time to time, yes, the genesis of neighbourhood watches was really crime prevention. But we want to encourage them to be more than that. And given the fact that I wear the hat of Minister responsible for Home Affairs, and in that regard have responsibility for disaster management, we believe that there's a good link there - for example, that we can encourage more neighbourhood watch programmes that also see themselves as mini district emergency organisations. And in other words, that they become not only their brothers' keepers in terms of crime prevention, but if there's an event of some kind, whether it be fire or a natural hazard, that they, in fact, are able to assist their brothers and sisters. And that's an area that I do intend to place more emphasis on in terms of the link between the neighbourhood watch programme as we have it now and what I would like to see it morph into in the future.

I also wanted to mention that in the Royal Barbados Police Force we recognise the importance of giving victims of crime support. Although we do not yet have a victims' charter that one can point to and say, well, you know, this is the victims' charter of the Royal Barbados Police Force, we do have this unit, and it does wonderful work because, as you very well know, sir, from your own practice, that quite often it does not matter the nature of the crime - even a simple burglary, as simple as a burglary may seem, whether or not the person is in the home - quite often the individual is traumatised. And quite often the individual has never been to a police station, has never been to court. And that's the kind of work that the Victim Support Unit will do with victims of crime, and I want to signal the work of the Victim Support Unit. And we will continue to ensure that victims of crime are given the necessary support that they require.

We don't always get it right. We try to keep victims informed of what has happened with respect to their matters. From time to time we may drop the ball in terms of not corresponding with victims so they can hear what's happening with the progress of their cases. But generally we are trying to ensure that victims are kept abreast of what is happening with their matters because we are partnering with them. We want them to know that we empathise with what happened with them, we empathise with what they're going through, and we want to cement that partnership. And that's the role of the Victim Support Unit. And of course, we have trained officers in the Royal Barbados Police Force - that's what they're doing.

This leads me into the issue of domestic violence, which over the last couple of weeks we have been seeing and hearing lots in the press about. And we did have one very unfortunate incident a few weeks ago which was more or less the catalyst of Barbados' renewed debate about the issue of domestic violence. You would have heard from the Minister of Family that in the not too distant future we will be bringing certain reforms to the Domestic Violence Protection Orders Act 1992. And I am fairly confident that we should have that with us in the short to medium term. But notwithstanding the fact that there are some legislative changes, already within the Royal Barbados Police Force we are looking at how we can have a more victim-centred approach. And that requires more training of police officers across the various stations and we intend to do that. So we want to ensure that whether from Belle Plaine in St. Lucy to District C in St. Philip, that if you are a victim of domestic violence, the officer that you come in contact with has the requisite training in terms of care and attention, because we recognise that there have been some deficiencies in the handling of those matters in the past.

And as I said, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the fact that we have to make some legislative changes, we have already made some changes on the ground with respect to

how these matters are handled, and I'm sure that my friend the Minister of Family, if he will speak on this bill, may have a few more things to say with respect to that particular issue.

We're also seeing some success in the area of human trafficking. As you know, sir, in the year 2012 - if not late 2011, my memory fails me now at my old age of 51 - we established a committee to address the issue of human trafficking and I have been chair of that committee from inception. We have been doing some work not only with the Royal Barbados Police Force but with immigration, with certain NGOs, and educating the public. We've gone up and down the length of Barbados having seminars and having discussions on the issue of human trafficking. The Royal Barbados Police Force has itself established a unit to deal with human trafficking, and I believe that we are already seeing some results. The most important thing about that training has been the fact that we want the public, we want individuals, we want the actors within the Royal Barbados Police Force and Immigration, et cetera, to know that these individuals are victims and we are having a more victim-centred approach with respect to these individuals.

We realise that in matters of human trafficking there are some areas that we need to address. For example, we need to ensure that trials are held as quickly as possible because quite often victims may wish to go back - assuming that they're not from Barbados - may wish to go back home. And we know that sometimes there's a challenge in terms of persuading individuals to come back to Barbados to give evidence, so we need to ensure that we have it right in terms of the timely not only interviewing of suspects and the bringing of charges, but certainly having matters expedited before our courts so that we would not have cases of human trafficking go unprosecuted because the key witnesses - that is, the victims - have left the jurisdiction or are unwilling to come back to Barbados. Again, that's why training is important, because we want to ensure that the victims are met with individuals who are empathetic to them, who care, because that relationship is going to be very important if we are to successfully prosecute any cases that come before us in terms of human trafficking. So I want to signal my appreciation to the management of the Royal Barbados Police Force for establishing that unit and for continuing to send a senior officer to our committee so that we can continue to work to address any issues of human trafficking.

Over the last couple of months, we have seen - based not on any evidence that I have, but based on just reading our local newspapers - that we seem to have seen more drug seizures across Barbados. And we also seem to be seeing more seizures of drugs locally grown, so it's not just drugs that are intercepted across our seas, but drugs locally grown across Barbados. Again, I think that's testimony to

the hard work of the Drug Squad of the Royal Barbados Police Force. They don't do it alone - there's some help from regional organisations. But I again want to signal the tremendous amount of work, long hours, and sacrifice that is being made by members of the Drug Squad in Barbados to ensure that this country is as free as possible of drugs, and in particular of marijuana and cocaine.

But we are not only intercepting, because it is our responsibility to ensure that there's a reduction of demand in Barbados. Because obviously if there's a demand, then we know what would happen - we will see that persons will try to provide. And therefore we are trying to work with more communities to encourage more of our youngsters to see that there's a way of life free of drugs. So we have not only the National Task Force on Crime Prevention, who does several programmes of merit; we have the NCSA, who is doing some fantastic work. We have an annual back-to-school programme where we have up to 3 000 kids that are brought in to make the transition from primary school to secondary school, and we work with them to encourage them not only to make the transition, but to make the transition and understand peer pressure and understand that they don't need to get involved in certain activities, including the use of illegal drugs.

So if I can take a wider view of the issue of drugs in the region - you are very well aware of the success of Mexico, and we were seeing for years horrific stories of the Mexican cartels and the bloodbaths that occurred in various towns across Mexico. Before Mexico, I believe that we used to hear stories of the horrific acts of cartels across Colombia. So the drug trade seemed to move from Colombia to Mexico, and now the success of Mexico, we believe, has seen an increase of trade across the Caribbean as a transshipment point into North America and into Europe. I mention that seriously because it means that as a country and as a region we have to place additional resources to our police force, to our immigration authorities, to the RSS, to our regional institutions, to IMPACTS - which is the implementation agency for crime and security - so that we can address more of the transshipment that is happening across the Caribbean.

Unfortunately, the use of the Caribbean - the accelerated use of the Caribbean - has coincided with the recession across the Caribbean. And I single that out because our regional institutions have been cash-starved, so that IMPACTS, as an example, is an agency that I believe, sir, is required across the Caribbean to assist us. We have had some challenges in terms of its structure, but moreover, we presently have a challenge in terms of its financial resources because many of our Caribbean partners are not paying the requisite subscriptions to IMPACTS so that it can continue to do the work that it has to perform. We know about the outstanding work of the RSS in terms of being able to give us some air surveillance. Again, the RSS

is essential if we're to continue our fight against drugs coming into the region.

And you know, there was a time that we used to speak about drugs passing through the region. The reality is that we cannot close our eyes and say, well, they're only passing through the region. The reality is that much of it is staying in the region, and we therefore have to ensure that our regional institutions can function and can function effectively. We are seeing that the boats used by the drug lords are faster than some of the boats that we have in many of our jurisdictions. And the fact is that they have better - or seem to have better - resources than many of our smaller countries. And therefore, at a time when we are having fiscal challenges - and I say we, meaning the region - we really need to have more resources made available to us, made available to our Coast Guards, made available to the RSS, made available to our Air Wings, so that we can intercept more vessels going through the region.

I want to signal also that it's not just a case of the go-fast boats, as they're called, because it is their information that more yachts are being used to transport drugs through the region. We promote the region as a place for yachting. I used to live in a jurisdiction that used to say, come get on a yacht for 21 days and visit paradise, et cetera. We are encouraging more yachting in Barbados - and I signal this because I don't want my friend the Minister of Tourism to castigate me. We have signalled that we want to develop Barbados as a yachting jurisdiction and we are seeing some success. But we are also seeing that in the region yachts are being used for more than pleasure. Again, we need to have the machinery in place not only to inspect yachts but to be able to detect which yachts are doing more than just sailing through our shores. And we cannot do that unless we have the requisite resources to do it.

Not one of us can do it alone, and therein lies a problem. Because Barbados cannot do it alone, the OECS cannot do it alone, Trinidad cannot do it alone, and if I go as far as Venezuela or any of the French islands - we must have a regional approach to the whole issue of drugs and interception of vessels passing through our jurisdiction. So we do have some challenges on the regional front in terms of our regional institutions that are cash-strapped, and we have been working with several of our international partners to assist us. And let me say that we have been receiving some assistance from many of our international partners, but it is of some concern to me still that our regional institutions are not as strong as I would like them to be, or not as strong as we would like them to be at this point in time.

So my message therefore, with respect to crime generally in Barbados, is that we have recognised that there have been some challenges. We have moved across

Barbados and across different ministries to address the issue of drugs in particular, but of crime across Barbados. We are doing more in terms of conflict resolution - by way of a simple example, of teaching individuals that violence is not the way to solve issues.

One of the regrets that I have in terms of instant communication, Mr. Speaker, is that I probably like yourself, sir, I spend a fair amount of time on the internet and on Facebook and I see messages from different persons in Barbados. But one of the things that I find very sad is that you see very, very few positive messages. And that concerns me. And if I can use this medium to send a message to Barbadians, is that I think it would do us absolutely no harm. In fact, I think it will do us a world of good if persons, if the same persons that take the time to take a picture of someone who just unfortunately jumped off of a building and posted across Barbados, that in fact that they can use the same medium to send positive messages, to encourage more of our young people to stay away from crime, to encourage more of our young people to stay away from drugs. But unfortunately, that does not happen. Even in our local newspapers, it would seem like if good news is no news. In fact, good news doesn't sell, unfortunately. But we really need to work hand in hand to ensure that we spread a better message, that we teach our people a better way.

And before I close, let me also say that in fact that we as politicians and we as members of the House of Assembly in particular also have to accept some responsibility. Because it is not enough for us to go across Barbados or go to New York or go wherever and speak about an escalation of crime in Barbados and suggest that things are so bad, etc. What I would suggest that we should be doing is looking in our own communities and see how we can address the areas where there are weaknesses and the areas where interventions are necessary. I mean, if, for example, I was a member for St. Michael East, I'll just use St. Michael East, for example. I will go into Blenheim and I will look at the playing field, I will look at the environs across the playing field and see how we can clean up the area, see how we can bring more positive messages across the area so that when the students from Springer School go across there to do their athletics, that they can do so in a safe environment. You know, we really need to take ownership of as politicians of our various environments to see how we can contribute. Because at the end of the day, at the end of the day, if crime gets out of hand in this country, we are all going to pay and we would have all failed.

And that's why I'm committed as Attorney General and that's why I have been working with all actors possible, whether it be the Royal Barbados Police Force, whether it be NGOs, whether it be the Government Industrial School, whether it be the police, all actors I've

been working with to see how we can address the issue of crime, how we can move more of our young people away from a life of crime and away from committing offences. Finally, sir, because I and you would have heard me say this on more than one occasion, I have a keen interest in our young people, in particular the young people at the Government Industrial School. Finally, I'm happy to report that we are on the road towards modernising our juvenile justice legislation. We have given certain instructions to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel to remove what in essence has been an archaic system before us. We have legislation before us that presently operates that is about 100 years old. We are modernising our juvenile justice system. We're speaking more of restorative justice. We're trying to encourage more parents to get involved in the lives of the young people, not only before they come into contact with the criminal justice system, but certainly after they come in contact with the criminal justice system.

We are working more with training at the Government Industrial School. I am committed to ensure that not only legislatively that we make the requisite changes to our juvenile justice system, but we put the structures in place that we modernise our processes, that we train more individuals, whether it be at the Government Industrial School, whether it be at probation, whether it be at the Royal Barbados Police Force, whether it be even welfare, which is an important component of our overall strategy, that we do the requisite training to ensure that we save more of our young people.

I am not saying, sir, that all is well across all aspects of the criminal justice system in Barbados, but I am saying that - and I have highlighted in particular the more positive things that we are doing - because from time to time, if you just go by our local newspapers, you would believe that this is the worst place to live, that the Royal Barbados Police Force do nothing but break into people's homes and steal their money, conduct searches, etc., just if you read our local newspaper. I'm not saying that is true, but I'm saying that these are the kind of stories that you will see. But you don't see stories in terms of the fact that you have a victim support officer who goes with a victim and spends eight or 10 hours with them, sits with them at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, sits with them at the police station. You know, you don't see those stories. You don't see the stories of the police officer who goes into St. Philip and sits down with a family, sits down with mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters and tries to encourage the young men, and particularly young women, to stay away from crime. We don't see those stories. So that's why I thought it necessary to bring those stories to our attention here this morning, because there's a tremendous amount of good work that is going on behind the scenes in Barbados to ensure that we save more of our young people.

So I would normally say, because I promised to speak for five minutes only, I would normally say, with those few words, I beg to move that this resolution, that this bill be read a second time. But I said more than a few words, sir, but with your kind permission, I beg that this bill be read a second time. Thank you, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: A seconder, please. A seconder? A seconder? Thank you. I reserve your right to speak. Good. Right. Yes, Honourable Member for St. James Central. Very briefly.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, sir, there seems to be no reason why one should have any difficulty with this issue of validating the actions taken by the Police Complaints Authority. It is a highly innocuous bill. One is very surprised that the Attorney General found it necessary to delay the chamber for such an exceptionally long period of time, taking us as far away as Mexico and Colombia and the international drug cartels on a matter which is almost as trifling as this. There is no issue taken. It is not, I think, sir, an opportunity for a really substantive debate on law and order in Barbados. And if that is where the Attorney General had wanted to go, then I would have thought, sir, that we would be speaking to a substantive aspect of Government's policy with respect to matters touching on legal affairs and law and order. I don't wish to repeat, sir, that which he has said or to do the same mischief that he has done by delaying the House unnecessarily. So I would simply say, sir, that the opposition takes no issue with this matter. Ever blessed.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir. I rise to join this debate. I'm not going to be guided by the honourable member who just sat down, who had nothing to say. But I believe that from time to time, in spite of the precise nature of any measure before this chamber, if those responsible for leadership believe it is necessary to just assure Barbadians of what is happening in their country from a position of knowledge, I think it is something I know that Barbadians will be very keen on hearing. I think in this day and age in which we live, it is even more important that we as leaders in our community, sir, from time to time take these opportunities to assure Barbadians of the measures which we are taking.

The Honourable Attorney General, sir, was very careful to state from time to time that he is not necessarily 100 per cent satisfied with the outcomes, but he is certainly satisfied with the extent of effort which is being put out by those with whom we charge the responsibility of guiding the care of our police force and indeed of guiding the care of our communities. As a member of Parliament, I am from time to time confronted with requests by members of my community and indeed communities all around Barbados asking for some level of intervention or some level of assistance.

in even raising that level. The amount of effort being expended and helping to direct so that the best results can always be found. The threats to our island, sir, the threats to our people in this day and age are highly sophisticated and should never, should never be trivialized. And I really take personal objection to the approach from the Honourable Member for St. James Central. I'm not surprised. Sir, the point is that we are dealing with a world which features a new kind of crime. It manifests itself in what is often described as terrorism. It manifests itself in a level of societal changes and approaches of those who may have a different agenda to the extent that they are prepared to stop at no measure. They are prepared to stop at no measure, sir, before they can carry out their ill deeds. And I think the Honourable Attorney General was again at pains to point out Barbados' locale in respect to this very important international struggle. We are called upon by our international regional partners and again the Honourable Attorney General referred to the work of IMPACTS and I'm sure the regional security system from time to time is called upon to intervene in these very important measures. Things of course that we even sometimes cannot speak to in terms of detail because the magnitude of the threat, the magnitude of the threat cannot be understated.

The Honourable Attorney General spoke to the question of our - even the impact on our tourism product and the fact that we have from time to time to recognize that these misguided elements in our community who have been the victims of drugs or the victims of whatever other misleading force need to be reeled in. Again, sir, I represent a community that includes a high level of tourism activity at places like the St. Lawrence Gap, the Worthing Coast, and not to mention of course the Oistins Bay Garden. And indeed stretching right up that coast along the Atlantic Shores area right into Silver Sands. And you all remember - for Christ Church East, I'm sure could speak volumes to the kinds of measures which we sometimes have to join in taking to prevent these situations from escalating. So they're very, very important issues. And as simple as it may seem, even the question of harassment of our visitors can, if unchecked, have a tremendous impact on where this country goes. And when we speak to the fact that Barbados is fighting a battle, an international competitive battle, for the attractiveness of our country as a destination, for persons who have choices, we understand even more why the work of entities like the Complaints Commission, like the Royal Barbados Police Force, the Defence Force, our community organizations, our D.E.M.s, etc. We understand why it is so critical and so important. And wiser, we need to bring our people up to date at every opportunity we gain, or every opportunity we have, up to date with the measures being taken and the level of success that we can attribute to these measures. So that is important and it must be taken into consideration in this honourable chamber, sir.

And sir, I thought most interestingly the Attorney General made mention of the question of the internet and how this has changed the whole perspective under which crime is first of all reported, the freedom with which it is reported and what they call - they use a term called going viral - which means that everybody knows what's going on. Everybody, whether it is, as they say, your business or not, sir, you are fully aware of what's going on. Is it not, therefore, extremely important that as a House of Assembly, that this chamber, sir, should from time to time speak to these measures so that we can assure our people of the kinds of interventions we make. I since I sat here this morning, sir, and listening to the honourable member. At the same time, because of communication in today's world, I have been in touch with members of my community speaking to these very issues. The question of privacy, the question of evasion of your privacy. The neighbourhood watch, sir, in the area where I live in Atlantic Shores has now raised its approach not only to include occasional meetings at the community level, but they have a Facebook page. You all remember the Honourable Attorney General referred to that fact. And on this page, they communicate with each other. They communicate with this honourable member, sir, and rightly expect some level of appropriate intervention because that is the way we do it now. That is the way we communicate. That is the way we get things done. And that is a departure. That is a departure from the traditional way of handling issues of crime, or of any other matter in the Barbados that we are so accustomed to. So these are new facts which need to be laid before this chamber, which need to be discussed from time to time and which need to be put into - be part of our full consideration of the kind of issues that we are dealing with. And I'm sure, sir, that the Complaints Commission, the authority to which we refer, must also bring these matters into consideration.

I was happy, too, sir, to hear the Honourable Attorney General speak to the question of recruitment, and indeed he carefully dealt with the matter of the male and female balance in our Royal Barbados Police Force because it has been an important issue for the people of Barbados for some time. And the fact, the reassurance that we now have 32 new recruits in training at the Royal Barbados Police Force is indeed a very important piece of information for this honourable member, and I'm sure for many of the honourable members on this side of the House. Sir, I don't know how many of them are residents of Christ Church, but I'm going to seek to find out. But I know I have a number of young men and ladies who have expressed an interest in joining the Royal Barbados Police Force and some of them have made tremendous progress in this regard. But I know the opportunities will be there and I'm sure in consultation with the Honourable Member for St. Philip North we will work to ensure that these ambitions are fulfilled wherever possible.

So of course, sir, I also noted with concern the fact that he has regrettably to carry out some repairs at the training school itself - at Paragon Regional Police Training School at Paragon. And I would urge the Honourable Member in his considerations if he can ensure that his people, those responsible, look into the possibility of not necessarily closing the school for the period, but maybe relocating to another venue so that training can be ongoing and that we can look forward to that level of satisfaction in regard to the recruitment and training of police officers to carry out this very important work.

I am further not surprised that the honourable member for St. James Central does not want to speak about matters of the police. Because, sir, you know, we've not always been graced by useful support in this regard from that side. But it is important for us to understand that even in these very challenging times, we have sought as an administration to make sure that the conditions under which the police in Barbados operate are improved. I know that some efforts were made by the Barbados Labour Party as a government, but we have made sure that process has continued, and I think the latest facility is the Hastings Police Station, whose construction should start imminently. And I think this is an encouragement to those police officers, that assurance that we continue to try to improve their facilities, try to improve their equipment so that they can carry out their work in a safe environment and to the satisfaction of the public who we seek to serve.

And sir, indeed, the Honourable Attorney General did not get there, but we could even discuss the question of our prison service and our prison conditions. Now that we have the facility at Dodds, how successful have we been in the question of treatment of the incarcerated? What is the question of recidivism and the improvements in this regard? What are the improvements that we've been able to gain in terms of the ability for that facility to farm and to produce food for itself? So these are, to my mind, important considerations which we need to consider from time to time.

We spoke to the broader aspect of community, communities helping themselves in regard to matters of police and security, and indeed matters of all kinds of emergencies. And I want to mention at this stage that we recently had an incident at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital where there was a level of flooding in the area of the accident and emergency, the haematology area, and the asthma bay area where there was some flooding as a result of an accident on the construction site. And I want to pay tribute to the Roving Response team in this area who came out in the dead of night, as it were, to assist the members of the staff of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in correcting this very threatening situation and making that facility available for public use again in a much quicker time than would have been the case if they had to rely only on their own

resources. I think it speaks to the growth of these community organisations, the maturity with which the leadership of these organisations is taking their responsibility, and the fact that they do these activities, they carry out these actions largely for absolutely no consideration whatsoever. And I want to go on record on behalf of the team at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the chairman, the members of the board, and the CEO and his management team, to express our sincere appreciation to this support from the Roving Response Team in the area of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

I think too, sir, that the Honourable Attorney General correctly spoke to the question of traumatisation and the victim support question as a result of crime from time to time. And this, again, sir, is an extremely, extremely important aspect of the treatment of crime, investigation of crime, and the kind of residual treatment that is required from time to time on behalf of the victims of these crimes, no matter how small they may appear. That invasion of one's privacy, that invasion of privacy and deprivation that, as a result of the crime that was committed, can only be understood by the victim - it can only be understood, sir, by the victim. And again, the commentary of the Attorney General to speak to the maturity of the Barbadian society and his team's support for this important work, sir, is a vital consideration at this juncture as we face challenging economic times. Yes, these are going to be increasing considerations which one has to bear in mind. And there's no getting away from these realities. And therefore, sir, there can be nothing inopportune about the opportunity this morning, about the chance this morning to speak to the whole question of the management of crime - specifically the management of the Police Complaints Authority and the related issues which impact on their work, which as a result obviously impact on the way in which our society is ordered and managed.

I therefore in supporting this Bill, sir, want to again congratulate the Honourable Attorney General, his team, his entire network of management of criminal activity in Barbados, and pray God's continued guidance in this regard, sir, and certainly want to commit on my part my untiring contribution to control and management of the entire aspect of crime, no matter how it may manifest itself in our society, sir. Sir, with those few words, sir, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a brief intervention in this debate. The validation bill, which is a very simple parliamentary exercise, as has been pointed out. Validations become necessary, of course, as a precaution against the unlawful or unauthorised exercise of power by persons holding public offices, statutory

corporations or statutory entities. Now, if one were to count the number of validations that have come before this House since independence, I mean, it would run into thousands, because successive governments have had to validate because of oversights of one kind or another. That is not my purpose for getting involved in this debate though.

The Police Complaints Authority to which the validation relates was established in the year 2001, and 12 years later, I think it is appropriate that one should look back to see whether the authority has justified its existence over the last 12 years. The rationale, of course, for the existence of the authority was the consistent, insistent and persistent complaint by members of the public that they had little or no redress or opportunities for redress against abuse of power by members of the Royal Barbados Police Force. There were already and there have been complaints procedures in the force itself. But those complaints procedures can take years to produce results for persons who think they have a legitimate complaint against a member of the force in the exercise of his authority. So it was thought that we should create an independent authority to deal with complaints against the police.

That authority was created in 2001. It was after a very hesitant start because there were problems in the legislation. The legislation had not made provision for the appointment of a deputy chairman at one stage, and then it had to be amended to make provision for that. And a few other legislative hiccups had occurred that made it difficult for the Police Complaints Authority to get off the ground. It got off the ground eventually, and truth to tell, it has functioned reasonably well within the constraints within which it decided to operate. But yet there is no evidence that members of the public are euphoric about the way their complaints against the police are handled.

Now the complaints that go before the Police Complaints Authority are, by the confession, by the admission, I believe, of the chairman of the authority - recently I heard in a news item - are not always grave complaints, but there is an inherent contradiction in the legislation that while you have a Police Complaints Authority to deal with complaints against the police, the authority still has to depend on the police force to do critical investigations in relation to those complaints before the authority itself can act and provide the kind of redress or advise on the kind of redress that a complainant may have. And the same problems therefore that led to the creation of the authority have now begun to bedevil the authority itself because the authority has to wait on the police force to investigate matters in relation to the police officers and sometimes can be made to wait for as long as two or three years before the police force can get back to the authority.

And I think that the Attorney General is quite right, that we are going to have to take a second look at this legislation and try to make sure that it is a little more efficacious in the production of the kind of results that it was intended to produce. In the best of times, in any society - Barbados is no special case in this regard - citizens regard the police force with a certain measure of suspicion. That is a fact of life across the world. In the same way that customs officers or immigration officers are regarded with a certain amount of suspicion by those who have to interact with them, so too are police officers. And it has to do with the nature of the work which they have to do. So there has to be an infrastructure of confidence that defines the relationship between the police force and members of the public.

In the discharge of their duties, police officers do not go into society to deal with saints. Dealing with the criminal element and dealing with issues of domestic violence and so on can be very difficult, can be very challenging. And members of the public with whom the police have to deal may not always understand why the police have had to behave in a particular way. Not trying to suggest that the police are always right either, because very often in the courts of law, on the cross-examination, missteps by the police can be uncovered as well. But the bottom line is that if you have a complaints authority which is supposed to provide redress for our citizens and which is supposed to deal with the issue of confidence of citizens in the processes of the authority, and in the confidence that moves between citizen and police and between police and citizen, that authority should have the statutory teeth to deal rather more directly with complaints rather than having to rely on the same police force to go away and investigate and then come back and report to the authority, which sometimes can take two years, three years and so on.

So I think that this is a matter at which the government has to look. I do not think that over the last decade or so of the functioning of the authority, the confidence issue has been satisfactorily dealt with by the functioning of the authority. And it has to do not with the authority itself, not with the members themselves who punctually turn up for their meetings and who do their work properly, but it has to do with the statutory constraints and the procedural network that the authority has to negotiate in order to get its work done properly. So I am very pleased to hear the Attorney General say that there is going to be a revisiting of the legislation and a fine-tuning of it to make sure that the concerns of citizens in relation to police complaints are properly dealt with.

The delays, of course, of which I spoke, have nothing to do or have very little to do with any attempt on the part of members of the Royal Barbados Police Force to hide wrongdoing or to try to be difficult or to try to frustrate the work of the authority. The force itself has been

operating under oppressive human resource constraints. They have been managing their numbers for longer than we would have wished. I am very pleased to hear the learned Attorney General announce to the country that we have been succeeding now in attracting a larger number of young men to the force than was the case just a few years ago. And it is important that the point be made that the need to attract young men to the force has nothing to do with any bias against attracting young women to the force. It just happens that, as the Commissioner is called upon to note from time to time, physical accommodation at our police stations makes it very difficult to deal with that issue of accommodating as large a number of young women as you would wish. But I think that the more new police stations we build, the better able we will be to provide the kind of accommodation needed to facilitate larger numbers of women in the force.

But the women in the force themselves do an excellent job and lay just claim, of course, to fair and equal treatment at the levels of recruitment. But they have been operating with crippling human resource constraints. And given the fact that their primary duty is to get out into society and to deal with the hotter immediacies of the maintenance of law and order, it can be understood why sometimes disciplinary matters can suffer alike. We have the same problems. I used to have the same problems practising law. When you are awaiting medical reports from doctors, you used to be told quite frankly, look, I have to spend my time every day trying to save lives, not sitting and writing reports. And you understand that. So a delicate balancing act has to be played in this whole exercise.

But I think by and large Barbados can boast a good trustworthy police force. It has done a great job for this country in maintaining law and order and keeping public faith in the system reasonably high. No organisation is perfect. There will always be members of any organisation - we see it in the legal profession, we see it in the medical profession - so too a police force who will forsake the higher standards to which they are called and disappoint from time to time. But by and large we have a good police force, and I think we have to continue to build on what we have, but we cannot afford to have public confidence in the police undermined by the inability of the public to get complaints made against the police dealt with and dealt with expeditiously and smoothly, and of course, to the public's satisfaction.

So I am supporting the validation bill, but I just thought that since it dealt with the complaints authority and the complaints authority is now 12 years old, that I should make those comments, Mr. Speaker, and hope that we can soon be back here with an amended Police Complaints Authority bill that results from proper consultation with the authority itself as to what the procedural constraints have been like, so that members of the public can get even better

service than they are getting now from the Police Complaints Authority. I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker. I am obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: I recognise the Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: debate and to say from the outset that it is no doubt that the police in this country have a lot to deal with, and I want to commend them, especially when one represents a constituency like mine that has water on three sides. I want to say that I am very happy to report that I think that they do a fantastic job. And I'm very happy to say that the advice given some 18 years or so ago is very much in use and that they are utilising the location and I hope that the work that we are doing in the North will also enhance the job that they have to do. And it shows how sometimes things that people ignore as minor can become very major, because a simple road, a simple launch and pad can make a significant difference and can also reduce costs tremendously to the country and also enhance the work done by the Royal Barbados Police Force.

I also want to make the point, sir, that I'm very glad to see, because I was in here for a very long time and there was always a complaint in this House that we could not attract young men to the police force. I'm very glad to say that we are now attracting a large number of young men to the police force and that the interest of young men wanting to serve in the police force is very much there again. And I also want to commend the young women who are also very interested in serving in the police force.

There is no doubt that the police force has many challenges, and I want to applaud them that even though they have had these challenges, they continue to do a fantastic job in this country when it comes to Laureate. And we have to understand that once we can support them and continue to hold their hands, especially when one considers that our main economic tool is tourism. And we know, sir, there is no doubt that we have many challenges. There are people who do not appreciate that country Barbados is bigger than any one person. And in terms of harassment and so on, we sometimes only talk about harassment. But we also have to understand, even though this might not deal with the police force, that we also have to be very careful that the message sometimes that we send out about our country Barbados - and how that message in the negative way that we send it - can create a base for people to do negative things. Because if you build a country on a negative base, it is obvious you will also influence others to do negative things.

So I want to say, sir, that the police force has a lot on their plate, but I believe they are doing a fantastic job. And we will do everything on this side to ensure that wherever

we can help them and assist them, we will continue to help and assist to ensure that their lives and the services that they offer continue to be delivered in a fair way. It is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that the police force cannot only be seen as law and order, but they must also be looked at as doing a fantastic job as it relates to saving foreign exchange in this country. And I will leave it there, sir. But they do a fantastic job to ensure that we do not waste our foreign exchange and that our foreign exchange is protected.

We sometimes just look at the normal duties of the police, but when one considers what is happening in the world, we must also understand that their job must be seen as one that protects the economic tool of the country. And I'm saying so that we must also see it from an economic point of view, not only as spending money on the police force. But we must also recognise that because of the type of work they are doing and the effectiveness of the work they are doing, they protect the foreign exchange of this country. And the same thing can be said of the Coast Guard, the same thing can be said of the Defence Force and those agencies like that - all the protective agencies.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have no intention of delaying the House, but I just want to say, sir, that I'm happy to see the work they are doing and I look forward to the day when we can give them all the resources that they deserve. But I also know, sir, that I'm making this statement, and there's a statement I've been hearing now for over 19 years also. So you see, it shows that it is nothing new as it relates to resources for the police force in these difficult times in the world, because when there was plenty and so on, there were still resource problems for the police force. And we would have known that, sir. So I don't want anybody to give the impression that things are any worse with the police force now than they have ever been. Because the truth is, as long as I have been here, promises have always been made to the police force. And we are still making the promises to the police force, even at these difficult times.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we on this side, and I suspect on the other side, will always wish well for them. And we hope that they will accommodate that we can deliver everything that they would expect us to deliver. But I have been here for 18 years, and all 18 years I've been hearing promises to the police force, and I look forward to today that those promises can be delivered. I thank you, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker. I rise to support this validation bill relative to the Police Complaints Authority. I've heard the speech of the honourable minister who has responsibility for home affairs and thus responsibility for the police force of Barbados. And one

can almost argue that it is an awesome responsibility which he has, because in every society, persons who are expected to uphold law, persons who are expected to police the state on behalf of the citizens, can sometimes find themselves at the tip of the tongue of certain members of your community.

Members of the Royal Barbados Police Force have from time to time found themselves not only at the tip of the tongue for condemnation and for curse, but also have found themselves embroiled in what you can only refer to as the hostile behaviour of some citizens. Not to be encouraged, of course. Our police come from within our communities. By and large, they are Barbadians. They reflect everything Barbadian. In other words, since they come from the bowels of our community, they reflect the wide gamut of the personalities which come from within our communities. And therefore, as I speak, I am not going to haul every policeman up with the same hand. Because to do that is to be making the claim that all citizens of Barbados are perfect, and therefore by extension, all police persons are perfect. That would be to do a disservice to them, to the people they serve, and to this country as a whole.

They are persons, they are human beings and they are open to the vagaries of life and to some of the confusions and complexities of human existence. And so sometimes they can be strengthened and sometimes they can be weakened. Our country is rife sometimes with gossip and innuendo about some members of our Royal Barbados Police Force. And as a result of that, persons might make complaints, that persons might make accusations, that persons sometimes in the hidden recesses of dark spaces might seek to reach them and deprive them of life. Because that is what you have in every society. People - there are people who don't respect law and those who stand for the protection of law; there are persons who are lawless. Some of it, of course, encouraged by those who should know better. And I said, I want to repeat it again, encourage lawlessness.

The honourable member for the City was - and I believe they still carry their names, even when they leave their force - an outstanding citizen of Barbados. He was not necessarily an individual who was called to protect the citizens on land, because that is left to the police force, but from those who would seek to invade. He stood as a bulwark, well-trained, to turn them back from our shores. But sometimes it is not looking beyond our borders that should concern us, not trying only to protect the seashore, but what is happening right within the 166 square mile rock.

We have only, Mr. Speaker, just slightly over 100 days completed what can only be termed one of the most non-controversial - in the sense of battles - in an election.

There were no stones thrown, not one bottle, not a broken glass, a flattened tyre, not a cane blade burnt in this country. And that has to do, sir, with not only the spirit of the citizenry of Barbados, but because of the vigilance, the protection and the knowledge of the Royal Barbados Police Force, supported where necessary by the members of the Barbados Defence Force when they are so called upon under authority of law.

And therefore, 1937, sir - a period when an individual born of Barbadian stock but coming out of Trinidad and Tobago spoke. And there are persons who truly don't understand what emerged during that period. Right across the length and breadth of Barbados, in Jamaica, in Trinidad, in Barbados, in Grenada - a period not only of economic deprivation, but a period when the majority of the citizens across this Caribbean space, but more particularly here in Barbados, did not enjoy any freedom whatsoever. Most of them were hewers of wood and drawers of water.

2013 is a different period, albeit challenged by the severe economic difficulties in our own country and across many other places of the world. And the grab for power beyond the 100 days and the spewing from the mouth of seeking now to go back to a period - to bring out the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force and the Defence Force of Barbados because somehow they feel that they must galvanise Barbados - who hitherto thought, just like you over 100 days ago, went to an election and in a democratic way chose a government, albeit with a small majority. What rests in their bosoms, Mr. Speaker - men who would have worked hard over 100 days ago - to be calling them out again because they too have taken up their cudgels sharpened on both sides. Hungry, hungry, starved even, because somehow they are ordained to be the leaders of Barbados, to have the power in their hands to lord it over the people of this great country.

As if, Mr. Speaker, the people of Barbados in a democratic way don't have the right to choose once again. That game must be coerced and manipulated as though we are sleeping. Those who light the fire will be consumed by the flames. Simple as that. It is all well and good to want to lead a nation. Nothing wrong with that. If you are in this House, there is nothing wrong in wanting to lead a nation. But there is a time and place for everything under the sun. Your time too will come, the honourable member, if it is God's will, of course.

The honourable member for St. James Central - a gentleman, Mr. Speaker, who was reared in the bosom of this great party. And when he so rested, he was reviled by many from the side that he now sits with. He has shown great caution in espousing what some others are espousing. Maybe it is because of his teachings in this party. And some who call the Right Excellent Errol Walter Barrow,

Papa Barrow, want to turn this country upside down where the armoury and the artillery of the Royal Barbados Police Force is brought to bear on the democratic citizens of this country. Those who plant the seeds of destruction - those seeds of destruction, Mr. Speaker, will come on them. And so all I am appealing to is good sense, good judgement.

You can seek to have a collection, and there are always motley crews available. There are always motley crews. I am talking about the complaints authority. Mr. Speaker, there are always motley crews that those who know how to gather can gather among themselves. Those motley crews don't have to fear the members of this side. We all fight for the same thing, I hope. We fight for the liberation from economic deprivation of our people. We fight to put up structures which are important for every one of our people.

I have never, Mr. Speaker, as I dined with my parents in my early days, had anybody ringing a bell. Never had it. I do not in any way begrudge anyone who has had such a life. But there are hungry, Mr. Speaker, starved - to bring out the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force - because they do not understand what is happening at the base of our society and our economy, particularly our society. They are blended all of a sudden after 19 years of avoiding the people. All of a sudden now there are persons in cane fields with Digicel umbrellas. All of a sudden there are persons walking Swan Street, when the Royal Barbados Police Force would say, okay, you have your licence. I might not agree, Mr. Speaker, with the licence, but I agree with order. I agree with order.

So when members of the Royal Barbados Police Force would say, look, as a means of control, as a means of allowing free movement of people - free movement, don't hinder their progress - all of a sudden you are putting your ears in people's mouths. Trying to pretend that somehow you care more about them than I. I tell you, I remember - for goodness' sake - that is not true. The motley crew will never take over Barbados because there are citizens of this country they want to divide. There are people who want to divide Barbados. There are persons who have no respect for democracy. They have a right to talk. But when they believe that right spreads to the creating of a groundswell to breed insurrection, Mr. Speaker, you will be calling on the coercive forces of Barbados, the military forces of Barbados, the Royal Barbados Police Force to bring back law and order. Who will be the complaints authority then? There will be thousands of complaints because by necessity, in order to restore order, you have to crack some heads, you have to shoot some people. Let us understand this reality. 1937 in this country, many persons died. Some died - we cannot account for them even now.

So let them speak. I want to say to this honourable House, there are criminal elements in Barbados, severe

criminal elements. And there are people who know those criminal elements very well. They know them. They give them hidden help and support. They encourage them because they are planting them across Barbados as a means of securing their own ends. Because we are afraid to talk, we are afraid to speak. Be afraid to talk. So because we are afraid to talk, the seepage continues and people who should know better are silent. One group is silent and the other group encourages. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that we respect in this country law and order. An educated nation is a nation that fosters that level of respect. But there are educated people who themselves are disrespectful of the system from which they come or from which they came. Let those who have ears to hear, let them hear.

There are quiet, gentle people in Barbados who are watching. Guerrilla warfare, Mr. Speaker, is not practised by conventional armies. That is not how they are trained to fight. But there are persons who know how to practise it very well. I hope there is not a member in this House - I sincerely hope so - that because of their own greed and grasp for power, their own overarching ambitions, overreaching ambitions, the dreams that turn into nightmares - before they reach the age of 50 or 55 they must have a choker, another scarf on their throat - somehow they must be Prime Minister of Barbados or President of Barbados. So they cannot wait for the wheels of democracy to turn so they can flash insincere words, Mr. Speaker, before the public of Barbados.

A mandate, Mr. Speaker, was given to the Democratic Labour Party on the 21st of February in the year of our Lord 2013. The people gave that mandate in one of the most difficult economic times. It was not by mere verbal persuasion. It was not about a relation to the well-presented platform of the Democratic Labour Party, but because they said we want to hold faith with the Democratic Labour Party to take us over this most difficult period, which will get worse before it gets better. That is what they said. Anybody conscious would have realised that.

The members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, as they stood in their numbers protecting us - because that is who they were protecting, the so-called political class - they were themselves exposing themselves to danger as they protect us each and every day in this House. So why should we make their work more difficult? Why should we be telling citizens, let us in our collective march make it impossible for the government to govern? Those are words, Mr. Speaker, that in other places that individual would have been collected, whomever that individual is. But in our democracy, we laugh. We smile and we say, thou art a good and faithful servant. That is not true. Greedy wait - hot will cool. Greedy wait, hot will cool. Give our members of the Royal Barbados Police Force an

opportunity to rest a little. They have been weary just lately over 100 days of hard work.

I heard the honourable Minister of Home Affairs as he presented this validation bill speak to the excellent policemen we have. Excellent. He spoke to that. He spoke to the young men now who are gradually returning to the force. There was a time in this country when you couldn't find five men willing to go into a batch of 60. You had 55 ladies and five men. Today you are almost reaching again an equality of numbers because there is a confidence returning to the men that they can go and serve their nation. Young men, well qualified. When the Royal Barbados Police Force selects its numbers for training, the young men who came to me said, Minister, talk to the Attorney General to see if I can get in. And when you check their qualifications - associate degrees, first degrees, Mr. Speaker - and that is because they have a love for country, to be a policeman, a fireman, a defence force soldier, a prison warden. You have to have a love of country because you expose yourself on the front line. And where we can cushion them from that exposure, we so must. So careless words, harmful words, poisonous words embedded within the psyche of a nation can lead to greater dangers.

for members of the Royal Barbados Police Force. And let me say, like any citizen, they have a right to protect themselves. As a citizen, I have a right to protect myself, my property and my family. As a citizen, I have a right within my home, within my space. I would ask any QC if that's not true. I have a right and the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force have a right as well to do such. Frivolous complaints should not be encouraged. Genuine, authentic complaints for some of those who can sometimes be problematic should be encouraged - citizens in a democracy should be encouraged to bring forward any complaints and they must have a certain specific timeline to have those complaints answered, to have those complaints redressed. Otherwise the society also loses confidence. Otherwise the underbelly of the society becomes exposed.

I've had family members of the Royal Barbados Police Force. I've had friends, I still do, who are members of the Royal Barbados Police Force. Decent men and women whom I would invite to sit with me at the table. Sup. Sup. Sup. At the table. Not because I encourage their protection in my space, but because I believe I can break bread with them, that I can share bread with them, that they come from the same place that I come from, that they come out of the belly of Barbados. And therefore, understanding the reality of what is taking place in the world. You know, policemen need shelter too.

And therefore I'm not going to say that the famous phrase conjured up some time ago by the individual who has now coined the phrase, don't bring any carpetbaggers.

And those who understand the use of the word carpetbaggers would go back into the period of the Civil War in the United States of America. You know who were the carpetbaggers? Don't bring any carpetbaggers to take over my state. I did not coin those words, Mr. Speaker. I did not send a threat or shot across the bow. I therefore did not cause anybody to be galvanised into action. That is not my business or not my concern. I need simply to keep my doorways clean. I simply need to keep the opportunities for these young people, these members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, who somebody said were not worthy, that they weren't special.

There are members of our society that we must consider special. Politicians must not believe that they're the only ones who should be considered special. Must not be. Policemen sometimes pay the hazard of the law. Why are they paid the hazard of the law? Because by the very nature of their work, the jobs are hazardous. In fact, when one reads the sociology and the psychology - the psychology of a policeman, or of a defence force soldier, or a soldier, or prison wardens, people who expose themselves to danger - you will find that they are cut of a special cloth. They are a special breed. He who puts himself like a secret service agent or an individual who protects the Prime Minister or the Attorney General or any member in this House, they bare their chest. They bare their chest to the penetrating bullet or the slashing sword or knife in order to protect the leader, the leader of the opposition, the Attorney General, the member for the City - even though the member for the City is well trained. You are a member for Christ Church East. You are a member for St. Lucy. You are a member for St. Michael South East. You are a member for St. Michael East. But they place themselves in danger to protect. That's what they do.

I heard the Honourable Attorney General speak to the social media and he is so right. I have spoken and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would know what I'm speaking about. Technology is a valued and valuable tool but it can, unless there is ethical use, it becomes destructive and harmful. And we need to look - I know we've passed legislation on the use of technology and this House under the last Barbados Labour Party government - electronic transactions, et cetera. But there is a dangerous trend where places like Facebook and Instagram, even though they carry pretty good pictures, but not of death, are plastered with death and mayhem. Because the technology today is so instantaneous. At one time you had to find a payphone to call your family from St. Lucy to Christ Church and tell them there's a death down here. Today you don't have to do that. Even the simplest of mobile phones can be used to take a picture.

But that is saying something to me when persons post on Facebook broken bodies, persons decapitated, the faces of persons who have suffered in very harsh ways. Is it

because we've become so insensitive to human existence? Is it because they are hearing maybe mixed messages coming from leaders in our country that they resort to these things? You have a member who has already just touched briefly on the tragedy not too far from here in our city centre. Not every life is precious? Every life is precious under God and must be precious under man - and I'm using that in a generic way. And therefore, the life lost is a life that not only belongs to God, but belongs to a family. I am seeing pictures of students on our [Inaudible.]

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: All members, the sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken - Order No. one? Yes. And with that we shall continue. Yes, Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, sir, I rise to speak on this debate. One of the things, sir, when I listen to your presentation, sir, and especially, sir, when I listen to the contribution, or should I say, sir, in some cases, lack of contribution from the other side, and when sometimes we think about the fact that in many cases, we have the institutions in our society and we have to ensure that our citizens have the opportunity to participate in those institutions in a meaningful way. We also know that many of the institutions that are there are supposed to protect the rights of the citizen and in that regard, I want to compliment the Royal Barbados Police Force, sir, for in many cases, sir, making an excellent contribution, sir, to maintaining stability in our society.

As a matter of fact, sir, I believe that one of the important things that we need to recognize is that in many cases, a lot of the institutions that we have in our society, sir, represent what I would call symbols - they represent, like houses, that provide a direction for which society is indebted to. Because in many cases, sir, they represent ideals and philosophies that we hold dear as citizens, and we find that those are the things which identify us, sir, as a society, first of all. And one of the pillars of this Democratic Labour Party administration, sir, has been that we have treated Barbados, sir, not only as an economy, sir, but as a society in which basically what we do, sir, is that we hold forth to certain ideals.

And I want to say, sir, that certainly we need to recognize that to the extent where we reflect what our society is, certainly, sir, in terms of the police complaints authority, and I think that as far as that is concerned, sir, I think, sir, that generally we have to compliment the fact that over the years, when we look at other countries and the manner in which the police forces function, that certainly in respect of Barbados our Royal Barbados Police Force have held, by and large, sir, to high ideals. And to the extent where it is a reflection of the society, the failing, sir, of the

force, we shall not seek to isolate ourselves from the force in any way, but recognize that the failures of the force is in truth and in fact, sir, a representation of the failures of our society. Because very often we seem sometimes to feel that we don't reflect the body politic.

And I think, sir, that generally as political representatives and as politicians generally, we also have a responsibility to ensure that as much as possible we reflect, sir, the very best of what is in our society. And that is why, sir, I was a bit disappointed this morning when the opposition, sir, had the opportunity to at least, sir, make a contribution towards trying to uplift those ideas and instead it chose not to. That to me, sir, was unfortunate.

Sir, the other point too, sir, which I would want to make is this. That, you know, very often in our societies we sometimes make mistakes. And I think, sir, it is very important that we need to recognize that we must give that process of the citizen himself, sir, being able to make at least a vent, a grievance when he feels that he has been offended in some way. And in that regard, sir, I think that we must not diminish the role of the police complaints authority. And that is why, sir, I will support generally the suggestion that maybe, well, we have started with a particular premise in terms of how we have constructed it, certainly maybe, sir, we should always seek, sir, to make things better. We should always seek, sir, to find out whether or not institutions that we establish are actually serving, sir, the society for which they have been established, sir, in the best possible way.

I believe, sir, in relation to that, we maybe might need to look to see whether or not the way in which it is presently constituted, maybe we can look to see if we can reshape it to give even greater confidence to those members of the public who might be coming or who might come forth with different issues - that we give them even a greater measure of comfort to try to ensure, sir, that what they are bringing, the things that they have or they are concerned about, sir, will be actually dealt with in a fair manner and of course in a fair and transparent manner, sir. And I think, sir, that we need also to recognize that.

And so, sir, we therefore have to recognize that in communities it is also a way of trying to get the trust of persons of the same community because let us admit it. Very often we have situations in our societies where those persons who sometimes shout the loudest seem to be heard most often and that is something that is common. But it does not mean, sir, that the persons who shout the loudest sometimes are the persons who are in the right. Because generally we have to find a way of trying to at least ensure that even those persons who might feel intimidated in the process, that they have also some vehicles through which whatever concern that they have, sir, could at least come to

the fore and so that at least they can feel comfortable that in whatever way the concern, sir, will be heard.

So I really think, sir, that generally, when we look at the issues generally as it relates to policing, that we need to ensure that the citizenry is involved as much as possible. One of the things too, sir, I think that even when it comes to the whole question of the police force, we sometimes in the area of community policing - and I just want to refer to that because sometimes many policemen, sir, do things in our society where sometimes we do not at least give them great credit for. Because for instance I could tell you in my constituency what I do - I maintain, sir, a reading club every Saturday that I do at my office. And one of the things one Saturday, I remember carefully, is to invite a member of the Royal Barbados Police Force to come to speak to young people, sir, not only on policing but generally on the problems that police have when they actually have to deal with people in the society.

And it will surprise you, sir - we have young people in our society who are very aware not only of what we might perceive as infelicities of the force, but also very aware of the challenges that the police force faces even in respect of when it has to deal with what we would call pretty normal situations. We are not even aware that even in that respect, that young people - in as much as some of us would like to think, sir, or seem to be very anti-social - that these same young people, sir, can give you ideas on how you can actually improve the processes, sir, within the police force. And I think that kind of mixture, that kind where the police actually go out and try to reach out to those persons in society, sir, I think is very helpful. And it is something, sir, which we should actively seek to encourage.

And to the extent where we, as representatives, sir, can ensure that we bolster those organs that we have so that we do not also diminish them, because very often sometimes the thing about the police complaints authority - what it offers, sir, at the same time, is an opportunity for citizens who might have whatever complaint that they might have. Because, you know, we have to be very careful, though, when it comes to complaints, because very often you might have a situation where people sometimes come with frivolous complaints. But, sir, I think the important thing is the fact that they are coming helps, sir, to at least ensure that any undercurrents that you may have do not build up, sir, in greater proportions than they need to.

So the police complaints authority, sir, has the opportunity to take those complaints that might be coming forward and actually, sir, take them and investigate them and I think that is what people want in our society, sir - to be heard. Because very often today in many cases we have our citizens, sir, who go through all kinds of things, they go through all kinds of issues, all kinds of problems, and in

many cases, sir, we have a situation sometimes in officialdom which sometimes too readily dismisses, sir, what people are coming to them with. And even if in some cases, sir, in many cases, it may be based on a misunderstanding of what happens in terms of the bureaucracy. That is something, sir, that we need to recognize. So when we do that, what we do, sir, is that we create greater confidence, sir, on the part of citizens, sir, in institutions that are there to serve them too at the same time.

That is why sometimes when you hear some of the pronouncements that you get sometimes coming from persons who, I know in many cases, are misguided. And not only that, too, citizens serve to expect sometimes from certain people a greater level of responsibility and sometimes that is not displayed. We have to admit that sometimes we have persons in our society who the society looks up to and very often, sir, that is not displayed adequately. So when you have, sir, persons who might misunderstand what they are hearing, what will happen - to at least again, sir, to a source like the same complaints authority - is that you have those things going through their way, you at least have citizens who are able to come and feel that if there is a grievance, that grievance at the same time, sir, will be heard.

But what I think is very important, sir, is that we have a process which ensures to the ordinary citizen who has a complaint that the grievance, sir, will be heard in a fair manner and that it will be given the time that it needs to be given. And maybe in this way, sir, what we will do is we will be able to engender a greater level of respect and confidence, sir, by the ordinary citizen in the very institutions, sir, which are there to help to protect them. And we, sir, have a role to play because one of the critical things that I believe very often - we should not seek, sir, to undermine the very institutions that are there to protect us. Even as lawmakers, we should not seek to do that because at the end of the day, those are the pillars on which we stand.

Because when, for instance, we have persons who might belittle an electoral process, for instance, or even the outcome of an electoral process, what are we saying then to people? What are we saying, sir, to people, sir, who at the same time, when the very institutions that are there to protect us - that we don't seek at the same time to strengthen them, but rather to give lack of confidence - because what we need to do, sir, is to find ways, if there is a problem, let us find ways to fix it. And let us come up with constructive ways because, you know, I detect in our society today a level of impatience. Because very often what we don't recognize is that many of the institutions that we have today, sir, they took hundreds of years before they came to the stage that they are at. And in many cases, sir, even many of the ideas that we have - it turns out

moving forward to get things done, they will not be done readily. Because in many cases, the society does not do things unless it is mentally prepared to accept the change that is being placed upon it. Because in many cases, sir, if you force a change, what you end up doing, sir, is that you end up creating resentment and that is what you do not need.

But our responsibility, sir, is to go out there and educate the public, sir, on how we do things and we do it in the correct way, sir, in a manner in which that at least ensures that we maintain stability in the very society, sir, that we are part of. Because at the end of it, sir, we are all the beneficiaries of that stability. Because at the same time, we don't want to have a situation where we get to the point in our society where we are not talking to our brothers or our sisters, or if we have households split down the middle - we don't want to get to that situation. We want to get to the situation, sir, where we continue, sir, to at least as Barbadians be able to speak to each other on a platform in which at least it ensures that we can disagree, but still at the same time shall maintain a certain level of civility between us.

So we have a situation in our society today where depending on sometimes which side of the political spectrum you are from, that in some cases people will say that they will stand in the way of doing certain things once you are not with them. That is one of the problems that we have. And I think sometimes we are not aware that even in respect of the whole question of politics in itself, there is a time and season for everything - that once we have passed that stage, what needs to happen, sir, is that we as Barbadians all together, whether or not you are a BLP or a DLP, need to work together to achieve the objectives of the government of the day. And the objective, sir, of this Democratic Labour Party government, sir, is to build, sir, a better society. That is what it is. Not, sir, to encourage division. Not, sir, to encourage people to get out there and march on the streets, but also to recognize that sometimes if you are to bring laws, it must be balanced. It must be laws that must not discriminate. Laws that say that, look, in its application, it is applicable both to the rich and to the poor. It is applicable, sir, not only to persons who might have an affiliation with the opposition, but to those who are affiliated to the government.

But we have a situation that has been created in our society where there are those persons who feel that they are untouchable. There are some persons who feel, sir, that they are only there and only they can rule. And that is why we have this feeling today in some cases that, look, you know, many, many - the people made a decision, it was a mistake. Our duty now is to make sure that we will make these people's lives as miserable as ever so that whatever happens, nothing must go forward. And we have to be careful as a society that when we adopt those kinds of

positions, it harms not only the people that you are trying to get at, but also the poor, those people who are least able to defend themselves. And you know what happens, sir?

Sometimes we end up using those people for our own ends, but when we use them for our own ends, sir, at the same time, we don't seek to protect them from the ravages, because at the same time you have these people very insulated. That is why I have always stated, sir, I have always stated that when it comes to the question of capital punishment, I am one who have said, I will never, ever support any abolition of capital punishment. You know why, sir? The rich, sir, can go and build their, what you call them, gated communities and pretend they are nice gates and pretend all their security to protect themselves. But the poor man who lives down in Grèves or Extène Village or in the city of New Orleans, he can't build any gates. He cannot build any gates. So when you encourage insurrection, who hurts the most? The poor. And Barbadians must ask themselves this critical question. When people out there, politicians out there, encourage that foolish behaviour, who gets hurt most? The poor, not them, because they can run up in their gated communities and - you know - many, many, and we all know in this country that when you call the police, if you are nobody, they treat you last. The first words ahead is the big bodies. That is what we have in this country. And we as political representatives, sir, we as political representatives have to be careful that instead of trying to implement institutions that only serve some, that we must implement institutions, sir, that serve all. All, not some.

And that is why in respect of the Police Complaints Authority, sir, I must say this, that our duty is to make sure that it functions in the way in which it is supposed to be functioning and if there are weaknesses, our duty, sir, is to ensure that we address those weaknesses, not in the interest of a chosen few, not in the interest of trying to protect capital or the owners of that capital, but in the interest of trying to ensure that any ordinary man and woman in this country who has a legitimate complaint can come and say that complaint that I have has been addressed in a transparent way and I feel satisfied that I have been heard and justice provided. That is what we need to have. That is what we need to have.

And that is why, sir, I think that this project is ongoing because as I have said, that in many cases institutions develop. We as a democracy are still relatively young and we are evolving and we are trying to find ways in which we can better serve the people. That's what we are doing. We are building a society which in itself produces a strong economy because I made the point, sir. Which investor will come to Barbados if we don't have a society in which there are rules, that the laws are obeyed. As a matter of fact, we know over the years that one of the strong points by which people have come to Barbados as

investors or whatever is based upon the fact, sir, that traditionally we have maintained certain stability as a society. We have maintained that stability. But when we have people trying to undermine that stability - in other words, you know - we have to take note. We have to take note. Especially, sir, those who should know better. That is what we should do. Those who should know better.

So I really believe, sir, I really believe that again, in relation to our Police Complaints Authority, this, sir, is an authority, sir, evolving. It is evolving. It is not perfect. And I think, when I listen to the Commissioner - of the Prime Minister this morning - when I listen to the Commissioner this morning, in which he spoke to the fact of how the murders are being dealt with, a whole problem we need to look at - I believe it would even be in the interest of the police force to want to see that kind of evolution happening. Because I believe, sir, if you saw that kind of evolution happening in the same way, what would happen, sir, it will enable, sir, the Royal Barbados Police Force to provide an even better service to the very people who it serves, because very often, again, I made the point that institutions are there to serve. We are here for service, sir. That is what we are here for principally. So if we have a means of helping us to serve the people better, we will want that kind of feedback. That is where, again, the Police Complaints Authority forms that critical connection.

So I think for the opposition, sir, to dismiss that particular bill this morning as if it was just something here, and even at this point in time, at this crucial stage in our country where we are - the society is under stress. Let us be clear, our society is under stress today. Because very often when the world is going through the kind of problems that it is, it places stress in our societies and as admitted, you know, it is only a person who is not of this world who would say that everything is okay. It is not. And as a matter of fact, we are going through extraordinary times and those extraordinary times are causing unique pressures in our society. It is even causing us to care for our morals. We have a tremendous pressure being placed on this country now to try to change what we consider our established concepts of marriage as between man and woman. A lot of pressure is being placed on us and you know what? The Feeney can do it and Dangers can do it and if you change that, that's what you get. But we have to stand firm as a society. We have to stand by the things that we believe in. We cannot cave in.

Look, Mr. Speaker, sir, I know that our citizens, sir, are going through that kind of stress. And you might be prone from time to time, sir, to get a young man, a woman, who out there is experiencing difficulties in getting a job. And, you know, they come to me and they say, you know, Mr. Paul, I can't find a job readily, or whatever, and I would do ABC and I said to them, listen to me, that is no reason why you should do it. That is no reason - stand firm.

Stand firm by the beliefs that you have. But the problem is that when we have leaders in our society who encourage our people to take the easy way out, to take the easy way out, some of them take the easy way out. That is what we do. We are now producing leaders and we have to be very careful of that. Who encourage our people to take that easy way out and that easy way out, sir, is usually the wrong way, the wrong way, because we are prepared to sell our grandmothers, our mothers for what the Almighty dollar - I always remember, sir, I always remember that when that issue of the golf courses, Dunk Sandy Lane came out, and I remember that people, sir, were paid handsome money for the land that they sold. Ask a lot of them where is the money that they got then? And what benefit is it to Barbados today? We could have pursued, sir, a different path in terms of development. We made a choice, the easy way out.

Coming back to the Complaints Authority, because what I'm saying, sir, the Police Complaints Authority helps us. Helps us, sir. It helps us to ensure that people are focused here on doing what is the right thing. And not only that, we encourage them to follow the process. Follow the process. That is what we need to do. And that is why, sir, we must not fail. We must not fail. In terms of ensuring that we continue to have a healthy respect, sir, for the Royal Barbados Police Force, sir, for law and order, and let us appreciate the extent to which, sir, that Police Complaints Authority, sir, will be able, sir, to engender that healthy respect for law and order and due process in this country. And with that, sir, I thank you very much. I support you, Madam Speaker. I'm obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I join this debate on what I believe to be a very important issue in relation to the Police Complaints Authority, a very important institution in Barbados. It is a pity that the other side does not share that thinking - that the Police Complaints Authority is an important institution and so important that it warrants, even on a matter to deal with rectifying certain matters in relation to the body itself, the highest degree of review from all members of the House.

So I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Police Complaints Authority was established some time ago with a view to ensuring that we could have the highest degree of accountability within the ranks of the Royal Barbados Police Force. And I believe that such an opportunity as granted in this House to review not only the Complaints Authority, but to review some of the very critical areas which of course face law and order in Barbados, are indeed areas that we should reflect on. And I believe that for one thing we have to note that the Police Complaints Authority

has been established by law. And when you examine the duties of the authority and the composition of the authority, we have to agree that much effort was made to ensure that you could have a body which is independent of the Royal Barbados Police Force and independent of the political directorate. That ought to give comfort to Barbadians, that if they have a complaint against any member of the Royal Barbados Police Force, that it would be listened to with a certain degree of objectivity and that they ought not to fear any recriminations from placing any matters before the Royal Barbados Police Force.

And this is important, Mr. Speaker, because from time to time in Barbados, certainly as a Member of Parliament, I have had referred to me by members of the public various complaints, various grouses that they may have in relation to a particular officer, a particular experience in the Royal Barbados Police Force. And it is critical that citizens who encounter challenges or by virtue of the procedure involving an investigation, where they have legitimate complaints or where they have complaints generally, it is very important that they are made to feel that their complaints will be listened to in a manner that respects their rights and in a manner that is objective.

And I say this, Mr. Speaker, because within the context of the very long tradition in Barbados for respect of law and order, the high traditions of the rule of law demands nothing less than our citizenry believing and knowing that they have recourse under the law to deal with matters that they believe may infringe their fundamental rights and privileges. And I think that this opportunity in reflecting on this legislation before the House offers us a very

pristine and certainly a timely intervention to look to see how we can improve on the arrangements that we have in relation to the Police Complaints Authority. And while we know that the Act does provide a certain provision, it is clear that we have to now look to see how we could improve on the arrangements under which the authority operates. And based on the experience so far, we would have had the benefit of several reports from the authority. And based on the experience that we would have seen so far, the number of cases presenting before the authority, I believe we have to now look to see how best we could further improve the degree to which that authority can independently investigate complaints about the Royal Barbados Police Force without necessarily having to engage or rely on any member of the Royal Barbados Police Force to carry out that investigation. And I think that is an area in which we can seek to move the authority along in relation to the work that it has to do.

But within the context of the rule of law, which I referred to, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that we have to continue to build institutions in Barbados that gives

meaning to our constitutional rights, that this particular authority is really one of those institutions that we have to uphold. And I believe that every member of Parliament should feel that they have an obligation to contribute to any dialogue that draws the attention of the public in relation to this particular body. I believe that when we discuss the thinking behind the police complaints authority and the kind of checks and balances that it creates, that it raises some other fundamental points in relation to the question of how we follow and adhere to the rule of law in Barbados. And further than that, it sends the kind of correct signals and raises the kind of questions as it relates to how we as lawmakers by our own conduct, our own behaviour, how we ourselves not only uphold the rule of law, but encourages our citizens to uphold the rule of law.

I believe that just as the public, the Police Complaints Authority is required to function in relation to respect for law and order, that all of us are required by our actions to ensure that we do nothing to reflect negatively or send the wrong signal as to how we uphold the rule of law in Barbados. And I say that by extension because I know that this is a very critical time for us in terms of our economy. And it is sometimes understandable that persons may feel a sense of loss and deprivation. What I would caution though, that those who have been walking around Barbados and trying to identify the problems by offering no solutions, I would like to suggest that we temper our enthusiasm and the words that we use in accordance with what we respect as the rule of law.

And I say that, Mr. Speaker, because recently I saw written in another, I believe it is one of our daily newspapers, some words which I believe ought never to be repeated anywhere if in fact those words were spoken. And the words which were attributed to the leader of the opposition reflected her passion for creating a kind of institution or some kind of movement to champion the rights of those who are downtrodden. But I believe I saw the words saying that we will not take arms. We will not take arms in this country, but we will do other things to somehow get the message to the government. And I think those words were regrettable because no member of parliament should even say we will not take arms. Even the notion of creating an expectation that we are somehow under the guise of our threat, of arms being used to deal with issues of national significance, ought not to grace the lips of any member of parliament, whether in here or outside. And I tie that in, Mr. Speaker, within the context of the rule of law.

Because the Police Complaints Authority was established by this Parliament to avoid a situation where people, because they did not feel they have access to a remedy against complaints and issues they have with the police force, it avoids a situation where they may feel that they want to take matters into their own hands. And we as

lawmakers have established channels by which they can be heard and by which their complaints can be listened to and action taken. And that principle was taken, Mr. Speaker, because in the absence of an avenue for redress such as the Police Complaints Authority, it is very likely that persons may get so frustrated that they seek to take the law into their own hands.

And I draw the correlation between what appears to be a new thinking on the part of the opposition to go into the public domain and to somehow charge up the public in times of economic hardship so that they may feel as though they want to take matters into their own hands, and not take account of the legitimate systems and institutions which are designed to allow for expression of opinion. And I wanted to dwell on that directly because it concerns the wider issues which we are talking about today in relation to the rule of law, and therefore I would like members of the other side to adhere to the rules, the rule of law in Barbados, and not seek extra-judicial means or extra-constitutional means to vent their frustrations in relation to what they may have thought that they ought to have gotten. And I want to just issue that word of caution.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, that unfortunately in relation to the debate on matters such as these, the Police Services Commission Act, we do not have the luxury as members of Parliament of escaping the obligation of debating matters in this House. And I believe that it is really here, it is really in this House that the views of Honourable Members should be heard in relation to important matters such as these. Because the institution of Parliament was created, Mr. Speaker, as far as I am aware, for Members of Parliament to address matters of national significance and to deal with matters in here. Because in here you can then be rebutted. If you speak things that are contrary to the facts, then they can be rebutted and dealt with in an appropriate manner.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that there are a number of innovations which we can adopt in relation to the Police Complaints Authority. I believe that one of the things that has to be done is that the authority needs now to be better known to the public of Barbados. I think the authority should engage in a public education drive to ensure that citizens are made more aware as to its functions and so that they can better utilise and have access to the authority in a more profound way than I have been seeing in the past. I believe that if this is done, that many of the concerns, many of the anxieties of members of the public who may have encounters from time to time with members of the Royal Barbados Police Force may very well be dealt with and managed.

I also believe, Mr. Speaker, that once complaints have gone before the authority and have been investigated, that very quickly after that, an aggrieved person should be

aware and have access to some redress so that the matter can be brought to a conclusion. I believe that the time taken in between the making of a complaint and when that matter is fully investigated need to be shortened so that we can have a more rapid result. And I say that, Mr. Speaker, because as we continue to focus our people on finding legitimate means of having issues addressed, that certainly our focus on the victims of alleged police high-handedness must be such that they do not feel alienated from the process, and by extension, that police officers who in their exuberance to conduct investigations do not feel that they are above the law.

And I speak specifically, Mr. Speaker, in relation to cases which may require the police to obtain search warrants and the way in which search warrants may be executed, where of course we have had complaints of damage to property and such like. I believe that just as how we uphold the rights of the police to execute search warrants and to do their job, we also have to strike a balance where persons who are unjustifiably impacted on, whether by means of property being destroyed, that they have legal recourse and that legal recourse, Mr. Speaker, is provided in the quickest possible time. We cannot afford, Mr. Speaker, any action or lack of action that creates any loophole in our system, particularly our criminal justice system. And we have to have a system that is fine-tuned, that does its job, but one that does not or cannot be accused of flying in the face of the Constitution.

And Mr. Speaker, this is important for us because we do not live in a vacuum. We do not live in a world by ourselves and from time to time because of the obligations that we have under various international treaty obligations, we have to make reports to various international institutions and we know that some of the things that they look at relate to the use of police force, the availability of redress for persons who have legitimate grievances against law enforcement. And if we can proactively, by means of appropriate amendments to the relevant legislation and by means of how we deal with issues such as the Police Complaints Authority, if we can strike that at a very high level, proactively, I think that we can be seen in the international community as a country that ought to be emulated in relation to our respect for constitutional rights and our respect for the rule of law. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, this issue, this particular matter before the House, cannot be taken lightly.

And I believe even the members of the Police Complaints Authority would relish any advice, certainly any useful advice that comes from this House that would make their deliberations not only more smooth, but would render the Police Complaints Authority a more efficiently run and effective institution. So, Mr. Speaker, I hope that as a result of this debate and the contributions which have been made - the only contributions, of course, which have

been made have come from the government side, which is good - but I am hoping that the members of the opposition would see this as an opportunity to say something useful and purposeful in the House about something that is important.

But at the end of the day, I am hoping that out of this can come the necessary amendments to the Act that will improve the functioning of the authority, would ensure that it has the relevant staff to do its job, and that in the end, what will happen is that the improvements will be done to the benefit of the work of the Royal Barbados Police Force. It is important that the force itself can mount aggressive recruitment drives in Barbados to attract the best police men and police women. And I know that one of the challenges that they face now is the ability to increase their numbers in a manner that does not in any way detract from the very high quality of policing that we have had over the years in Barbados. And therefore, one of the calls I would wish to make in this debate, Mr. Speaker, is that the opportunities are there for young people in particular to make themselves available for recruitment in the Royal Barbados Police Force.

I will just say that young persons who wish to become members of not only the Royal Barbados Police Force, but certainly the Defence Force as well, should ensure that they follow the best practices and that they do not get themselves involved in any compromising activity that may besmirch their character and cause them not to be able to present clean certificates of character to allow them to recruit into the Royal Barbados Police Force. And one of the challenges that I must say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Royal Barbados Police Force and the Defence Force face, particularly in this era of very liberal behaviour as it relates to the use of illegal drugs, in particular the use of marijuana, some young people are engaged in this practice and they also wish to be considered for recruitment in the ranks of the Royal Barbados Police Force and the Defence Force. And I would just like to say that the two aspirations do not come together.

And certainly those young persons who want to be considered for membership of the Royal Barbados Police Force must ensure that they do not take their good names either by their conduct or by means of other nefarious activities which could render their applications stillborn. We need good police officers in Barbados and we have to continue to replenish the ranks of the Royal Barbados Police Force and we can only do that, Mr. Speaker, by recruiting young men and women in Barbados. And I want to say that the force needs those young men and women, but they need them without the trappings and some of the things that may come with modern-day life, modern-day living. And there is no space for young people who are going to abuse drugs in the Royal Barbados Police Force, and therefore it is an opportunity for young men and

women to be hired in the Royal Barbados Police Force. But we have to understand that illegal drugs and the use of illegal drugs have no place really and should not have any place for any officer, any recruit in the Royal Barbados Police Force.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to signal my support for this measure before the House and certainly by means of the things that I have said, which I believe will go towards the improvement of the Police Complaints Authority, that they will continue to improve and that certainly can be assured of the support of the government in ensuring that it can do its job in a manner that is in keeping with the balances inherent in our Constitution. And with those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, the bill before this chamber is a very simple matter. And the opposition member who spoke in reply to the Honourable Attorney General signalled our clear support of what really is a trite and obvious matter. And we continue to wonder why it is that it is attracting so much discussion in Parliament. Mr. Speaker, speeches have ranged far and wide and we have touched on everything under the sun including the Honourable Member just saying that we have to recruit young men and women in Barbados for the police force. I didn't know that we were thinking of recruiting them from St. Lucia or St. Vincent or the Bahamas.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

AN HON. MEMBER: The Honourable Member is misleading, sir. When the Honourable Member was Attorney-General, sir, the Honourable Member told this House on many occasions that he was thinking of recruiting some from outside Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: That is absurd. That is not true. That is absurd, sir. But be that as it may, the Honourable Member has made his contribution. I believe he clearly misunderstands the role of Parliament. I did not know that Parliament was supposed to offer advice to the Police Complaints Authority. The Police Complaints Authority is established by law. There is a piece of legislation. And if you all remember, who just spoke feels, Mr. Speaker, that there are deficiencies in the bill, this is a prime occasion to come and correct them.

Legislation has been brought here today to validate acts, and if there were any issues relating to the Police Complaints Authority legislation, this would have been the most opportune time to present it to Parliament. But instead

we are being told that it is hoped. It is the earnest hope of the Minister of Culture and Youth Affairs that this debate will somehow throw advice for the Commission. I wonder what the public is to make, sir, of the statement of the Minister of Education made earlier - that the police would have to crack a few heads and shoot a few people. I wonder who that advice is intended for, sir. But since the Minister of Education made that disgraceful comment, not a member on that side has sought to distance themselves from what is evidently the original -

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

AN HON. MEMBER: The Honourable Member is misleading the House and trying to suggest that the comment made by the Honourable Member was disgraceful. It should be withdrawn.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Sir, that is the worst possible defence. Because the Honourable Member is now trying to fortify what is a disgraceful comment by trying to say that it is not in fact disgraceful, sir.

Mr. Speaker, the Royal Barbados Police Force is responsible for the maintenance of law and order. And I do not know of any occasion since the 1930s when any law enforcement agency in Barbados, as far as the Caribbean, felt that the way in which they should bring about public order was to crack a few heads and shoot a few people. I wonder if that is the stance that the Attorney General - Mr. Speaker, an individual who is the Minister of Education, who has the responsibility for the human resource component of Barbados, who has the responsibility for moulding the lives of young people, who has the responsibility, sir, for safeguarding in many respects the generations to come, made the comment. He can't deny he made the comment, sir. And I wonder what the Attorney General has to say about it. Is it the view of the Attorney General that the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force should now see themselves, as they carry out their duties, of cracking a few skulls and shooting a few people, sir? That is not the police force that the people of Barbados today want or deserve. And the member, sir, who said it, deserves the highest opprobrium for those disgraceful comments, sir.

And none of the members who spoke have distanced themselves from it. And I'm waiting, sir. I am waiting, sir. There are several other members who have spoken. And none of them have distanced themselves from it, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: All our members, please. Please. Let's have a moment. Continue, Honourable Member.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Well, sir, you know, when you're talking about shooting a few people, you call the right name. Call the right name, sir. Call the right name, sir.

And the case that was before the parliamentary committee is now dead in Parliament, sir. So we could talk about that, too. We could talk about that, too, sir.

Mr. Speaker, the Police Complaints Authority - sir, we need now to set up a new authority to deal not with complaints about the police force, but with complaints by the police force. Complaints from the police force, sir, because they don't have proper kit. They don't have proper equipment. The cars are breaking down daily on the road, sir. All of those are issues that the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force should really complain about, sir. They should complain about the disgraceful political interference that the Democratic Labour Party has committed in relation to the police force and in relation to promotion, sir. They should talk about all that. They should talk about all those things, sir.

But instead we could get in Parliament and we can talk about a lot of fluff. A lot of stuff, sir. This is a simple bill. The opposition said we support it, and that should have been the end of that, sir. Nobody wants to create any issue over authority members whose appointment expired and the people still sat, sir. Nobody wants to make a meal of that. It isn't worthy of a meal. It isn't worthy of a meal. But if we're going to have a debate, let us debate the serious issues, sir. Let us debate the serious issues that are affecting the Royal Barbados Police Force today. Let us debate, sir, the fact that at this point, sir, joint patrols between the police force and defence force have been jeopardised because the defence force did not have a fully functional fleet of vehicles. Let's talk about that, sir. I believe the people of Barbados would want to hear about the matters that affect their safety, the matters that affect their security, sir. Those are the things that we can talk about. But until then, sir, until then, we really should say let us pass this bill and move on.

Because the government has no appetite. The government has no appetite, Mr. Speaker, for dealing with any of the burning issues that are affecting the police force. The government has no appetite for dealing with any of the issues that threaten the morale of the Royal Barbados Police Force today. And there's not a person who could deny, there's not a person who could deny, Mr. Speaker, that the morale of the force is at its lowest ebb ever. At its lowest ebb ever, sir. This has been the administration since 2008. This is the administration since 2008, sir.

When the Barbados Labour Party was in government, we made sure that the Royal Barbados Police Force was the finest equipped police force anywhere in the Caribbean. We improved the circumstances of the members of the force by allowing them to earn additional monies through flexi allowances, through cleaning allowances and a whole set of other things, sir. The Barbados Labour Party came and found a force that could not cope with the

modern issues and we fully modernised it. People got training. The force that we left was a force that we could have been proud of. But today, sir, today you drive along the street and you find that the police vehicles are broken down. Police are once again having to drive their own vehicles to the scenes of accidents because they don't have a vehicle in the place, sir. The police force do not even have ammunition to use on the range. Don't have ammunition to use on the range, sir. Let us talk about those issues, sir.

The opposition supports this bill. It is a slight thing. But if we are going to get into a debate on policing, let us not come in here with superficial nonsense, sir. Let us confront

the critical issues. But most importantly, sir, I am calling on - if the members of the government benches do not see it fit to distance themselves loudly and publicly from that horrible comment made by the Minister of Education, sir, I am calling on Barbadians to stand up and say we do not support that. I believe the Minister of Education will call that civil unrest and recommend the cracking of a few skulls and the shooting of a few people, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am going to ask you to withdraw the comment that he recommended the shooting of a few people and the cracking - right now, because he didn't recommend that. Just a minute. Just a minute. You can take statements of context and so on, there's freedom of speech, but you are not allowed to misrepresent what the member said. He didn't say that. Withdrawn, let's move on.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: I've already withdrawn it, sir. I wish the member would have withdrawn what he said, because I have withdrawn saying that he recommended it, but what is more worrisome, sir? What is more worrisome, sir, is that those words could have come out of the Minister of Education's mouth, sir. But then again, sir, here is the man who said that the young people of Barbados are full of demons. That's the same individual, sir. Full of demons, sir. Full of demons, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I would welcome a serious debate on policing. I would welcome it, sir, because the situation in Barbados in relation to law and order - it's not just a matter of 1 400 or 1 500 police officers driving about from day to day, sir. What we are faced with - when the member for St. Lucy, sir, spoke, I don't know who interrupted him, sir - policing in Barbados is not just about running up and down, sir, after car accidents and so on. There are a whole set of issues that we have to confront. So let us confront them. Don't let's play games with it, sir. We welcome the debate. But when the members of the government benches intend to take policing seriously, then, sir, we can have a debate that merits Parliament. But until then, sir, until then,

the comments from that side, sir, are not worthy of parliamentarians, sir, and should really be ignored by the public at large. But if only we could ignore the comment from the Minister in question, sir. I'm obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: Good. Thank you. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. Sir, before the -

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Let me enter this debate, which I really had no intention of entering. But I think that it really deserves at least a brief reflection on some of the things which have been said, particularly by the last honourable member, who I think clearly was jarred by the speech by the honourable member for Christ Church West Central. I don't know why that speech upset him or upset members of the Labour Party opposition, but I don't know why it upset him.

Mr. Speaker, sir, and the honourable members on that side, you know, it's really amazing because we have heard a lot of commentary about the appetite of the government to debate issues and Parliament not meeting. I'm not reflecting on any of that. I would have thought that an opposition that claims, that says that it is ready for government and it is prepared to do anything within its power other than bear arms to get government and whip up the country in a frenzy - we would have come in here all excited to debate matters of law and order. And what has transpired here today, Mr. Speaker, sir, tells us very clearly that when we remove the smoke and mirrors and the huff and puff, the opposition is really not ready to debate any serious issues. They have had a three-week layoff from Parliament and have come back in here unprepared to discuss serious issues.

I find it absolutely incredulous that the former Attorney General - and I haven't heard the current leader of the opposition speak for the time being, correct? - the leading opposition for the time being speaking on this matter. I assume that the honourable member will speak after I do. But I can't believe that a party went in government supposedly with all of the resources at their disposal, when Barbados was such a wonderful place - no, they don't want to hear it - could in fact leave the very same Royal Barbados Police Force in a state of practical decimation.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, sir, we can get up and list the number of police stations in Barbados that had literally fallen down on police officers. Indeed, the Attorney General, the learned Attorney General, can tell you how many papers had to be brought to Cabinet to pay compensation for police officers who fell through floors at District C and Black Rock, and chairs falling apart and motorcycles disassembling on the road and all of these things, and compensation having to be paid when there was

no money - I mean, when there was a lot of money in the economy for them to spend on the police force.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, sir, it was one honourable member, a leading honourable member of the other side, who said that the police were nobody special. That's right. And that they didn't deserve to get anything more than anybody else in Barbados. So this latter-day latterism, these lamentations about their loving the police force - can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, sir, that one of the biggest processes of disorientation in the police force as it relates to morale, because of issues of promotions in the police force, we started on the last administration and the infestation carried on under this administration. The two attorneys general that we've had in this administration since we came back to office have had to grapple with it. A morass. When you speak to junior members of the force, they'll tell you of the things that went on, shepherded by senior members of the Barbados Labour Party government when it was in office.

And they say they want to discuss. They have the opportunity. You're the alternative government, you say. Only one seat separates you from Bay Street. And the honourable member for St. James Central came and said, you know, this is a perfunctory matter, an amendment, and therefore, you know, we're not wasting time with that. So in a country in which they said there are such fundamental problems with law and order and a weakened police force, it took the honourable member for St. Joseph to come to the House in the afternoon session - after lunch - to try to put something on the table. The opposition had given up on the debate. Now the honourable Attorney General sought to give them the opportunity by widening the discourse. But the opposition is not interested in that. They're interested in Bay Street and the Treasury. That's the only two things that excite them. The Office of Prime Minister and the Treasury of Barbados.

And so we come here today, Mr. Speaker, sir, to be lectured - I am not getting side-tracked by the honourable member for St. Joseph - to be lectured and hear about the police force. We know that there are issues in the force. The honourable Attorney General is trying to repair the broken morale, trying to get new recruits in a very difficult exercise. You left it to us. We are trying to repair some of these police stations. Right in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Michael West, the Black Rock Police Station was in a total mess. Total and complete mess. Bell Place - we had to come in and move the people out of that. And St. Michael West there, you used to have a little thing there, a supermarket operating there - not adequate quarters at all.

We now have an arrangement where we are working with the attorneys at the Attorney General's office to seek funding, I believe, from the Inter-American Development Bank and other sources, to do four police stations to try to

bring back some type of morale about the police and where they're operating from. They went along and left the whole town in a complete mess. Whenever it really flooded, the entire station. And I'm not going to talk about Crab Hill Police Station because that is a matter for the Public Accounts Committee. That is why when the committee starts investigating, I have to start at the right place. I am not getting there yet. I am going to have the opportunity to speak on those matters. So I leave it at that.

So we know that we have issues. We know the Complaints Authority has always been one of these things within the system, within the process, that is not absolutely clear to the public. And I think one of the things that we have to agree on, both sides, is that not only do we strengthen the Complaints Authority, because in a democracy, in a country that prides itself on the upholding of human rights and the upholding of law and order and access and so forth and so on, and the protection of your natural rights and rules of natural justice, that you should have checks and balances in place even for a police force.

You want to ensure that your police force is enabled to conduct its operations, do its job to the best of its ability, and you stretch that as far as you can in terms of the envelope to ensure that they can do so, but of course you still have a citizenry to think about. And there are those persons who may seemingly run afoul of the law, but may actually, after investigation, not be. And they need to have that level of protection, that level of comfort, that if they appeal to some other authority, some other mechanism within the system, that they can find the necessary recourse. And that action be taken, not just in terms of what might be perpetrated by a wayward police officer or otherwise, but to ensure that such things do not recur in the future.

And that is really what we are talking about in this particular debate, because it is absolutely central to the practice, the culture of a democracy that those checks and balances be put in place. Many times people complain about the way in which police carry out their operations. It's not so much that they're carrying out the operation; it is how they're carrying out the operation and whether or not they may have infringed on people's protected rights. Now of course the law courts are open to anybody who feels so heavily aggrieved, but you also have a Complaints Authority and you should feel comfortable that you can make legitimate calls on that committee and that the committee is going to investigate, as the honourable member for Christ Church West Central has said, expeditiously and completely, and report in a time that is considered to be reasonable by the average citizen, for any corrective action or course of action that may have to be taken.

So we understand what this amendment is about, but we also believe that in a democracy such as ours, and in a society, particularly in which, Mr. Speaker, sir, from time to time when we have minus spurts in the crime levels, where people like to rush and give the impression that everything in Barbados is falling apart, we need to know that when we respond and when our police force responds, that order and discipline is brought to the society in the shortest possible order.

And we can say today - we just have this whole issue of the cash-for-gold situation, and the police force working with the public administration have been able to put things in place to stem it. It's not totally gone; there is still some of that around. But they petitioned the office of the Attorney General. The Attorney General brought a piece of legislation here to ensure that corrective policy measures were put in place. The police were subsequently able, by their own admission recently in the public, to have used that legislation and that new policy framework to be able to govern down the thing. And we've now seen a tailoring off in that activity. That is how the system is supposed to work. I think that's a classic example of how the system is supposed to work.

And this government remains committed to the Royal Barbados Police Force, providing them real resources. In the estimates for this year we gave them monies to purchase a new high-speed marine vehicle, and the estimates to be able to ensure that they can continue their drug interdiction activities. We can't go into the details of that publicly at this stage, but we know that those resources have been made available. We have been trying to work with them to provide new vehicles. The Attorney General has spoken to the officials of the Ministry of Finance about making sure that we replace vehicles at a reasonable rate. We're looking at different options as opposed to only buying outright. We look at leasing. We look at different types of arrangements which have been put in place. And we feel reasonably assured that there is adequate fleet in the police force to ensure that they can carry out their operations and be stand-ready, because law and order and security is one of the critical aspects of the development of the country - not just social development but economic development as well, because a stable security situation in a country leads, of course, to comfort which can internally lead to investment.

So these are the things which we have been doing. So we're not getting sidetracked by these comments from people about what is happening and some of the outlandish things about policemen using their private vehicles to go to accident scenes - maybe, but that is not true, Mr. Speaker, sir. And there are no vehicles breaking down on the road. I drive all around Barbados and I have not seen any police vehicles broken down on the road. I haven't seen it, Mr. Speaker, sir.

So I think we have to be level-headed. Don't try to turn this debate into a trivial and adversarial exchange between the two sides, because there's blame to go all around, but there's also praise to go all around too. And we have to ensure that issues pertaining to security are kept at that level, but that we engage each other in a discourse that would reflect the maturity of both parties in relation to these matters. And I hope, Mr. Speaker, sir, with those few words, that we can get on, and I support the bill, of course, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. The honourable member for St. George South.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this debate this afternoon, and let me first say openly that I support this bill as passed by the member for St. Philip South. But let me go further and I also want to say, yes, I have seen some work done at the Boarded Hall Police Station and on behalf of the residents of St. George South, it is indeed a good sight. But it is one that I think, yes, you are responsible, and that is your role as government to ensure. To ensure.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable member, please refrain from speaking directly to other members when you're on your feet. Speak to the chair. Thank you.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Indeed government's role and government's responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the infrastructure for good policing is put in place. And it is nothing that this side, the Barbados Labour Party, did not do in our tenure as government in this country. But I would like you to take it further, to ensure that when you start a job that it takes it to its integrity. Because I had the privilege of visiting the Border Hall Police Station and while you have attempted - I speak on behalf of the residents and also the policemen who work at Border Hall Police Station, men and women - Mr. Speaker, we would like to ensure that you make that facility, we would like to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that you make that facility the facility that would ensure that the residents of St. George and the policemen are highly motivated so that law and order will be effectively carried out.

And with that point, Mr. Speaker, I also wish to move further because let me say that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph spoke eloquently and he hit the nail on the head when he said that there is demotivation within our police force in this country. And we can't make any sport about it, Mr. Speaker, when we come to this House, because if we come to this House and we say that all is well within our police force, we will not be speaking accurately to the people of this country. And it is our duty - the 30 of us that have been chosen by the people of this country to represent their interests - to air our views as it relates to any matter, policing, emergency matters, any

matter, to ensure that all of the critical issues are ventilated in this Honourable House.

So that takes me to the point when I can hear the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, Mr. Speaker, get up in this Honourable House and speak about heads being cracked and people being shot. I represent over 9 500 persons within St. George South. And this Society is an educated Society - old and young, sick and healthy. This is an educated Society. And when I can hear from the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central making statements about cracking heads and shooting, whether he said people's heads should be cracked or not, but when you get into this House and you can carry the debate to that level, to that low standard, I am appalled, because all it is saying to me, Mr. Speaker, is that those people who in St. George South - and not only St. George South, but in this country - who are going through trials and tribulations, people who can't put food on their table, people who are not so educated, some of them. I say some of them, Mr. Speaker. But let me carry on, because I would not be sidetracked from my point, because you all are trying to divert.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay, all of you members. Just a minute please. Members, let us have some order. I have noticed - excuse me, all members - thank you. All members, the asides are getting a bit too loud. I have been trying to tolerate them but they are really getting a bit out of hand. So please keep it down and let the Honourable Member make his contribution in peace.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just like law and order should be maintained in this Honourable House, we want it to be maintained in the country. So while we, when we speak this afternoon on the passing of this Bill, while we support it, we will not sit in this House and allow those loose comments to be made to the citizens of this country in this Honourable House. Because all it is saying to me, Mr. Speaker, is that the people living in this country, when they hear those comments, those loose comments coming from the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, they can take matters into their own hands. And that was not the intention of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. And we know that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is trying to reference what was said some days ago. But what was said some days ago was that the people in this country are not satisfied. And it was demonstrated, and it has nothing to do with policing. It has something to do with what we call democracy.

And when we can take it to that level, I am saying to this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, through you, that we have to refrain from making such comments that can agitate. Because this Honourable side, the Barbados Labour Party, we have not yet today made any comment that will

cause the citizens of this country to be agitated. It came from the other side and you ought to know better, Mr. Speaker. So my contribution to this debate is to say, yes, we support the Bill, but moving forward, when we come to this Honourable House, we expect the 30 of us to conduct our business in such a way, Mr. Speaker, that the people looking on will applaud us and our heads can be held high in esteem for doing what they have chosen us to do on that day in February. And I thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is my contribution to this House. Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to make a brief intervention in this debate. I, as my colleagues would have stated earlier, members of the opposition have no difficulty supporting this particular validation. What I will say at the outset, however, is that the introduction of these pieces of validation bills seems to become quite frequent in this chamber and in the other place. And I would like to think that we could move to a position where instead of validating acts which are done after they have been done, that we can move more expeditiously to ensure that so much time is not wasted in these matters in bringing them to this chamber.

That said, I too wish to express my concern and horror at the comments made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central earlier in this debate. And I say so because it concerns me that in the constituency of St. Michael South East - a constituency where a large percentage of persons often find themselves having to make complaints in respect of whether it is police brutality, whether it is persons in the police force harassing them in the course of their duties, or whether it is in respect of the general behaviour of the police towards them when they go to search their premises - and to hear in this chamber from a senior member of the government give the impression that the police now have some high hand to be able to crack the heads of persons who may in some way violate law and order, and that if it is necessary to restore order in this country that you may have to shoot a few people, disturbs me, Mr. Speaker.

It disturbs me because I believe that better must be expected from those in authority in terms of their comments. I would hope that the Honourable Member on reflection would seek to withdraw his comments because there are persons out there who will draw the conclusion, whether in the public domain or in the police force, that the police have such authority to be able to administer such force. And there is nothing in the law that can tell me that reasonable force is shooting someone or cracking their head. And that, more than anything, Mr. Speaker, disturbs me to hear those words uttered by the Honourable Minister

of Education in this chamber. The people of Barbados deserve better.

I have no difficulty with the Royal Barbados Police Force carrying out their duties. I have no difficulty with members of the Royal Barbados Police Force in the execution of their duties, searching premises if they are looking for drugs or restoring law and order in this country. But we cannot send a message in this country that the police are able to do as they like and that their force will not be reasonable in the circumstances. It also sends a very dangerous message that if the people of this country have difficulties with the current administration and the policies which are being implemented, that they are not able to exercise their constitutional right to be able to lobby and to advocate for change in this country. And simply because we have just come out of an election and the current administration has been given a mandate by - I would not even say a majority in this country, but a very slim majority in this country - does not mean that the day-to-day policies of this administration do not continue to affect the people of this country.

And therefore, if those people take the view, as we have been noticing, as we traverse our constituencies and as we talk to people across the length and breadth of Barbados, that there is discontent across this country, no matter which sector in this country you go to, whether it is the police force, whether it is the creative sector, whether it is the tourism sector, whether we go down in town, whether we go on the beaches, we hear the same things being echoed across this country.

That there are difficulties being experienced and hardship in this country by the people of Barbados. And as such, if it is that those people decide that they want to advocate for change, that they want to send a message to the Barbados government that they have had enough and that they will not tolerate any more, so long as that is done in a peaceful and civil manner - the Honourable Member who made the comment that the police can crack heads in the country notwithstanding - so long as persons in this country continue to exercise their right to lobby and to advocate for change, it is incorrect and inaccurate for any member of this chamber to send a message that they will be shot or their heads will be cracked by the Royal Barbados Police Force in order to restore order in this country. It is a very dangerous precedent that is being set, Mr. Speaker.

And I really do hope that the Minister of Education reflects on the comments that he made. He may have said it in a moment of passion. He may have said it in a moment where I am sure on sober reflection he will realise that his comments perhaps were not intended for this chamber. But the fact is that the damage has already been done and the listening public will be the judge of the comments made by the Honourable Member and those on the other side who

have found it unnecessary to disassociate themselves from those comments.

But the fact remains that yes, there are serious issues that we must address in this country as it relates to law and order. And there are serious issues and serious decisions to be made as to how we ensure that our Royal Barbados Police Force are able to carry out their duties effectively. And I would have hoped that we would have spent time, maybe not in this debate, but certainly discussing ways in which we can improve the Royal Barbados Police Force, and that we can encourage younger people to be able to enter the force, to be able to pursue a career in the police force.

I would also like to take the opportunity at this time to commend the work of some of the officers who work alongside the children through programmes in the St. Michael South East community and across Barbados - music programmes that they host in conjunction, for instance, with the Pinehill's Creative Workshop. And I would like to implore the Minister of Home Affairs to encourage more activities of this nature in communities, because that is how you build relationships. That is how you ease tension in communities. That is how you penetrate communities and you change behaviour. You do not send comments such as those by the Minister of Education that you crack heads and you try to restore order by shooting a few people. And I want to continue to reiterate that because we have a responsibility in this chamber to ensure that our comments are also responsible to the public of Barbados.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we have no difficulty with this particular validation bill. My comments were intended to be short, but I believe they are necessary in the circumstances because there are several people in my constituency and people who I come into contact with who will no doubt be impacted by the comments that have been made here today - the unfortunate comments that have been made here today - and no doubt would want the assurance from members on the other side that those comments will not trickle down to the Royal Barbados Police Force in the execution of their duties. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: which is essentially a bill to validate the actions of the Police Complaints Authority since October 6, 2011, and in summary terms, effectively to say that anything that the Police Complaints Authority did since October 6, 2011 shall now stand to be regularized as a result of this legislation. And this type of validation bill, sir, is really as a result, obviously, of the failure to appropriately appoint the members of the authority and hence without the passage of this bill anything which they have done in the last just shy of two

years, stands to be held null and void because of the clear omission to appoint the members of this authority correctly.

And you know, sir, this debate and today's whole proceedings really comes to be a perfect sketch of what this that government is about. That we are here in the midst of all of the difficulties and trials and tribulations being faced by Barbadians in their businesses, losing their jobs, being put on short week, and what are we here to do today for the last five, six hours? To make right the incompetence of the Attorney General in the appointment of the Police Complaints Authority. That is what this is about. Because if they had done their work correctly, the paper that has been used, the time that has been spent by the Chief Parliamentary Council, the time that has been spent by the admin officers getting this to cabinet and getting it down here, and then a day of Parliament's work when we could be doing things to ease the burden of ordinary Barbadians in their daily plight. And then you wonder why people express frustration, sir.

And instead of us dealing with the validation, accepting that these things can happen, we spend a whole day to construct the fact that this government has nothing else to speak about, so we use this as a form of political filibustering to lay before the people of Barbados some kind of commentary even though the commentary is completely divorced and disconnected from action. If the public of Barbados felt that we were in here dealing with the shortage of vehicles for the Royal Barbados Police Force for five hours, they would say the people of this Parliament advanced the work of the people of Barbados today. If the people of Barbados felt that we were in here addressing issues of how to be able to deal with the fact and all of the talk about the IDB loan now, cane garden plans were finished when this government took up office to build a new station. Bell plane was finished. The plans to build a new police station, the plans for Willy and the discussion with the Barbados National Bank were finished when this government took up office. The plan to develop Worthing was on the table. If they felt that we were in here dealing with that, the public would be happy.

If they felt that we were in here dealing even with the misfounded plan of duty-free vehicles for policemen. They would have felt that at least the government was honouring a promise that they made in 2008. If they felt that we were in here dealing sir, with the ability of the Royal Barbados Police Force to satisfy its requirements in terms of human resources, or to satisfy the fact that in many barracks in the police stations, one of the reasons you cannot hire more policewomen in the Royal Barbados Police Force is because of the lack of conditions in the barracks for females. And that we know that until we make those adjustments, there will be an imbalance between men and women being recruited in the Royal Barbados Police

Force. If the public felt that the 30 members of Parliament were discussing these things for six hours, they would have appreciated that the work of this society is being advanced.

But to spend six hours and only one member really spent any time on the government side dealing with the validation and the work of the Police Complaints Authority, but to carry us from Mexico to Colombia and then back to go fast boats and yachts and then cross to what really was the most stunning and amazing example of a loose tongue, a weak mind and a frightened spirit in relation to comments constructed to engage in a form of intimidation that is unworthy, sir, in my view, of Barbadians.

Sir, we were taken from the comments attributed to Clement Payne, which truly were made by Mendes Chase. But I would have expected that the Minister of Education would know that. And then we went, sir, to the multiple definitions of motley crowd. And then we went, sir, to notions of inciting. And we were told that the Royal Barbados Police was a force. And then, sir, came the unbelievable comments from an honourable member who has acted as Prime Minister more times than most on that side - not lately, not recently, not for a year, not since the Eager 11 - but who nevertheless has acted as Prime Minister of this country. And out of his lips came, sir, the words: to restore order, some heads would have to be cracked and a few people would have to be shot.

No, sir, not even in passion, not even in jest, under no circumstances can those words be heard to be coming from a senior government minister charged not just with the responsibility of education, but a senior government minister - because the natural interpretation by those who heard it, and I spoke to many at lunchtime, because you would be surprised how many people listened to this debate. And in fact, I had texts all the way from New York and all the way from Canada telling me that they could not believe that those comments were made because they saw them as intimidatory and they saw them, sir, as constituting a threat to people wanting to legitimately express themselves as guaranteed by the Constitution of Barbados.

Now, sir, if people feel that they have to express themselves as they have been doing across Barbados, when they tell you that they cannot make ends meet, when they tell you, as we heard as recently as Sunday, that their businesses are down 50 per cent, when they heard and told us, sir, that we don't know what the government is doing, the biggest question is, but what the government really doing though? - that the inaction, that the silence is killing them. And when the Barbados Labour Party says that we will do what we have to do in this country, short of bearing arms, to be able to represent the voices and the feelings of the people of Barbados, sir, we say so with all sincerity, and we mean it with sincerity. And if the honourable

member feels that there are things that are likely to happen on the government's part that will cause those noises and voices to get stronger, well then maybe he better tell us what it is the government has in store for the country that might cause the population to become even more agitated than they are. He clearly knows what is coming and he clearly fears that something is going to come that will cause people to become more agitated.

We speak of people understanding that they have the power to express their voices as they did in 1991, as they did equally when they were in opposition. And we say, sir, that history is replete with circumstances even of civil disobedience, of circumstances of protest, of circumstances of people raising their voice or signing petitions. And you know, Mr. Speaker, the irony is this. That on my way to Parliament this morning, I was listening to Brass Tacks. And the host of Brass Tacks, Mr. Ellis, had a co-host on who started her presentation on the need for Barbadians to be filled with hope and that in some sense that Barbadians could not leave the need to have hope and to reflect hope only to politicians. And a gentleman called in to speak to the young lady who was on the programme with Mr. Ellis. And he asked her, but what do people do if all actions still come back to the political class? And the young lady said, people have to raise their voices, people have to sign petitions, people have to picket, at which point Mr. Ellis said, but that is not part of our culture. And she said, that may be true, but it happened in 1991. When I was in New York, I was surprised to learn that my father was one of those bearing placards. And the father she was referring to is no other than a former Minister of the Democratic Labour Party government, the late Ramsay's Cattle [Inaudible.].

So here you have a daughter of a Democratic Labour Party parliamentarian reflecting that people in this country may have to reflect how they feel through raising their voices, through signing petitions and through picketing if necessary. Now we may not be at that stage but the point is, sir, that this government will have to have their heads buried in the sand not to know the feeling of frustration, not to know the anxiety, not to be aware of the fact that people are finding it difficult to be able to make ends meet. And to them, all they have is an echo of silence coming back at them. And then when they look to this honourable chamber to see what initiatives are being brought here on a Tuesday, to their regret, we go on a six weeks Easter break, and then we meet twice again, and we go on a four-week break. I don't know what to call it other than a May break. A May sabbatical to allow members of Parliament to travel. And almost there were at least five ministers out of the island last weekend. At least one in Canada, one in Tampa, one in China, one other that came back yesterday on a flight with some family of mine, all over the place - the other one in New York and Miami - so that we understand that the 16-14 majority has meant that Barbados, when it has its most

difficult and perilous time since independence, is having its parliament meet the least amount of times.

And then, sir, when it meets, this is the depth - the clerks, the bills and resolutions in this session - and what are we here to deal with? The correction of incompetence for the Police Complaints Authority, and rather than deal with it and get on with substantive business that can advance the concerns and interests of the police force or citizens or putting money back into people's pockets or stabilizing the government situation, we have a form of political filibustering that leads to the comments from a weak mind, sir, on a loose tongue and a frightened spirit.

Sir, if it was intended to be a threat to the people of Barbados, I say to you, sir, that we will not be threatened into silence. And I say to you, sir, that as long as there is the will in our body to breathe, that the Barbados Labour Party will offer hope and a spirit of unflinching will to this country and we will work with whoever, wherever, whenever in accordance with the law to raise our voices, to express our opinions, to constitute protest if it ever comes to that as well, in accordance with the Public Order Act. But those are the rights that have been enshrined in the Constitution of Barbados.

And you know, sir, I was a teenager, sir, when a former minister of the Barbados Labour Party administration happened to have in his exuberance said that if you were named Douglas Leopold Phillips, that you should meet. And Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party and that gentleman came to be defined by that statement, which was not buttressed by similar circumstances. But what we have today now is the reaction of a government that causes me to sit down and wonder. I pray, Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central was getting carried away as he is sometimes wont to do. I pray because I do not want to believe that a person who has acted many times as Prime Minister of this country could suggest that members of the Royal Barbados Police Force could use force to restore order - he didn't say that they should restore order, you know, sir. And a member of St. Michael South East got it correct. That he said that they should use a level of force that by anybody's standard goes beyond which could be considered reasonable because you cannot be cracking someone's head for any reason whatsoever. And you cannot be seeking to shoot somebody unless somebody has a gun or a knife that is threatening your life. Not to restore order, sir. Those things come in defence of life, not to restore order.

And I want to thank the honourable member for St. Joseph for speaking as forcefully, as clearly and as solidly as he did in here, in highlighting the fact that we will await in the closure of this debate the comments from the Honourable Attorney General. Because as horrified as we are by the statements of the Minister of Education, we want

to know that the person who has the responsibility for police affairs in this country distances himself from those comments that would in any way leave any doubt in anyone's mind in Barbados or out of Barbados that this could be an acceptable form of conduct for the resolution of any kind of disorder in Barbados, particularly since reasonable force is the premise upon which our rule of law is based and our constitution.

And particularly since, Mr. Speaker, not only is reasonable force that underlying premise - that one would not seek to crack somebody's head or to shoot anybody unless one's life - not even cracking the head, quite frankly, there is no circumstance in which I could see that acceptable. And if one uses a gun to shoot anybody, it can be in defence of your life, only in defence of your life. And the message that we send, which is wrong, is that there may be people out there who now may want to speak, but who say, but wait, this government now wants to intimidate me. This government now wants to make me frightened. But I say to them, I say to them, sir, that rest assured that this side will not be silent. And rest assured, sir, that this side will explain to the people of Barbados that we will defend them to the hilt because you cannot have coming from the mouth of a government minister - ministers in this country have been fired for less, ministers in this country have had to resign for less.

And I am saying to you, sir, that I trust and pray that the Honourable Attorney General will distance himself from those comments and that the Minister for Education, who gets carried away, will recognise that those comments were inappropriate for this debate, had nothing at all to do with police validation, had nothing at all to do with the innocuous nature of this bill, as the member for St. James Central said up front, but because they wanted to parade and pretend to the public that something is happening, they went wide, they went far, they went loose, and they went to the area where they ought never to have travelled by veiled threats to the people of this country. Please, I pray, the Honourable member for Christ Church East Central - withdraw those comments and let us get on with the business of this country. I am obliged to you, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: [Inaudible.]

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, this morning, when this debate began, I deliberately, in my presentation, opened the debate, I thought, as wide as possible so that we can have a debate on law and order, so we can have a debate on the validation bill, so we can have a wide and serious debate. The opposition lead sportsman, the member for St. James Central, said that it was innocuous and therefore he saw no reason to contribute to the debate. All the other members had nothing to say until the member for Christ Church East Central in his presentation seemed to have riled and attacked the leader of

the opposition. So they went downstairs and they planned how they're going to respond this afternoon. So we heard a different opposition in the afternoon, because as we very well know, the leader of the opposition is thin-skinned and insecure. So any comments attacking her must feel the wrath of her attack posse, for want of a better way of putting it. So in the afternoon we had a member for St. Joseph. All of a sudden we are talking about a serious debate on law and order, but he made no serious comments. He made not one serious comment about police cars breaking down on the road and all kinds of things that are not factual. Right?

Now, I don't know of any police cars breaking down on the road. I know what we have been doing in terms of ensuring that there's a renewal of the fleet. We have said that we cannot do them all at once and we'll do them over a period of time, and I've been working with the police. But I don't want the Royal Barbados Police Force to be a political football. And I'm not going to spend lots of time on that. But I was really willing and hoping that we can have a serious debate on all these issues because it wasn't, as far as I'm concerned, good enough for certain members of the opposition to go outside of Barbados and inside of Barbados and suggest that we had a problem in terms of crime, and that there is a link between the escalation of crime and poverty, all kinds of things. But when it comes to coming here and having a debate, where we can respond, not a single word out of them until the leader of the opposition was attacked. It wasn't an important debate. But you attacked the leader of the opposition.

And let me tell you what the attack was about. The leader of the opposition is up and down Barbados speaking about putting together a committee of conscience or a coalition of conscience. And we know they say that the plot of conscience is conspiracy. That's what they say. And that they're going to agitate, et cetera. And the member for Christ Church East Central was merely saying to her, in your quest for power, remember that there are people who could be hurt. Remember what happened in 1937. Look all across Barbados. Look all across the world, sorry, Mr. Speaker. And you'll see what happened when people have taken up. And all he is saying is, be careful, because you should not put your quest for power first.

Mr. SPEAKER: That's what he was saying. Yes, I remember. Yes, I remember. Go on.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, sir, the Honourable Member misleads the Chamber. All of us were in here when the member for Christ Church East Central spoke. He didn't say be careful. The Honourable Member said that to restore order some heads - and we can call for the transcript - to restore order, to restore - we have it taped too - to restore order some heads will have to be cracked and a few people will get shot. Those were the

words of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. If he did not mean them, sir - just a minute, please - if he did not mean them, then he can withdraw them. But that is what he said. And for the Honourable Attorney General now to try to say that he said be careful, to misconstrue and to make it soft - and just a minute, please - to misconstrue and to say what was not said, of which we complain, sir, is to mislead this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: I find no point of order. The person who is speaking is entitled to get a copy of his speech if it is available, and to refer to it. I can call for everything. There is no need to call for it. There is no point of order. The Honourable Member speaking is seeking to put his interpretation in terms of what was said in context, in the same way Honourable Members from your side, the Honourable Member who has spoken, have put it in a certain context. All right, please continue.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Let me say again then. My understanding of what the Member for Christ Church East Central was saying is that the leader of the opposition is power hungry and does not care what happens to the ordinary people of Barbados as long as she gets her hand on power. That's what I understand him to be saying. And he is saying be careful, because what happens when people uprise is that usually it leads to violence - that's what I understand him to be saying. So the lady opposite wants to walk about Barbados and wants to agitate all Barbados, et cetera, because of power. All this thing is about power. And as we said to her earlier today, your time will come if it's the Lord's will. So I say to you, wait, wait on the Lord, and see whether or not your time will come. That's my advice to you. Instead of agitating, instead of trying to persuade the people of Barbados that they need to uprise - not in 2013. That's not how we behave. That's not how we behave. That's not how we behave.

And I also want to say to the members of St. Michael South East, because I understand wanting to follow the will of your leader, I understand that, but use your own common sense sometimes. I can excuse the member for St. George South because he seems incapable of independent thought. I can excuse him, so he will say whatever he is encouraged to say. But we are not, as a government, saying to the people of Barbados that they cannot speak openly. We want to engage the people of Barbados. We spent many nights in January and February walking around Barbados, listening to them and speaking to them. And we continue to do it. We understand what is happening, but we don't have to stage any outing at Christ Church to suggest that only we have the answers. We don't have to encourage our people to come in and tell tales of having problems with mortgages, et cetera. It is not only the brothers and the party supporters who may have issues.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute, just a minute please. Let's have some order. There's too much shouting across the floor. And Honourable Member for Phillips - I assure you, I am not deaf. I can hear you very well. So just take it down a bit, please. Take it down a bit. Thank you.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, I will abide by your ruling, sir. I'll abide by your ruling. I don't want any advice from you, member for St. Michael North East. I will never be part of your team. Never. I will never be part of your team. So, yes, this is an innocuous validation bill. If you listen to some parts, this bill is not worth commenting on. If you listen to other parts, et cetera. So the only thing worth discussing is the contribution of the member for Christ Church East Central, his contribution. But we are more concerned about the overall issue of crime in this country. And that's why I spread that wide and far. And that's why I said to the members on the other side, you too have a responsibility to use your positions to influence the young people in this country so that we can address the issues that they face. Not encourage them to agitate, not encourage them to break the law if necessary - not at all, sir. I want to withdraw that before you. I want to withdraw that.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, the Honourable Member has dangerously misled this House by saying that we are encouraging people not just to agitate, but to break the law. If necessary, we are not. And it's not only withdraw - he should also apologise, sir. And it should be struck from the record. It should be struck from the record, sir. With all due respect, it is injurious. Sir, it is - I'm an Honourable Member. I've heard you. He said already, even before he started, he was withdrawing it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, I said so too. Thank you. It is to be struck from the record. I said so. Yes, please continue.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, as I said, I've withdrawn it. I apologise. But what I will not withdraw is that the member for St. Michael North East is power hungry. I will do anything in this country to have the chance to sit here. To have the chance to sit here. So all our mountains is about sitting in this chair. All our mountains. So I want the people of Barbados, when the Member for St. Michael North East speaks in this House and outside of this House, to listen very carefully. Because, sir, I marvel at how some people in this country are able to speak and speak for hours and say nothing of substance. The Member for St. Michael North East is one of those people. A giant sounding nice and pretty. But when you sit there and analyse - same old story, same old contribution, not much substance. Not much substance.

I'm not going to respond to the charge that the Attorney General is incompetent because of this validation

bill, because we all know that there have been various validation bills across both divides. And, sir, I have a file in front of me named the Police Complaints Authority File, Appointment of Members. And within the first three pages, I actually saw that members of the Complaints Authority were appointed before the Act was proclaimed and instruments signed, and this happened before us. This happened in 2004. Right? This happened in 2004. But I'm not going to say that the Attorney General at the time was incompetent. I'm not going to say anything like that. All I am saying is that things happen within Ministries and the reason why you have the validation apparatus is to put them right once you realise that these things need to be addressed. And that's what's happening today.

So, sir, I want to thank the Honourable Members for contributing to this debate. I want to thank the Member for St. Joseph for leaving wherever he was to come and contribute to this debate, because were it not for him, all we would have heard from the other side was that this is an innocuous bill, therefore we don't need to debate it. And to the third part of the opposition, I want to also thank you for contributing to the debate, because that's why we're here. We're here to debate things so that at the end of the day, hopefully, what's best for the people of Barbados would emerge, and that's why I listen to all members regardless of whether or not I agree with them. So I want to thank them. I want to thank even those who don't believe that they need to contribute because they're from the other party opposition and we're told that they were not going to contribute. So that's fine. So all three parties of opposition, I want to thank for participating. So, sir, with those few words in closing, I beg that this bill be read a second time.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and the Bill was read a second time.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that you do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve itself into Committee for further consideration of this Bill.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee, Mr. J. D. PAUL, Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, Mr. Chairman reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee without amendment and

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Police Complaints Authority Validation Act, 2013.

Mr. CLERK: Order number four, sir. In the name of the Honourable Minister of Social Care, Community Development, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development, to move the passing of a resolution that Parliament take note of and approve the White Paper on Ageing.

ORDER NO. 4 – RESOLUTION – WHITE PAPER ON AGEING

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Minister.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In moving this resolution this afternoon to take note of the National Policy on Aging for Barbados, towards a society for all ages, let me say at the outset that the country that provides for its children and elderly is a society, Mr. Speaker, that is well ordered and compassionate and deserving of lofty commendation and high praise. It is a society, Mr. Speaker, that recognises its economic responsibilities and commitments but simultaneously displays the milk of human kindness and touches its citizens softly and gently, Mr. Speaker, and wraps them in the arms of governmental security.

At this juncture, Mr. Speaker, of our existence as a country, I am really pleased to be the minister responsible for social care, constituency empowerment and community development. And for today is a special day, and I dare say, Mr. Speaker, a watershed in the history and development of our nation. And I am pleased to present this to this August chamber this afternoon, the National Policy on Aging.

Following the change in government in January 2008, Mr. Speaker, the National Committee on Aging completed the very first draft of the white paper, and it was guided by research carried out by earlier national aging committees and they worked towards finalising the paper and of course they continued to the final approval was received from the cabinet on the 20th of December of last year.

The white paper, Mr. Speaker, delineates a policy that is grounded in a philosophy that embraces the principle of equal opportunity, equal access, inclusion and active aging. It articulates the position, Mr. Speaker, that the Government on Population Aging, which is defined as the increase in the percentage of persons 65 years and over and the total population of Barbados. Now having a population

with an average life expectancy, Mr. Speaker, of 77.0 years and with 13.7 per cent of its people currently 65 years and over, it is projected that by 2025 the percentage of older persons in Barbados will increase to 20.4 per cent of the population.

Now, given the change in population dynamics, Mr. Speaker, where women's roles have been significantly widening beyond that of primary caregivers and the fact that the adult children can no longer be relied on to provide support for many of the older persons living with them having become increasingly vulnerable to the effects of aging. And of course, this is quite evident in society now, Mr. Speaker, where the older people in our communities are left alone, some family members of course are working or most of them are working at this time and the traditional family support is quite absent within our communities and therefore quite a large number of our older people are now left to fend for themselves in our communities.

Some 4 per cent Mr. Speaker of the elderly live in institutions like the geriatric hospital and the district hospitals which collectively provide for some 758 beds under the Ministry of Health's Alternative Care Program. And of course, this is also supplemented by what we do through the National Assistance Board, where we provide at the Vauxhall, in a citizens village, some 34 apartments, where we accommodate able-bodied elderly people at that facility in Vauxhall. And of course, it is the kind of facility where we accommodated some of the people who were disembarked from the place of residence when the Arch Cot tragedy occurred. But now I'm pleased to say that facility is now being vacated by the Arch Cot people. They're now rehabilitated back into society, of course, with the welfare department. They're now adequately housed in apartments being paid for by the welfare department until these residents, of course, can catch their feet and of course stand on their own two feet again. So the Vauxhall site in the citizens village is now cleared and ready to accommodate the full complement of 34 people that they can accommodate at that facility.

Now, many more are found, of course, Mr. Speaker, to be living alone facing the vagaries of everyday life very much on their own without effective channels of support from their relatives. Now this experience, Mr. Speaker, nevertheless, is somewhat relieved by the intervention from the National Assistance Board through its home care program. We are now servicing some 1 000 home care recipients that have, they of course have the capacity to accommodate a couple hundred more as we move forward with our elderly population as we develop as an agency. The home care recipients are now just over 1 000 and then of course we're making provision for the National Assistance Board to accommodate many more.

Now, over the last five years, the National Assistance Board has moved to a stage where in the last three years we have filled all the posts that are outstanding. At the National Assistance Board, we now have the Human Resources Manager, because when we assumed the government in 2008, we found that a staff of over 400 people at the National Assistance Board, they were without a Human Resources Manager, and we moved swiftly to fill that post and we also filled the post of home care manager. And of course we have a lot of ongoing training for our staff. Just recently they were exposed to some level of training to better equip them to deal with their recipients as they traverse the length and breadth of this country and looking after the over 1 000 home care recipients. And of course we are moving to have all of them have that prequalification, which is already a prerequisite - this is the care of the elderly certificate, which most of, if not all, of the home care workers would have to acquire before they can be employed by the National Assistance Board, because we want to better equip them to supply the services to the home care recipients.

Now, the incidence of chronic non-communicable diseases, Mr. Speaker, is really concerning Barbados. It is particularly visible among the elderly in Barbados. And on an average, 38 per cent of men 65 years and over and nearly 52 per cent of women suffer from hypertension in Barbados. Dementia, of course, Mr. Speaker, chief among them Alzheimer's disease, are already presenting challenges to the health care sector and the population aging trends suggest likely higher incidence with implications for the family as caregivers and for the demand for institutional care. Disabilities, including blindness and amputations, affect some 14.6 per cent of older persons in Barbados. And when it comes to the question of Alzheimer's, I want to thank the President of the Alzheimer's Association and other members of that association for their support and the collaborative efforts they have always sought to merge with the government agencies and bring some relief to the people who suffer from this very debilitating disease.

Now responses to the population aging, therefore, Mr. Speaker, demands more attention and increased life expectancy requires individuals to take greater responsibility for their well-being. The white paper in particular, Mr. Speaker, examines the status of older persons in Barbados with the view to removing existing barriers in critical areas that may hinder their full participation in mainstream Barbadian society. And it proposes in the body of the white paper to undertake this process in a phased series of actions over the next 10 years with the aim of fostering national development, promoting positive images of aging, and developing effective poverty eradication strategies for older persons as part of the national approach to poverty reduction.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the areas being examined in the poverty eradication strategies is the establishment of the reverse mortgages, which has been discussed widely in Barbados among many of the stakeholders, and especially by the organisation that deals with the retired people. Now this is one strategy that financially empowers our elderly folk in Barbados who are oftentimes asset rich but cash poor and relies sometimes on a monthly pension that on many occasions has more months than pension. But guided by the international principles emanating from the number of conventions to which Barbados is a signatory, and there are many of them, the policy also intends to safeguard the rights of older persons and provide legal protection where it is not now provided and to promote and preserve the dignity and independence of older persons and to create an environment that is safe and free from the exploitation and abuse of others.

It also seeks to ensure that as far as possible, that the allocation of adequate resources to facilitate the physical, mental, social and economic well-being of older persons in Barbados will be established and that the institutional framework necessary to provide support for the well-being of older persons here in our country. Now this policy, Mr. Speaker, will for the first time provide the kind of framework that will encourage greater collaboration, especially among all of the stakeholders, in the provision of services and care for older persons, as well as to raise awareness at the community and national levels of population aging and its implication for national development.

Now importantly, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that it will also offer a coherent strategic national context for planning and decision making about elder affairs and will ensure that the respect, acceptance and appreciation of the life achievements and contributions made to the family, community, society and also to the national development by older persons. Now, this policy, Mr. Speaker, has been based upon an extensive situational analysis of the population aging in Barbados, which has examined, among other things, the demographic shift over time in Barbados, the profile of older persons in Barbados, the economic and the social security issues they face, and the services available to them.

Now, coming out of the analysis, six priority areas have been identified for action. These are the financial and economic security, the health care, the physical and built environment, the social environment, the legislation, and of course research. Now additionally the policy addresses the institutional arrangements, particularly the need to establish a national body with some responsibility for matters dealing with the elderly, already a procedure to facilitate appeals by older persons against administrative acts. It also combines with a matrix, Mr. Speaker, of the

recommendations which suggested broad timelines ranging from the short to the long term.

Now, the white paper acknowledges also financial and economic security to be crucial issues for the elderly, and it recognises that while some individuals are benefiting or benefit from pensions provided some form of financial and economic security. In the latter years others enter into a phase in which these major reliances on the government will be financial, economic and social support from the state. Now while it is accepted, Mr. Speaker, that providing support for increasing numbers of older persons will be a challenge for the state, a number of recommendations aimed at facilitating continued participation in the labour force, improved retirement planning and enhancing the effectiveness of government social security provisioning are also outlined in the paper in some detail.

Now notably, I want to add, Mr. Speaker, that it proposed that the efforts be made to facilitate the employment of retired persons. And I want to say very up front that it is very much of their own volition and it is not going to be forced on them. But we are looking to facilitate the employment of those retired persons who are capable and wish to continue using their skills and knowledge productively in employment; that wide-ranging training and retraining programmes be developed by the training institutions for older persons; and that the NIS regulations be amended to allow individuals to increase their pensions by personal contributions through the NIS pension scheme. And I want to reinforce and reiterate that it is purely voluntary, and of course, of the individual elderly person's own volition.

Now it also recommends that consideration be given to the indexing of pensions to the cost of living, or the provision of a cost of living allowance which would alleviate the burdens placed on those living on pensions with the progress of time. And of course the white paper also proposes that banks and credit unions and other financial institutions be encouraged to create the mechanisms to facilitate older persons and remove age discriminatory practices. And likewise those older persons are encouraged to take advantage of the retirement savings and investment plans.

Now on the question of retirement, Mr. Speaker, I would want to make the point that it is extremely important for everyone, especially our elderly, to make provision for that period of time, what we call retirement. Now I am recommending, Mr. Speaker, that government and other social partners be encouraged to facilitate retirement preparation programmes involving both employees and the employers. And these programmes should be implemented well before retirement, Mr. Speaker, and certainly from the earliest years of any paid employment by these elderly people. So very early in their life cycle, when they're

involved in any paid employment, I believe that we should be moving towards securing some kind of retirement benefits later on down in your life. Because too often, many of the elderly don't plan for this period in their lives. Many of them - I encounter many of them, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that you and all the other members of this honourable House do encounter people who do not qualify for contributory pensions. And of course, they're left really out there in the cold, and of course having to resort to the welfare department where they get a small monetary grant from the welfare department. But of course, that welfare grant sometimes falls way below the accustomed earning level of the particular elderly person. And of course this really discombobulates the usual lifestyle, sometimes resulting in rent arrears, mortgage arrears, utility bill arrears, inadequate funds for food purchase and a general fall in the living standards because of inadequate provisioning for that kind of assistance when you are retired.

So I would want to encourage younger people, because this appeal would have to go now to younger people, to make that necessary provision for when you are retired and when your salary levels are not what they are at this stage, so that you will have enough money to supplement you and to take you through your retirement age. Now, the recommendation in relation to health and health care are based on the view held in the Barbados Strategic Plan for Health that in Barbados the policies on health are predicated on the philosophy that health care is a fundamental right of Barbadians. Universal access to health care, Mr. Speaker, is a tangible manifestation of that right. Everyone in Barbados, including the elderly, has that kind of right to fundamental health care. Now with its prevailing theme of active ageing, the white paper points directly to the benefits of regular exercise and recreational activity. And I want to say that this is also a fundamental policy of the Ministry of Social Care, constituency Department of Community Development, we are removing haste,

post haste, in putting in place the active aging policy which we have announced a number of months ago. Now this coincides with the prevailing policy of my ministry, like I said, to further develop this active aging program and to address the need for mental activity by introducing tournaments for our seniors in board games and table games to keep the mind agile, such as scrabble, drafts, chess and dominoes. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, it also recognizes that the increasing need for the design and implementation of strategies to address the likely increases in the number of chronically ill people likely to require long-term institutional care and recommends the inclusion of Alzheimer's disease on the list of CNCDS, to heighten the level of attention to this particular disease. It signals the need within the white paper for the development of their caregiver relief and of course respite services and requests the establishment of systems to identify the elderly in the

community at risk regarding their mental health needs. So it is already a comprehensive look at all of the illnesses affecting our elderly.

In consonance with the recommendations of the white paper, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health under this present administration has already embarked on a number of the reformative initiatives aimed at enhancing the delivery of health care to the elderly. The Ministry of Health has taken initiative and they have gone full speed ahead and of course in the delivery of this health care to our elderly folk. Now among these is a new management structure for the elderly that assumes greater emphasis on the primary care approach that involves community-based care, deinstitutionalization where appropriate and enhanced provision of care. And I want to commend the Ministry of Health for pressing ahead with this particular initiative.

The Ministry of Health has also recommended the establishment of a Department of Geriatric Services to drive the process and provide the dedicated focus on provisions of care for our elderly. And this department will provide technical oversight with respect to policy formulation, strategic direction and service provision, and will liaise with other government departments and form that kind of synergy between the departments or among the departments, as well as with non-governmental and international agencies in relation to elder care.

Now further to this, Mr. Speaker, further to this, the Ministry of Health has developed a draft infection control policy. Training sessions have already been formulated for all of the staff involved in the care of the elderly within institutions, and it will be executed very shortly. Now moreover, Mr. Speaker, to advance reform efforts, a framework has been created for the establishment of a sub-acute unit at the geriatric hospital. And monitoring and regulation mechanisms for the alternative care of the elderly program have been restructured in order to ensure that this quality care is provided to the elderly persons, especially in the private sector.

Now the ministry has additionally commenced the training of the staff of the Ministry of Health assigned to private nursing homes in the area of quality training in health care, nosocomial infections and also hand hygiene. Now this will be buttressed of course, Mr. Speaker, by the National Stakeholders Consultation that was undertaken in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization on the topic of disaster management and evacuation planning for all nursing homes.

Now Mr. Speaker, with respect to the physical and built environment, as I alluded to earlier in my presentation, the White Paper provides recommendations for the development of a supportive physical environment as a key determinant to health and healthy aging. And it

calls for additional policy decisions, new programs to address concerns in housing policy, the National Building Code, public roads and transport, disaster preparedness, safety, security, and, of course, accessibility of the services provided in Barbados.

Now, specifically, the paper calls for the establishment of the enforcement of the National Housing Policy and Building Codes with standards and guidelines in relation to both public and private housing, encompassing the needs of the elderly and the active exploration of all possibilities for promoting provisions of low-cost affordable housing. It supports the development of villages, complexes and other retirement facilities offering independent or assisted living facilities and the allocation of at least 10 per cent of all homes in new government housing development for older persons, preferably ground floor units or with access to elevator or lifts.

And I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, this afternoon to announce that this particular policy directive has already been implemented by this administration when we included in the design and construction of the soon to be allocated Valerie High Rise Apartments provision for the purpose-built accommodation for the elderly and the disabled here in Barbados. So we are already ahead of the policy in that regard and therefore we can only enhance it as we continue to press on with this particular initiative.

Now also, Mr. Speaker, trending practices such as the offering of reverse mortgages for the elderly, as I spoke to earlier, to refurbish and retrofit their homes, the provision of traffic lights with audio as well as visual signals at pedestrian crossings, properly timed to accommodate the elderly and for providers of public and private transportation to be sensitized and encouraged to accommodate the needs of the aging population have been addressed in the White Paper very comprehensively. The White Paper also additionally calls for the subsidization of the fire safety equipment for the elderly and the promotion of discounts and tax incentives for alarm systems and personalized body alarm systems for older persons. You will see on several ads on the television, Mr. Speaker, where these assistive devices are widely promoted and we are moving towards that now in Barbados and that is embodied in the policy.

I can also assure this Honourable House that this initiative will find a willing partner in the constituency councils. For in the councils program, you have already fashioned a program that will see hundreds of our elderly people being given fire alarms and fire blankets as part of the council's outreach program over the next few months. And this couples, of course, with the smoke alarm project, which is already being implemented by the National Assistance Board. And to date, the Barbados Fire Service has installed some 427 of these smoke alarms to homes of

some of our home care recipients. So we're moving already in tandem on the same page and moving in sync, of course, in this particular program.

To address the issues, Mr. Speaker, of the increasing social vulnerability, homelessness among the elderly, the requirements of palliative and end of life care, and to hedge against and discourage elder abuse and ageism, proposals are included that call for the establishment of programs to encourage young and old people with interactions throughout their communities. And that is one of the things that we are pressing hard for in having that kind of social interaction among our elderly people and among our young people because we are well aware that there is a lot of institutional knowledge, a lot in the heads of our elderly people and we feel that the kind of environment should be created that these older people can, of course, transfer that knowledge to our younger people and we are providing the kind of environment where this exchange could very well occur.

Now it calls for the creation of a national protocol for prevention, reporting, investigation and management of elder abuse, and promotes the national observance of June 15th as World Elder Abuse Day. In just another few days, of course, we will be observing this World Elder Abuse Day right here in Barbados. And I want to say that Barbados really was the very first of the English-speaking Caribbean countries to actually observe this day. So we should really pat ourselves on the back in that regard and for that achievement.

Now the white paper recommends, Mr. Speaker, the establishment of a protocol between the National Disabilities Unit and the National Assistance Board, with respect to collaboration in assisting elderly persons with disabilities, as well as the undertaking of a comprehensive review of the current home care service to determine the areas for improvement. And this will be done quite easily because both of these agencies, the National Disabilities Unit and the National Assistance Board, are both agencies that are really located in the Ministry of Social Care. So I will, as the political head of the Ministry, Mr. Speaker, drive this process along with my officers and ensuring that this synergistic relationship be created so that we can achieve this particular objective.

It also advances the exploration of the possibility of providing a caregiver allowance to responsible community caregivers and relatives in order to facilitate the care of the elderly at home. And this is quite evident in many homes where there is a paucity or a dearth of people who are actually in the home environment to give that support to the elderly person. And if we could encourage people from outside of the home environment to come into that particular home and provide the kind of services that will assist on a daily basis the elderly people, we are going to -

embodied in the policy - provide an allowance for those caregivers and relatives who are willing to share some time with the elderly and to make them feel that they are worth something in this country.

Now the paper recommends the creation of an enabling environment to address the specific legislative requirements of older persons. It speaks broadly to the aspects of deprivation of property, cruel treatment, abuse, neglect, discrimination on grounds of age, standards of care and improper use of restraints. The need for the provision of state representation of the interests of older persons who are no longer able to take control of their own affairs and have no known relatives or trustees are also addressed in this comprehensive policy paper.

Now, Mr. Speaker, significantly, the white paper establishes the need for the drafting of an Elder Affairs Act to replace the existing National Assistance Act. And it also promotes the establishment of a channel for grievances with a view towards the establishment of an Ombudsman for older persons or the amendment of the Ombudsman Act to provide for special attention to the needs of the older persons. There is also a recommendation for the introduction of legislation to permit government to recover the cost of long-term residential care from the assets of those older persons with the means to meet the costs of their own care where government has been required to meet such costs, and using specific criteria of course which clearly safeguards the rights of the older persons concerned and also safeguards the rights of the state.

Now the white paper would not be complete, Mr. Speaker, if it did not focus on the need for us to encourage an advanced, comprehensive, diversified and specialised research on aging as an essential requirement for the development of effective policies. We cannot develop our policies in a vacuum or without evidence-based information on which to act. And therefore, we are moving heavily in this particular policy to go towards the advanced, comprehensive, and diversified specialised research that will inform our every policy towards making lives better for our elderly. And as such, it really recommends that government assign priority to the collection of basic information for older persons - for example, population projections, health statistics, demand for availability and capacity of institutional health care facilities, the incidence and impact of CNCs on older persons, the incidence and treatment of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, the nature and extent of elder abuse in Barbados and the documentation of the skills, expertise, knowledge and cultural memory of seniors - and this cultural memory which I alluded to earlier in my presentation.

Now it also provides the rationale for the establishment of the Commission of Elder Affairs headed by a statutory board and supported by an appropriate

legislative framework to satisfy the vacuum created by the prevailing and outdated 1969 National Assistance Act, Cap 48. I spoke to this particular issue late last year when we presented to cabinet and got its endorsement for the renaming of the National Assistance Board to have its name changed to the Commission of Elder Affairs, and we are moving assiduously within the ministry to have this particular renaming of the nomenclature of the National Assistance Board to the Commission of Elder Affairs. And this will be done very, very shortly.

In advancing that government should monitor developments at the hemispheric and international levels in relation to the development of a convention on the rights of older persons and to develop a national position in this regard. It is also intended, Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the principles of public participation, that all social partners and all others in the public and private sector and civil society are made familiar with the national policy and provide support for the agreed policy recommendations.

The effects, Mr. Speaker, of poverty and social exclusion among the elderly have been seen to be material to the future of this policy in this country. Now one of the areas that we are paying close attention to in the policy is the question of HIV and AIDS in Barbados as well as globally. There is a perception that because some older adults are no longer sexually active, they should not become preoccupied with issues relating to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. But I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that this should be construed simply as a fallacy.

Now this point is reinforced by the National Institute on Aging of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, which disclosed recently that when people think of those most impacted by HIV older persons, of course, are often the last to come to mind. But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that older persons are at an increasing risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. And this, of course, institutes further underlining that a growing number of older persons are infected with HIV and that people, age 50 and older, represent almost one-fourth of all people who are living with HIV in the United States of America. Because older people do not get tested for HIV on a regular basis. And hence, operating against this background, there may be even more cases than are currently known.

Now over the years it was discovered that several older adults have been diagnosed as being HIV positive as a consequence of a number of reasons. And figuring prominently in those number of reasons, Mr. Speaker, was the tendency or failure of healthcare personnel to test older persons for HIV virus. It was discovered that some medical practitioners might not have diagnosed the HIV virus in older persons and some early symptoms of HIV might have appeared to be signs of normal aging. Another reason put

forward for older adults being diagnosed with HIV was the fact that many of them had newly become single as a result of a divorce or after losing a partner. They might have ignored the HIV prevention messages while they were in a relationship. In some respects, a number of them continued in unprotected sexual activity, whether it be heterosexual or same-sex.

And that is this, of course, Mr. Speaker. It was argued that the availability of Viagra and Cialis and all the other sexual performance enhancement drugs help men to obtain or maintain an erection, thus probably contributing to increased rates of sexual activity and sexually transmitted infections among older adults. Of course, with all of these back in place, of course, men are again back in business, and of course, the back in business signs are now being sold quite well.

So, Mr. Speaker, the policy recognises this new endangerment of our elderly and of course addresses it frontally in the policy.

Now in closing, Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the contribution made by the National Committee for Aging headed by the Honourable Maisie Barrow. But not only this particular committee I want to shower kudos and bouquets and encouragement on, because the other committees of the aging that preceded this particular, the current incumbents, would have contributed in some way to the formulation of this policy. And therefore, I would want to shower generous encomia on them as well. I also want to pay kudos to the ministries of health and finance and to the agencies within the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development for the input into the work that culminated in the National Policy on Aging for Barbados towards a society for all ages.

The Cabinet of Barbados has already commenced the process towards addressing the specific needs of the oldest segment of our population by approving the proposal to rename the National Assistance Board as the Commission of Elder Affairs, and the office of the Attorney General has received instructions to undertake the legislative requirements to give effect to this particular decision. Now, the reform of the operations of the welfare department is also proceeding with that department being revamped as the new Department of Social Services. The National Assistance Board has already made preparatory arrangements for the review of the home care programme to render it more effective in meeting the needs of our elderly constituents.

Now the white paper, Mr. Speaker, will be used as the basis for the elaboration of wide-ranging national development policies, plans, strategies relating to older persons that will chart the way forward for Barbados in the

second decade of the 21st century and certainly beyond. Now the government of Barbados remains committed to the strengthening of all segments of our population and to the improvement of our institutional capabilities so that our country can be guaranteed an even brighter future.

Now this document, Mr. Speaker, this particular document, the National Policy on Aging for Barbados, seeks to address all of these issues in relation to the elderly population of Barbados. It has been developed taking consequence of the factors which impact the lives of the elderly and it is really aimed at the eradication of all barriers that hedge against the fullest participation of our older persons in mainstream Barbadian society. Today, Mr. Speaker, is a good day for Barbados. For the first time in this country's existence, we now have a policy that speaks directly to the issues impacting on our nation builders, those who laid this country's foundation and those of us who will reach that period in our lives.

I, as Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development, Mr. Speaker, in moving this resolution, dedicate this policy to the lives of all of these salt of the earth citizens gone to meet their Lord and those who are still with us. But I especially, Mr. Speaker, dedicate this national policy on aging to a special Barbadian, Mr. James Sisnett, a super centenarian who passed away just last month and was interred last Saturday. He distinguished himself as the true father of Barbados, for he would have seen more, experienced more, and lived more than all of us. And therefore, I want to dedicate this particular national policy to his memory.

I therefore, Mr. Speaker, unhesitatingly beg to move that this resolution do now pass.

Mr. SPEAKER: Second? Second? Did we have a second? Yes, okay fine. Good.

Yes, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown.

Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to initiate the opposition's contribution to this debate and also to make my own contribution as the member who is shadowing this particular activity. I think this is a very important debate and it comes at an opportune time as we experience the passing of two of our oldest citizens and two who I'm sure whose lives - long lives and the enduring legacies that they have left behind - should really fortify us in our desire to accelerate the pace of this work in terms of preparing for the fact that our population is aging.

It was said back in 2002 at the Second World Assembly on Ageing by the then Director-General of the World Health Organization, and I quote, that we must be fully aware that while the developed countries became rich

before they became old, developing countries will become old before they become rich. And I think that is a very powerful and prophetic statement even as we look at the situation that confronts us here in Barbados at this time. A situation where the country is undergoing and experiencing some economic challenges, and the poverty situation is really striking at the heart and the core of our society and affecting, to a large extent, those who are old and vulnerable. And I think it is timely then that at this particular juncture that we are discussing and debating this subject here in this honourable chamber.

For the past four decades or so, if you look at the statistics in Barbados relating to the school age population, you would notice that there has been a decline in that population from approximately 97 000 persons in 1970 to 67 000 in 1990 and 60 000 by the year 2008. And when you look at this in relation to the fact that within the last 12 years we have produced approximately 110 centenarians and you look at the low fertility rate in this country, and the high life expectancy rate, you can see straight away that Barbados is indeed in the middle of this aging phenomena that is grappling the developing world.

It might also be surprising to some to know that apart from Europe and North America, the Caribbean region in which we live is the third leading or has the third highest percentage of elderly persons in its population. And when you look at that and also look at the fact that apart from Japan, Barbados has the highest rate of centenarians per capita in the world, these indicators should suggest to each and every one of us that we really have a very serious challenge on our hands, and a challenge that we must not walk away from, a challenge that's going to be difficult to overcome, but a challenge that we must overcome.

From as early as 1975, Barbados was designated as the first Caribbean country with more than 10 per cent of its population being elderly. And as the Honourable Minister said in his presentation, at the moment, the elderly population stands at about 13 per cent. By 2025, it should be about 20 per cent, and the projections for 2050 is that a third of our population will be 60 and over. These statistics are alarming. These statistics, Mr. Speaker, suggest to us that we ought to take a different aim and a different approach to our development in this country, recognising the global phenomena which is affecting us and unfolding before our very eyes.

So there can be no doubt that we on this side support this resolution, certainly the intent of the resolution. But we may have some issues with the content of the resolution. And that is not to knock the white paper. It is indeed comprehensive. But as a white paper, one would expect a bit more specificity in certain areas as we transition from the green paper to the white paper. And I think this is something that we need to move with speed and alacrity in

order to put the relevant programmes in place to deal with aging in Barbados. Because the fact is that this global trend, according to the experts, is likely or will be irreversible to a large extent. So this is something that is going to confront us for a very long time to come.

And I know that a lot of activities have taken place over the years. A lot of programmes, social programmes have been put in place. But what I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, is that we now need to accelerate the pace of things to really put some fire under what is really essentially a very serious situation. Those on this side who served in previous Barbados Labour Party administrations recognised several years ago the need to take care of our elderly population. They recognised this and they embarked on a programme to provide an enabling environment to safeguard the elderly and for them to continue to enjoy the high quality of life to which they had become accustomed. And it started as far back as 1998 with the establishment of the National Committee for Older Persons and the facilitation of the first National Senior Games through the then Ministry of Social Transformation.

The creation of the Urban and Rural Development Commissions also would have played a significant role in the assistance that have been provided to the elderly in this country. These commissions were designed to assist the elderly with improved housing, and some work was done to a large extent, but within recent times, certainly within the constituency that I represent, which obviously would be the home to several of those elderly persons who may not have the economic means to do what ought to be done and who would be depending on government intervention. We've seen a fall-off or decline in the assistance from the Urban Development Commission to the elderly people within the constituency. And they believe that this might be true of several other of the poorer constituencies in this country, and perhaps might be directly related to the economic situation that confronts the country, but we need to do something about this.

We also were able through the Tenantry Freehold Purchases Act of 1980 to assist the elderly with the ability and the facility to purchase the land which they would have been attached to for decades. And this would have provided some emotional support and motivation to the elderly who for the first time would have been able to own land in this country. We also provided back then specialized health care programs for the elderly, which at the time was considered to be the only one of its kind in the English-speaking Caribbean. And I'm speaking about things like the Home Health Initiative, Community Care Services, and things of that nature.

We also consider to be important alternative care for the elderly program, and this was done as a partnership with the private nursing homes in this country who had

satisfied the established criteria for participation that was established. These homes were paid on a daily basis to accommodate both ill and well elderly patients, and I believe at the end of the Barbados Labour Party administration some 200 such persons were accommodated. This was done in conjunction with the construction of the Boksburg Senior Citizens Village. And these initiatives would have provided some relief to the elderly in this country. But we recognize, and it must be recognized even now, that they were grossly inadequate and a lot of work still has to be done, but at least it was an initiative which was a cost-effective way of providing care to the elderly in our society.

In 2003, the Barbados Labour Party administration embarked on an overhaul of the existing pension scheme by introducing flexible retirement ages between 60 and 70, and we've adjusted pension payments and in debt sent to the NIS insurance scheme in order to assist the elderly in this country and to take into account the fact that our population was indeed aging. So these are things that have been done under the Barbados Labour Party administration to deal with the issues of aging. The Community Technology Program, for example, which I am glad is still going, is one that was also introduced by the Barbados Labour Party. And this program has seen the graduation of several elderly people in Barbados who are now able to use the computer and to be able to interact with each other and the outside world.

But, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that concerns me is the fact that for a long time a survey was carried out in this country which indicates that three-quarters of the elderly population in Barbados are beneficiaries of assistance in cash and in kind from families and from the communities. And we know that the changing social situation in Barbados, where families are not as strong as they used to be, where communities are not as cohesive as they used to be, that this obviously will have a negative impact on our ability to take care of the elderly. Before the advent of the Barbados Association of Retired Persons - and this group must be commended for the outstanding work that it has been doing - but with all of these efforts from government and non-government sources, there's still a sizable portion of elderly people in Barbados who fall through the cracks because they live alone. There's no family. If you go through your constituencies, I'm sure you'll come up and you can see a number of these people on a daily basis. And these are the ones that concern me because they do not get to participate in the activities that we have going for them. And these are the ones that we ought to be able to concentrate on within this white paper and the plans that will come after.

I believe that there's a great need for the private sector to play a greater role in terms of providing for our senior citizens. And if we use the Sarakostis Village in

Eden Lodge as an example of what can happen, I'm sure that this really should give us the incentive and the encouragement to pursue this as an activity within the plans for aging in Barbados. Inter-generational programs - and I know that we've had a few of those, really elderly interact with younger persons in the community, maybe from schools and so on - but it's not really done on a sustained basis and it is not really as expansive as it ought to be. And this is another area where I think the white paper and the plans really need to take into consideration.

Mr. Speaker, the time must never come in Barbados where we see our elderly as a burden to society because they are not. The fact that we have an aging population is a challenge and like I said, it's a challenge that we must overcome. But there are some positive aspects of population aging which we need to take into account and which we need to exploit and utilize for the development of Barbados. There is no doubt whatsoever that within the elderly population there are repositories of traditions, culture, knowledge and skill. And we must utilize these wherever possible within the communities where these people live for the development of Barbados and also to provide some avenues for activities for the elderly. The elderly are the pillars of our society and a much needed and stabilizing influence in family life. And I believe at a time like this, where, as I said, our family structures are not as strong as they ought to be, more use ought to be made of the elderly population that reside within our communities.

The majority of elderly persons make vital contributions, both social and economic, to their communities as workers, caregivers, volunteers, mentors, and active citizens. I was happy to hear of plans to utilize our elderly within the economy in terms of employment opportunities. And I'm sure that if government takes the lead in this regard, not necessarily on a full-time basis, but utilizing on a part-time basis, maybe for a few hours a day, a couple days a week, those persons with certain skills who might be retired, who would be able to contribute and give back something to the public service of this country. And in areas particularly where there's a shortfall in terms of bringing in government revenue and where there's a backlog of work in some of the government departments where speed is required, I think that greater use can be made and ought to be made of the elderly.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that the Barbados Labour Party has no difficulties with the white paper. We recognize the need to do something about the situation that confronts the country. We recognize that no government alone has the capacity to do all that is required. We recognize that whether or not we like it, that this phenomenon is not going to go away. We recognize that the elderly in society still have a significant contribution to make towards the development of a society which they themselves have helped to develop. We recognize the fact

that Barbados has a legacy of producing senior citizens, centenarians, super centenarians. We recognize the fact that we've been a leader in the Caribbean in terms of providing basic but important social services, not only for the society in general, but some specifically tailored towards the elderly.

But we also recognize that with all the work that has been done, we are still lacking in some areas, in lots of areas, in terms of providing facilities for the elderly. Transportation, for example, remains a problem. We do not have enough vehicles that are equipped to deal with the elderly and the less or differently able persons in our society. The retrofitting of homes remains a serious problem; some homes have been retrofitted, but the number is insignificant in terms of the overall scheme of things. We recognize that the combination of government and private senior citizens' homes is still grossly inadequate. We don't have enough beds for the senior citizens in this country. We recognize that we do not have enough recreational areas and facilities dedicated specifically to the elderly.

And I recall some time ago I had the pleasure of managing a table tennis team to Sweden. And I was amazed at the level of participation of the elderly community in Sweden. I saw people participating in water sports. I saw people participating in athletics, indoor games, table tennis, traveling all over Sweden competing against each other. These are elderly people I'm talking about. And this is something that I felt that we ought to have in Barbados. And so when the National Senior Games came about, I thought it was a step and a move in the right direction. And I'm happy to report that at least I'm one member of this honourable chamber that actually participated in the National Senior Games, and I would encourage all members to do so - those of us who are of that age. That includes me.

Mr. Speaker, for me, one of the most important components of the white paper is active aging - active aging because we have a lot of people who are living longer. And I believe the more that we engage them in wholesome activity, good activities, the less it's going to cost us in the long run in terms of providing health care. And I believe that every effort should be made to expand as quickly as possible the range of facilities that we have available so that the elderly can become actively involved in activities in this country. And I say that because, like I said, if you look at the turnout for the National Senior Games, if you go to Martin's Bay on a Thursday, you'll see several elderly people engaging in activities and enjoying themselves. If you go to the Q in the community, you will see more elderly people than young people. And that's a good sign. If you go to bingos in Barbados, you see the elderly. But we need to increase the range of activities for the elderly.

And so let me register first and foremost that we support the initiative, we support the white paper on aging. And we will now await the plan of action after this resolution is passed in this House. And hopefully, in short order, we would get some more concrete proposals to take forward in dealing with the elderly situation in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. John.

Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to contribute to this debate as I represent a constituency in which there are many elderly folk. There are numerous 80-year-olds and 90-year-olds, and of course, St. John has had its centurions as well. In fact, I recently attended a luncheon for a centurion who was unfortunately unable to enjoy a visit from the Governor General because the family was unable to prove that she was actually 100 since they didn't have the birth certificate anymore, on which her name did not appear anyway. Nonetheless, they had their luncheon and everyone celebrated and Miss Aldyth Beckles of Haynes Hill is still very much alive and kicking as I speak.

St. John also boasts of the oldest twin sisters Doris Mayers and Vida Lewis, who are presently 89 years old. And while I'm on my feet talking about elderly people and centurions, I would like to posthumously congratulate James Sisnett on the age that he reached - I don't rightly recall - and thank him for putting Barbados on the map in terms of being able to boast of having, I think it was, the third oldest person in the world. Yes, thank you, 113.

But this elderly population so would have implications for the country as a whole. And there are definitely benefits that come with the presence of an aging population because old people - or older persons rather, elderly people - are a reservoir of knowledge, much of which they can pass on to younger persons like myself and those younger than me. They are repositories of culture, tradition, skill, and knowledge. They are a stabilising force within the family. And they contribute to the economy and the society just like everybody else because they are still functioning, they are paying bills, they are going to the supermarket, and then there are some of them who still work. They may now do jobs that bear no relation to what they did when they were younger, but the point is they still are active and are part of what the last speaker mentioned, the active aging concept. And these certainly contribute to the country as a whole and to its betterment and improvement.

But along with these benefits, there are also challenges to having an aging population. The prevalence of CNCs in the country are found in the aging population, obviously, and the problem can really be a drain on the

health sector and the health facilities, because older people, I suppose, just have more medical ailments than younger ones. With the trend in more recent times of having fewer children, it means that these elderly folk don't have as many options for care as they get older. So this becomes a challenge and a burden on the entire society as a whole and on the government's expenditure. So also an increased burden on the social security, because if the family is not taking care of them, then obviously they fall to welfare and to the social security system.

Now this national policy on aging truly endeavours to address the challenges facing our elderly. It aims to ensure the fundamental rights to health and the policy aims to provide health care in its entirety. So I notice there is a focus on mental health and there must be such attention to mental health because it is just as debilitating - or probably even more debilitating - than physical health. It also looks at the geriatric hospital and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. And as I mentioned before, with the prevalence of the chronic non-communicable diseases, the Ministry of Health some four or five years ago established a national task force on physical activity and exercise. The task force basically went throughout the country, endeavouring to get Barbadians moving and to be more physically active and to exercise more. And I have the pleasure of heading that task force. The task force also has programmes for the elderly - perhaps not as strenuous as some of the activities for the younger folk, but we found that many elderly people did participate in the line dancing and they were quite happy to do the walking activities that the task force held.

Beside this, the policy I noticed takes into consideration social amenities needed by the elderly so that it looks at public roads and at sidewalks that will accommodate wheelchairs and scooters, which many elderly people need for them to get around. It also looks at the housing stock and the condition of houses that elderly people occupy. There is even a section that looks at preparing the elderly - those who are not being cared for as much as we would like by their own families - for any disasters that might be approaching, such as hurricanes in this part of the world.

So then, Mr. Speaker, the policy document proves that the Government of Barbados is addressing all issues that relate to our elderly folk. And it is a policy that improves the quality of life for all the wonderful elderly citizens of this country. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Polyclinic Project in St. John is well underway and when it is completed, the outpatients clinic at Gull Hill will be vacated. So before I take my seat, I would only like to suggest to the Minister that some minor renovations can be made to the Outpatients Clinic and it can be used as a daycare centre for the senior citizens in St. John. It is perfectly located in a very central area and can accommodate easy drop-off and collection. And I wish to

make that suggestion as there are so many elderly people in St. John who are, as someone mentioned earlier, simply at home, sitting all day with very little activity. With those few words, I'll take my seat. Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable. Thank you.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe I speak with legitimacy as a senior man, a senior citizen, with no reservations whatsoever or with no stigma attached to those elements of life. Sir, there is a philosophical principle espoused by the late Honourable Prime Minister Errol Walton Barrow. I believe it constitutes a very important framework in order to be able to respect the continuum of this journey and an effort to provide that duty of care for our own kind. And this deep philosophical framework of which I speak - let me quote Errol Walton Barrow, whom I revere. He said, in trying to establish the point - this is from the very paper produced by the Minister who introduced the National Policy on Aging. This is the white paper and to show that the thoughts were pure and comprehensive he quoted this one: Creates and maintains a social and economic atmosphere conducive to the enjoyment of equal opportunities and the democratic way of life for all. A society where there is not merely opportunity, but true equal opportunity for all to share in a rich and varied life and to develop the rich and varied talent of the human individual.

Now, we might hold that to be secular humanism, but the reality is as we evolve as a people, especially in the 20th century, we saw men that took a different perspective on a different journey to those who existed in the early 19th century. And in the early 19th century, nobody was living to 75 or 77 years as an average life expectancy. Your maximum age at that period was 40 on average. No teeth. Sugarfoot, crack heels. And people dumped our people and also saw our people as nothing else, not even semi-human - that was the kind of thinking. And this is where we have to respect where we are.

And I want to give the Minister the assurance that I respect what he has done today in seeing this document as so vital to not only me and you, but to the whole population of this society. You know, in the 1930s, during the period of the poor law, we saw changes in attitudes. But in the early centuries prior to emancipation, the almshouses were not there for us. Nobody produced any provisions in place for social services for us. The people who controlled them saw us as part of their property and a loss of assets when we were, as far as they were concerned, no longer able to produce in order to enhance their riches. So don't tell me I am an apologist. Don't tell me that I have to include people who were not included at the particular time in our interests. I do not falsify history. I heard remarks here this morning about who said this and who said that. I know it is

wrong, but I believe that is a slip. But I am not going to tell anybody -

Yes, I heard a member here saying that a Barbadian, a man of Barbadian parents born in Trinidad said these words tonight. It is a funny, it is a slip. It is a slip. But the point I am making, we have a psychological challenge that we have to face. And therefore, sometimes we do not respect the contribution that our own members are making and our own political party is making because we want people to believe that conditions were always the way that they are. It is not true. And I respect previous ministers since black self-government who contributed to these changes, who put provisions in place for various social services so that today you and I can say as a result of the quality of health and the quality of the social services and the way in which they are administered, our people can live the long life that human beings ought to be able to enjoy.

And it is not only a principle that rests on secular humanism, but I believe it is also a sacred duty. Nobody says to us that we must honour the principles of harmony and equality. This is a sacred duty. I am because you are. And if you understand those principles, it means that when you protect me, you are also protecting yourself. And I honour and respect persons who understand these guidelines.

Let us start by making reference to the father of independence and the direction - not dealing with any partisan talk today. This is a serious matter that relates to people's lives. So I have to go back to the journey of history, at least to make you understand that there is a grounding, not only historical grounding, but a philosophical grounding that is responsible for where we are today. And this whole effort to have a national policy on the table is one that I am going to give my unequivocal support to in this discussion.

Mr. Chairman, now over the years, we have seen those provisions under the previous administration. We have seen the expansion and a deliberate attempt to construct homes for our people, senior persons who were homeless, and recognising the contribution which they have made, the state never charged them a cent. So the whole principle of providing free housing for senior citizens and destitute persons, that was in place for a considerable time. And then we recognise that the models - and this is where the scars, the social and psychological scars emerge - people began to identify those houses as welfare houses. Modern thinkers in the public service and among politicians decide that we will rid ourselves of that kind of construct, I introduced something that is more modern with a variety of designs in order to counter the stigmatisation of almost everything that relates to the lives of senior citizens. And since the abandonment of that programme at the National Assistance Board, the

programme was introduced through the Rural Development and the Urban Development Commission. And I believe that work should be continued.

Now, I also want to say, sir, that the whole concept of healthy ageing is very important. And in consultation or while in conversation - nothing formal - with other members of the senior games, they expressed disappointment that among the acronyms that we see here, nothing was made mention of them because they were not invited when you were looking at ways in order to put recreational programmes in place. Apparently those who are responsible for gathering the information did not invite them. I just want to bring that to the attention of the Minister, invite them to participate in the discussion on these matters. But the whole concept of recreational therapy is important. If people are living longer, and they are healthy and able-bodied, and you are putting programmes in place like the senior games.

When those senior games were put in place, I was a consultant in the Ministry of Social Transformation. And Minister Lashley of the time who conceptualised the introduction of these games - we were listening to the views in the general public and some opposing individuals because of the kind of culture in which they were developing. And they were suggesting to us that we were almost getting involved in a genocide programme, carrying people 76, 77, 80 years to the stadium to run. And suggestions were made - our perception of our being was so narrow that we felt that these people could not run and could hardly walk. And people were suggesting that on that day there would not be any ambulance service available to other able-bodied citizens. And in my experience at the stadium, the only body who requested an ambulance to get to the hospital was a man who was 37 years old who fell down with bad fields. And I saw young people running. I even recall the honourable Member for St. Thomas, other persons in a race at the stadium, and we are still standing.

And those people are now asking the Ministry to at least engage them in more activities since private NGOs are not putting the programmes in place. They belong to the various clubs, but they are asking that they can have something - not just one annual activity - but they would like to see the games be zoned in such a way that the northern part of Barbados can have sporting activities for the seniors at a specific time during the year, and then at a later date you can classify the other two or so districts - however you decide is best to do that. But in other words, we are not imposing our perception of what they need on them. As we always talk about not having a top-down approach and we want a community-based approach, I am just conveying to you what they discussed with me.

When I was in the Ministry as consultant, when I was in the Ministry as Minister and subsequently out of the

Ministry, I still talk to those persons and they are saying, let us have games at least three or four times a year. And then we end it with the central annual games at the national stadium. I really think it is a grand idea. I think it is a grand idea and I am willing in any way to work with you, even to share ideas, if you would accept those in having to shape the future.

So the Ministry of Social Care, to which the Honourable Minister for St. Michael Central belongs, has been doing a great job. He is on the borders of St. Michael East. I know he is trying his best, but I want him to continue to reach out. And I respect the fact that I know how it probably was in trying to translate some of the tenets within these guidelines of the paper, because I have heard from other honourable members from the other side how concerned he was when the Ministry worked in collaboration with agencies like the Pinelands Theatre Workshop, the Israel Love Foundation. I heard a minister was concerned and even attributed me to playing multiple roles in conducting the work of the Israel Love Foundation. We have done great work and as a result of working together, we have been able to put in place a Meals on Wheels programme which complements what they do at the Salvation Army, the Red Cross. There is an Islamic community that is also doing the work. The Pinelands doing the work. Because we are conscious that there are many citizens and senior citizens at home experiencing virtually abandonment, sometimes by their offspring. Sometimes the offspring do not even want their friends to know that their mothers and grandmothers are in the back room. Some people go to the extreme of building village shacks in the yard and putting their hard-working grandparents who were on these plantations - Buckley Plantation, Lowe's Estate, Hassell's and Turning - all of these plantations these people worked hard on, and people who have been psychologically damaged severely abandon these people without conscience.

And that is what this paper is about to address. What I am saying to you is that although it is very descriptive, I believe that we can be a little more detailed and prescriptive in trying to create the kind of solutions to some of the issues that we have to confront as a people. And we say it because we know that there is a duty, it is a duty that we have to fulfil. We are not inspired by any external influences, by any UN or any MDG goals, Millennium Development Goals. You think that we do not know that we are suffering. You think that we do not know what has been done to us and that we have to play catch-up and put structures in place and instruments in place to help move all people forward. And we have to conduct ourselves as human beings. Other people laugh at us because we probably still believe that we are near slaves. But the reality is that we all have a responsibility.

I am not going to get entangled in any direct, contemptuous argument with anybody on the other side, simply because I am in the opposition. I believe that this is something of importance to every one of us, even those who believe that they are young, not knowing that the Lord can truncate the life tomorrow or even now. So I am a realist. I want to see proper provisions put in place, involve these people, make them feel an integral part of what is happening. Make sure that the records show that we continue the intergenerational programme. I have seen senior citizens groups involved in drama. There was a time they had a vibrant group at the National Assistance Board - senior citizens going overseas every year on tours. They are interested in knowing what is happening in the society so they travel across the country, some days looking at what is happening in the industrial plants, the sugarcane industry, the hotel industry, and they are very much engaged in serious discussions.

How can we be discussing these people as a repository of knowledge, talking about them as oral historians, on the one hand respecting them for the experience and the accumulation of knowledge, but then we are creating a form of social segregation and psychological segregation when we begin to relate to matters on the development of the society in which we live. So we talk about people, but we do not include seniors in being people. We talk about people and people means only those people who are below a specific age. This has to be a backward society if we continue that way.

I have seen people all over the world assuming leadership of countries bigger than this 166 square miles, which is not even equivalent sometimes to a province or state or even a good village in some metropolitan countries, and you have men in this country that are well respected at the highest levels in world affairs. And you, as soon as they reach a certain age, you want to abandon them. Destroy if you want to, because if that is the kind of programme that you want to pursue. But I would like to believe that you respect men and women from birth till death on the basis of merit. We have to be at that level as a people. And that is why the thinking of the late Honourable Prime Minister was very important in my whole introduction.

The other thing is that as we grow older, if most people go into 77 - we are hearing about somebody 120, somebody 106, you soon hear somebody 160 - but you cannot have one senior citizens' village in this country run by the state, a little small one. And the Government can be motivated by the fact that if we are responding to those concerns, we do not just say, well, there is a private village - I think the Seropost villages - and then we have Vauxhall City, Caesar's Village. Only in recent times we have been able to put the senior citizens in there because of the collapse of the cave at Brunnenstein. There is a need, there is a push factor. That is the point I am making. There is a

push factor. Nobody sits in a room and says, this is my programme for the future. If you are going to make these people inclusive based on what they are experiencing, you have to find some facility where they cannot remain in the community because there is no family there to give them the required support. You have to construct additional villages at strategic points across Barbados in order to facilitate these people. They have given too much to us.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes in which to conclude.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Thank you, sir. The people who made a mockery of them are people who are so disconnected from the fabric of reality that they do not even know that they are laughing at themselves. Because the laughter that you apply now will be applied to you 20 years from now. If it is for the same reason, I am asking you to take into consideration some of the things that I have said. I really believe that modern thinkers are making a great difference in dealing with these matters. I believe that we have to deal with elements, as I said - psychological abuse, the way how people behave towards seniors, telling them some harsh things, what we call abuse, vulgarity, indecency, whatever you call it, the way how we treat our own, how we treat ourselves. And that is what it is saying to you - it is a higher purpose for which we live. It is even higher than the virtuous principle that was espoused by Barrow, by the Honourable late Prime Minister, on equality. And I am asking that that support which I have offered be accepted for what it is. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move that further consideration of this resolution be suspended.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, with this we have come to the end of Government Business for today and I beg to move that this sitting be adjourned until Tuesday June 18, 2013 at 10 o'clock in the morning.

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, June 18, 2013 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

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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 correcting and preparing this report. Members are named as in the 2013–2018 Parliament.

Q1. Front matter. The source does not record the PRESENT list or the officiant at Prayers. The Members listed are those identified from the record; the time of meeting, 10.00 a.m., is as stated in the source. Please supply from the Votes and Proceedings.

Q2. Throughout. The bracketed time-checks in the source are out of sequence (for example '[12.30 a.m.]' during the morning and '[03.00 a.m.]' in the afternoon) and have been omitted.

Q3. Order No. 1, calls of the Prime Minister and Hon. R. D. Jones. Mr. SPEAKER's call of the Prime Minister is shown as '[Inaudible.]' in the source; it is printed from the recording as 'Yes, the Honourable Prime Minister.' His call of Hon. R. D. Jones survives only as 'Central. Thank you very much'; it is completed as the Member for Christ Church East Central, as later speakers identify him. Please confirm.

Q4. Order No. 1, Hon. R. D. Jones. The speaker refers to 'the honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs as he presented this validation bill'. The Bill was moved by the Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs; corrected to 'Minister of Home Affairs'.

Q5. Order No. 1, end of Part 1. Part 1 of the source ends during the speech of Hon. R. D. Jones ('I am seeing pictures of students on our [Inaudible.]') and Part 2 begins with Mr. SPEAKER resuming the sitting after the luncheon suspension. The end of the speech, any later speeches in the morning and the suspension are not recorded. Part of the debate may be missing at this point. Please check against the recording.

Q6. Order No. 1, Hon. S. A. Lashley. Headed 'HON. MICHAEL A. LASHLEY, S.C., M.P.' in the source. Mr. SPEAKER called the Member for Christ Church West Central, the caption labels the speech 'Hon. Stephen A. Lashley', Hon. C. P. Sinckler twice refers back to the Member for Christ Church West Central, and Mr. D. D. Marshall refers to 'the Minister of Culture and Youth Affairs'. Printed under Hon. S. A. LASHLEY.

Q7. Order No. 1, Mr. D. D. Marshall. Two points of order are run into Mr. Marshall's speech in the source with no speaker named: 'The Honourable Member is misleading, sir. When the Honourable Member was

Attorney-General...' and 'The Honourable Member is misleading the House and trying to suggest that the comment made by the Honourable Member was disgraceful. It should be withdrawn.' Both are printed under AN HON. MEMBER, with the Chair's words under Mr. SPEAKER. Please identify the Members from the recording.

Q8. Order No. 1, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley. After Mr. SPEAKER's call of the Member for St. Michael North East, the source begins her speech mid-sentence ('which is essentially a bill to validate the actions of the Police Complaints Authority'). The opening words are not recorded.

Q9. Order No. 1, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite (reply). Mr. SPEAKER's call of the Attorney-General to reply is shown as '[Inaudible.]'. In calling the House to order during the reply, Mr. SPEAKER addresses the 'Honourable Member for Phillips' in the source and in the caption; no constituency of that name exists and the Member is not identified. Printed as in the source; please check.

Q10. Committee. Mr. CHAIRMAN is not named in the source; the Chairman of Committees, Mr. J. D. Paul, is presumed. The Attorney-General's motion reads 'I beg that you do not leave the chair' in the source and is printed 'do now leave the Chair'. The Committee stage is condensed to the Official Report formulae; Clauses 1 and 2 were called separately and passed without amendment.

Q11. Order No. 4. The heading is taken from the Clerk's reading ('a resolution that Parliament take note of and approve the White Paper on Ageing'); the Minister refers to the document as the National Policy on Ageing for Barbados. Please confirm the title from the Order Paper. Further consideration of the Resolution was postponed during the speech of Mr. T. A. Prescod; it was not passed at this sitting.

Q12. Order No. 4, Hon. S. D. Blackett and Mrs. M-J. M. Thompson. The supercentenarian is named 'James Cistern' and 'James Cissna' in the source; printed as James Sisnett. 'The Arch Scott tragedy' is printed as the Arch Cot tragedy. Please confirm.

Q13. Order No. 4, Mr. T. A. Prescod. Mr. SPEAKER's warning 'we have five minutes in which to conclude' is run into Mr. Prescod's speech in the source; it is printed as a separate intervention by Mr. SPEAKER.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 11, 2013, with Mr. SPEAKER presiding. The Minutes of May 14, 2013 were confirmed, and Mr. SPEAKER announced receipt of the financial statements for September 2012 prepared by the Accountant General. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce laid the Investment Barbados Annual Report 2012 and two annual reports of the TVET Council, Hon. C. P. Sinckler financial statements of the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. and the Exchange Control Authorised Dealers and Depositaries Amendment Order 2013, and Hon. R. L. Sealy the Air Transport Licensing Authority Annual Report for 2010-2011. Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 were suspended.

Under Order No. 1 the Attorney-General, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, moved the second reading of the Police Complaints Authority Validation Bill, 2013, which validates the actions of the Authority from October 6, 2011, after the appointments of two members were found to have expired. He said he would propose to Cabinet that the Authority be able to investigate more complaints itself and be given more staff, and he reviewed crime more widely: there were 21 murders in 2012, of which 18 were solved, against 27 in 2011 and 31 in 2010. Mr. K. D. Symmonds said the Opposition took no issue with what he called a highly innocuous Bill. The Prime Minister, Hon. F. J. Stuart, said the confidence issue had not been satisfactorily dealt with in the Authority's 12 years, owing to its statutory constraints, and welcomed a review of the legislation. Hon. D. St.E. Kellman commended the police. Hon. R. D. Jones spoke of the police, of 1937, and of the use of social media to post images of violence, and said that 'in order to restore order, you have to crack some heads, you have to shoot some people'.

After the luncheon suspension Mr. J. D. Paul and Hon. S. A. Lashley supported the Bill, Mr. Lashley proposing a public education drive by the Authority. Mr. D.

D. Marshall said the Opposition supported the Bill and condemned the remarks of the Minister of Education; Mr. SPEAKER required him to withdraw a statement that the Minister had recommended shooting people, and he did so. Hon. C. P. Sinckler spoke of the repair of police stations, funding being sought for four stations, and money for a new high-speed marine vehicle. Mr. D. G. Sutherland and Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw supported the Bill and criticised the Minister's remarks, and the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, asked him to withdraw them. Replying, the Attorney-General said the Minister had been cautioning the Leader of the Opposition; Mr. SPEAKER found no point of order on her objection, and the Attorney-General withdrew and apologised for a statement that the Opposition encouraged people to break the law. The Bill was read a second time, passed through Committee without amendment, read a third time and passed as the Police Complaints Authority Validation Act, 2013.

Under Order No. 4 the Minister of Social Care, Hon. S. D. Blackett, moved a Resolution that Parliament take note of and approve the White Paper on Ageing. He said 13.7 per cent of the population were 65 and over, a share projected to reach 20.4 per cent by 2025, that some 4 per cent of the elderly lived in institutions providing some 758 beds, and that Cabinet had approved renaming the National Assistance Board as the Commission of Elder Affairs; he dedicated the policy to Mr. James Sisnett. Lt. Col. J. D. Bostic supported the White Paper for the Opposition and said it would await the plan of action. Mrs. M-J. M. Thompson suggested that the Gull Hill outpatients clinic become a daycare centre for senior citizens once the St. John polyclinic was completed. Mr. T. A. Prescod called for additional villages for the elderly. On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce further consideration of the Resolution was postponed, and the House adjourned until Tuesday, June 18, 2013 at 10.00 a.m.