
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, August 11, 2015

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, August 11, 2015.

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, Q.C. (Speaker)

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

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)

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

Dr. M. M. AGARD

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE (Minister of Health) (Leader of the House)

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY (Minister of Transport and Works)

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, Q.C. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Mr. G. A. CLARKE, J.P.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P.

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

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Good morning, honourable members. This House is now in session. I have with me minutes of our meeting held on Tuesday, 21 July 2015.

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.

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL

Mr. SPEAKER: Government House, Barbados, 30 July 2015. Dear Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to inform the honourable the House of Assembly that, with the approval of Her Majesty the Queen, I shall be on vacation leave from 1 to 31 August 2015. In accordance with the provisions of section 29(1)(A) of the Constitution, Sir Philip Marlowe Greaves, K.A., Q.C., will perform the functions of the office as Acting Governor General during my absence. As the honourable House will not be meeting prior to my departure, it will not be possible for the usual formal message to be sent down to your chamber. Will you therefore please bring my absence formally to the attention of the honourable House of Assembly when next it meets? I have the honour to be yours. Elliott Fitzroy Belgrave, Governor General.

PAPERS

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to command to lay the Duties, Taxes and Other Payments Exemption (Emergency Room Incorporated) Order 2015.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I am commanded to lay the Post Office Licensed Vendors of Postal Assistance Amendment Regulations 2015. I am obliged.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the financial statements of the Barbados Conference Services Limited for the year ending 31 March 2014.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I am also commanded to lay the annual report of the operations of the Barbados Drug Service for fiscal year April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, 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

ORDER NO. 18 – RESOLUTION – BORROWING BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BARBADOS OF \$76 MILLION – FROM THE NATIONAL INSURANCE BOARD TO FINANCE POLICE AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

In the name of the Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs, to move the passing of a resolution to approve the borrowing by the Government of Barbados of the sum of Barbados \$76 million from the National Insurance Board to finance: a police station at Hastings in the parish of Christ Church; a public centre complex at Cane Garden in the parish of St. Thomas; a police headquarters at The Pine in the parish of St. Michael; a police station and magistrates court at Border Hall in the parish of St. George; the refurbishment of the former Barbados Water Authority headquarters at The Pine in the parish of St. Michael; the Elaine Scantleberry Home at Belleplaine in the parish of St. Andrew; and the repairs to the old male barracks at the Central Police Station and the former Blackrock Police Station in the parish of St. Michael.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Attorney General.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker. Just under 30 months ago, the project office and the office of the Attorney General started the process towards the construction of a new police station at Hastings. At the time the thinking was, and still is, that we would have combined the Worthing police station and the existing Hastings police station into one police station at Hastings

and one police complex at Hastings. And this would have been accomplished via the exchange of certain lands owned by Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL), and they would exchange the land presently what we commonly call the old Bobville site, to the left of the road if you're going towards the airport. And in return they'll be given the existing site, Rare on Six, the Hastings police station.

Due to various issues this matter was derailed and we then had discussions with the National Insurance Department who expressed much willingness to assist us in the financing and construction of the police station at Hastings and indeed in discussions with the National Insurance Department. The director there, and I want to single out the director because he was very instrumental and very enthusiastic about what he termed a citizen security project and thus the vision not only to construct one police complex at Hastings, but certainly other police stations and other areas where we felt that there was need of renewal of plant. The National Insurance Department expressed open and eager willingness to assist us in that regard and it was therefore agreed that, subject to certain conditions, that they would loan the Government of Barbados \$76 million towards the construction of what we are commonly calling a citizen security strategy.

One of the preconditions of the loan, naturally, is to ensure that we satisfy the conditions of the Special Loans Act of Barbados. And thus this resolution is before this honourable chamber this morning. I reiterate, Mr. Speaker, that the National Insurance Department at the inception expressed willingness to assist us because they felt that, as a citizen of Barbados - and I use that word in a broader sense - that it was part of their duty to get involved in the type of projects that are being contemplated.

As the resolution outlines, the project contemplates a new Hastings police station, which I am advised should take approximately 24 months to complete and cost \$14.9 million to construct. To construct the site. I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that you have passed there on several occasions and you can see that the site is ready for construction to commence. As I said before, once completed, the existing Hastings and Worthing stations will be combined into that complex. It is contemplated that the Worthing station will be demolished and the existing Hastings site will be transferred to Hotels and Resorts Limited with whom the exchange of lands, as I said before, has been agreed.

Given the historic nature of the garrison area, much attention was paid to the design of the new Hastings complex because we wanted to ensure that even though we were building a modern facility, that the facade did not corrupt the environment and that it was as consistent as possible with the garrison area. As you know, sir, the garrison is everyone's part of our historic sites and so we paid particular attention to that. So the design is modern -

yes, in terms of internally - but we did wide consultation to ensure that there was agreement in terms of how the exterior would look and to ensure that it fits in quite nicely with the overall architecture of the area.

Whilst excavating the foundation, a few objects were found, and, of course, given the nature of the area, the historical society got involved, et cetera, to ensure that we weren't uncovering any artefacts. So we proceeded slowly to ensure that, in fact, no such artefacts were indeed on the site. So the site is there, it is ready, and once we have access to this funding, there is no reason why construction cannot start immediately at the existing Hastings police station. We assume that HRL will incorporate it into the hotel property next door, because that tract of land actually goes quite nicely down onto the beach. The Barbados Water Authority, I believe, has a facility there which has to be addressed, so there should be no disruption in terms of the area. HRL and the office of the Attorney General believe that it is a win situation because it would enhance the existing Savannah Hotel once the matters are resolved, we assume, but more importantly, is that we get to construct a modern facility at Hastings for the police officers there.

It is also contemplated with these monies that we will have a complex at King Garden. This complex will include a magistrate's court and police station. The construction cost is expected to be about \$15.3 million, and it is contemplated for completion in 24 months. Also, the police officers who are presently housed at Hometown will be transferred to this new station. You may recall the police officers from District D will be transferred back to this new police station at King Garden. You may recall that they were relocated several years ago - at one stage, I'm going to say, by St. John the Baptist down the hill there, et cetera - and that location proved to be unsatisfactory. They're presently housed at Hometown. So again, we're very enthusiastic about the construction of a new facility there.

During the course of discussions about the complex, some consideration was given to the incorporation of a library in the complex. After much discussion, including discussion with the officials of the library services, it has been decided that, in fact, that will not be the best use of the space. Indeed, sir, if one looks at what presently obtains - and I'll use the Eric Holder complex as a good example in terms of the use of the library space there - we took the decision that we did not believe that the traffic would be enough to merit the incorporation of the library facility there. I know that there are some of us in our community, and some of us, or at least one of us in this honourable chamber, who was very enthusiastic about having a library incorporated into the King Garden complex. But as I said, after much consultation with the officials and having looked at what obtains in terms of the usage of library facilities in other parts of Barbados, it was decided that we

did not believe that there would have been enough use of the space to merit the incorporation of a library facility there. Again, sir, King Garden - the site has been cleared. We know where all the boundaries are. It is also shovel ready. It's ready for us to start construction immediately. So that's Hastings and King Garden.

The male barracks at Central Police Station has been part of Central for time immemorial. I remember as a youngster going into Central and being able to venture behind there once or twice when my father allowed me to come where the men resided and see him. We have done some work there on the bottom floor, and this work would allow further facilities for the male police officers in particular. The cost is estimated at \$1.8 million. The completion should take about 16 months. And again, work can start immediately, and this would provide much needed accommodation for male police officers. For example, the police officers who are now part of the marine unit - where they are located, they have nowhere for them to place their heads at night, and they are billeted up to Central. There is a real need, and we will be very happy when that work commences and brings much needed accommodation to the male police officers within the old existing barracks at Central.

It is also contemplated that the old Blackrock police station will be put to some use. This building will house what is now called the Family Conflict Unit and the Truth Verification Unit. It is estimated that the cost will be \$1.4 million and it will take 14 months to complete. And again, construction can start immediately in both instances. In the instance of the Family Conflict Unit, given what they're doing and given the confidential nature of much of their discussions, it was felt that they needed to have a more private and secure facility, and the Truth Verification Unit similarly would require a more confidential and secure facility. So we're enthusiastic again about putting the existing - which is the old Blackrock police station - having that work started and putting that building to new use.

The police headquarters is presently housed just around the corner from here, housed in what I call the old Barclays building. When I had my first job, I actually worked in that building. So I still refer to it as the old Barclays building, which is just around the corner, a stone's throw from here. Mr. Speaker, it is contemplated that we will move police headquarters out of Bridgetown and a new facility will be constructed in Wildey, to the north of the CXC complex. We estimate that it will cost about \$18 million to construct. We are thinking about 40 000 square feet. There would be underground parking facilities there. The building has been designed - or will be designed - contemplating not only existing requirements, but the growth of central command ten to 15 years from now. So we're going to have conference facilities, et cetera.

I remember when we were discussing this, the director of National Insurance said, are you guys sure that you want three storeys or do you want four storeys? Do you want five storeys? Because once you're up in the air, the cost does not go up substantially. And you have to think in terms of what your requirements would be 10 to 15 years from now. And that's what we are thinking. If you can picture, I think, Mr. Speaker, that the building - if you look across from CXC, it's a pink building, one of these old pink buildings, almost made out of what coral stone buildings are like. But that's the site that we're thinking about. But just across from that site, the Ministry of Transport and Works and Drainage have some existing facilities there. So we will have to relocate those facilities in order to have complete access to the site. And that is why, sir, it is being contemplated, Mr. Speaker, that the old Barbados Water Authority building will be renovated to move those facilities - to move the Ministry of Transport and Works and Drainage officers into new facilities at the old Barbados Water Authority building there on the Pine - and then be able to demolish those existing structures there on the old site so that we can start the construction of the police headquarters. It is estimated that the renovations to the old Barbados Water Authority building would be about \$1.4 million. Both the Ministry of Transport and Works and Drainage are on board in terms of our vision in terms of moving them. Not to mention the fact that if you look at their existing facilities, they'll be quite enthusiastic about moving into new and refurbished facilities at the Barbados Water Authority building there.

Which brings me, Mr. Speaker, to the Elaine Scantleberry Home. We contemplated building a new complex at Belleplaine. There was much discussion between the welfare department, the post office, and the police in terms of what the requirements are at Belleplaine. We went around several times, kicked around many ideas in terms of what the complex should look like and what exactly the requirement is, given what is really required in St. Andrew, given the population in St. Andrew, given the level of crime in St. Andrew - et cetera. I should really say, given the level - it might suggest that St. Andrew has levels comparable with other parts of Barbados. But when I looked at the reports into Belleplaine in 2014, there were actually, if memory serves me correctly, about 80 reported crimes in St. Andrew in 2014. So against that background, the police management said that when they look at St. Andrew, when they look at the work being done in Belleplaine, that they really didn't believe that we needed to construct a new police station at Belleplaine. They've argued, and we've accepted, that in fact St. Andrew can be well serviced from District F at the Eric Holder complex and maintain just almost a storefront in St. Andrew. In other words, maintain a small facility there to house two or three officers. But St. Andrew in the main will be addressed from District F, which, as you know, sir, is just

about five or six minutes' drive, depending on who's driving, up the hill from St. Andrew.

So the Elaine Scantleberry Home - again, if you can picture that facility, it's a substantial facility - will be refurbished. Not the complete facility because, as I said, it's really a substantial facility, and that will be refurbished at the cost of \$1.4 million. And it is contemplated that we will have the welfare office there, we will have a small storefront - as I call it, a small facility for police officers - and a post office. Again, when we were thinking about doing a new complex in St. Andrew, the question was, if you're going to demolish the police station, where would you take the police officers? And that's why we looked across the hill and thought, well, let's refurbish the Elaine Scantleberry Home and move the police officers there on a temporary basis. But having had time to look at the project afresh, it is now being decided that, in fact, rather than build a new complex in St. Andrew, we will refurbish the existing facility and bring it up to 2015-2016 standards. So that's the plan for St. Andrew.

As I said again, St. Andrew is one of these areas where when I spoke to certain individuals in St. Andrew, they were saying that we need to have a police station in St. Andrew, et cetera. But when one looks at the level of reported crime, when one looks at what's happening in St. Andrew in terms of the population movement, the police high command have said, look, Belleplaine is really one of these areas where we can properly service it from District F. We may have to add some additional resources into District F in terms of the building there. But I accepted easily the recommendations of the management of the Royal Barbados Police Force, in particular when it seemed so infinitely sensible, based on the statistics that were made available to me in terms of the level of reported crime in St. Andrew.

Mr. Speaker, Boarding Hall in St. George. It is our intention - as usual, thank you - it is our intention to build a completely new centre at Boarding Hall. Again, this is one of the areas where for many years the thinking was, why Boarding Hall? Isn't there some other land in St. George that is flatter, that is wider, et cetera? We've looked all around, et cetera. And the reality is that Boarding Hall is quite central.

It is across from several districts, et cetera. We have decided, given its centrality also, we have decided that, in fact, that it makes more sense to utilize the existing facility, not what is down there, build a state of the art new police station and magistrate court. We have done much work at Borden Hall over time. The magistrate court at present has been relocated yet again to the Eric Holder complex because of the nature of the building there at Borden Hall. It's one of these old buildings that, notwithstanding the maintenance that you perform, unless you do it on a yearly

basis, then you'll always have the issues that we have had. It is our hope that we can have a new facility there and that would cost probably about \$13 million.

Just a couple of other things, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what we're hoping to do, the CID, the Criminal Investigations Department of the Royal Barbados Police Force is presently a bit all over the place. Some officers are at the Glebe in St. George, some officers are at the Holder complex in St. Joseph and some officers are at District A. That creates a bit of a management headache. We want to bring them under one roof and it has been agreed that we will use some of these funds to renovate the old registration department here at Corridor Street and bring the Criminal Investigation Department into one locale which should create greater efficiency for that department but moreover provide first class facilities for those officers who we all know sometimes work for a day or two days or three days as required when they have matters before them and are in need of first class facilities.

So this exercise, Mr. Speaker, it's been about, as I said, 30 months depending on which day of the week you speak to me. I'm either very happy or very sad because of the length of time it has taken. There are lessons to be learned here and hopefully the project office in the Office of Attorney General, the Ministry of Housing and Lands, there are lessons for all of us to learn by. A simple illustration is when we were discussing Belplane, I was told that in fact that Belplane had some encroachment problems. They could not find the title deeds, et cetera. And I said, well, explain to me what are the encroachment problems? Because the encroachment problems were allegedly that one arm of government owned a piece of land, the other arm of government owned the other piece and there was encroachment. I said, but it's all government. Why should this take a year for us to resolve? We had similar issues at King Garden in terms of getting title to the land. We had similar issues at Hastings in terms of having title to the land so we can have this swap organised.

I would like to suggest to my colleague, the member for St. Lucy, that in fact one lesson that the Ministry of Housing can learn immediately from this exercise is it is not enough for you to say that you have ownership of land, but some officer or officers should be assigned immediately to ensure that we do have proper title because it has caused significant delay in having these projects moving forward. As I said, it's been a source of some frustration and I would like us to learn from these experiences.

But I could sit now, Mr. Speaker, but I need to make a few more points in particular with respect to accommodation for the officers of the Royal Barbados Police Force. I'm not going to be political in my presentation. I'm just going to state the facts as they are

over the last, let's say 18 months, because we have tried, even with our fiscal challenges, to improve the lots of police officers across Barbados. And I know that the member for St. Joseph, when he speaks, likes to stand in this honourable House and say things like the police have their cars breaking down, all kinds of innuendo, et cetera. But these are the facts in terms of what we have done. And I've just used the last 18 months by way of example, example by example.

Last 18 months, Mr. Speaker, we have done renovations at the Regional Police Training Centre that has been done in two phases. The roof up there was an asbestos roof. It had to be replaced. You need specialist skills to ensure that the asbestos is removed. We provided new kitchen facilities, new conference rooms, and we have a state of the art training lab. The training lab allows our officers to have access to training not only locally but regionally and internationally, because the labs are hooked up to similar facilities across the OECS. And this places us on the cutting edge in terms of access to additional training at that cyber lab.

At the Regional Police Training Centre, we also did some work at Borden Hall. As I said, the nature of the structure. At Borden Hall, we did some work to the main police office. We added, I think, one interview room. We did some work to the magistrate court, but even in spite of that work, after a year we did end up with the same challenges. And again the decision was taken, given the discomfort expressed by, in particular the court officials, that it was better for us to relocate the magistrate court yet again down to the Holder complex.

Even in the new Blackrock police station, the blue building, that you are very familiar with, we are doing some work presently. We refurbished the top floor to make the accommodation better for the officers there. We have done some work at District A. We've refurbished the building occupied by what is commonly called the task force. We've installed some air conditioning units. We've reconfigured the space to make it more user friendly for some of the senior officers. In St. Philip, at District C, we've done some work on the top floor there to provide better accommodation. We've done some work at Oistins - the drug squad accommodation there has been upgraded, a new kitchen. Sir, I'm sure that you're familiar with the work at the airport. We've done some work at the airport there, both internally and externally. From time to time, the officers were complaining about the smell of fuel given where it is. We've tried to make their lives as comfortable as possible.

We have not stopped there, Mr. Speaker, as I said, even with our challenges, we've done some work at the famous Crab Hill, we've gone back and looked at the water distribution system, the towers at District C, and I'm going

to say Sturges, but I could have it wrong. The repeater towers, they're being repainted, et cetera. My point is, sir, is that via the Office of the Attorney General, that in fact, even with our fiscal challenges, the Royal Barbados Police Force, wherever possible and where money permits, we have found it possible to improve accommodation and the future.

In terms of a future vision for the Royal Barbados Police Force in terms of accommodation, it is my hope, sir - and my good friend, the member for St. Michael West, may recall - it is my hope that we can start looking, once we have this project off the ground, at how we can have a complex at Six Roads. I would not wish to leave the Office of the Attorney General and not have started a complex at Six Roads which has been spoken about since 1972 or 1973, since the seventies. So it is our hope, and we have been told where we can look towards some funding. It is our hope that we can have that done.

I know the marine unit is concerned about accommodation for themselves. We have the land. We have the land for Six Roads. Not land owned by me, land owned by the Government of Barbados. And the marine unit presently complain about accommodation where they are. We need to look at them. The Office of Criminal Responsibility, where they are here at Robert Street - I visited them a couple of days ago and they also need to be looked at in terms of relocation. It's not ideal in terms of privacy, et cetera, or at minimum have the offices significantly reconfigured. Because given the nature of the work that they are doing, we would want to ensure that they have the best possible accommodation.

So this is where we are in terms of this resolution being before Parliament at this point in time. I do not anticipate, Mr. Speaker, that anyone would oppose the Government of Barbados providing first class accommodation for the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, even those who at one point in time said that they weren't special. We think with 2015 thinking and with hindsight would agree that in fact the time has come for the Royal Barbados Police Force to be provided with the best accommodation possible. So I'm very enthusiastic about the possibilities here.

I want to again thank the National Insurance Department for coming on board. You will note that the interest rate being charged is six per cent. Depending on who you speak to, it is considered to be reasonable, very reasonable. But the point is that the interest rate that they have charged for these projects is actually below the normal interest rates that they charge for other government projects. And I will not dwell a lot on the interest rate in terms of whether or not it could have been better or otherwise. I will more focus on the fact that from day one the management of the National Insurance Department

came on board and said we want to do this with you. Tell us how we can assist so we can work together to bring these projects to fruition for the benefit of the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I wish, however, to spend some time discussing other police related matters and in particular some issues of crime in Barbados generally. Let me start with the one issue that is very topical at this point in time, and I don't mean topical in any derogatory manner. I mean that given the level of gun violence that we are seeing and given what we are reading in our newspapers and hearing on call-in programmes, we are aware - and I'm very aware - of the concern of the people of Barbados with respect to what seems to be a steady flow of illegal weapons into our country. Indeed, sir, if one goes into our communities, like the member for St. Philip North, because he calls me early every morning on his way home to let me know what he's heard. And even some of us who don't leave our homes can hear from time to time gunfire being discharged at night. And it need not be an exchange of fire with anger. More often than not it is these youngsters showing off their firepower or someone's birthday. And you hear after the fact that the guys saluted a person because of a birthday, et cetera. It calls for great concern to us.

And if there is one message that I would like, and I hope that all of us will send today, is that we are very concerned about the state of gun related crime in this country and we have to put our heads together to see how we can arrest this situation. Now the Royal Barbados Police Force obviously is in the process of certain initiatives to address this problem and they're not new initiatives, it's a continuous process, but they cannot do it alone. We need to get community involvement, we need to get the involvement of members of parliament. We cannot sit back and say that it's only certain elements in society because there's always a possibility of innocent bystanders being injured. Some of us need to take a firm stand.

One of the comments that my good friend from St. Michael South says that I want to let him know that I remembered is that if you're leading people, you cannot be afraid to lead from the front. So that if you're a member of parliament and you have in your community certain elements that you are aware are involved in gun related crimes and such, your responsibility is to see how you can get them out of that way as opposed to finding comfort sitting with them, knowing that in fact, when they leave your company, you don't know where they're going to go with the firearms that they possess.

We have the Firearms Act. We know the stiff penalties attached thereto. Legislation alone will not do it. We have to employ a myriad of strategies. We believe that some of the work that we are seeing, some of the violence that we're seeing, is gang related. And yes, I say gangs. We

are presently having a gang study conducted and I'm told that I should have the results of that study within the next two months for us to review. But what I'm being told by the persons conducting that study is that there is little doubt, based on the information that they have at present, that we do have what seems to be an increased number of gangs. They may not be as organised as the ones that we read about from the international community, but they are there and we all accept that, in fact, with drugs have always come guns, that individuals are not necessarily paying for drugs with money. They sometimes have firearms as part of the shipment. So we need to work harder in terms of intercepting more drug shipments into Barbados. We need to utilise the best technology possible at a port of entry.

It is of great concern to us. And to us, I mean the Office of the Attorney General, to me as Attorney General, sir, and certainly to the Royal Barbados Police Force. I cannot comment on their operational issues, but suffice to say, and I want the public of Barbados to know that we, like them, are concerned. There is much work being done to see how we can reduce the number of firearms coming into the country and to take more firearms out of the hands of the lawless in our communities.

I won't, with your permission, just comment on two matters that over the last couple of months I have seen and I wanted to find an opportunity to address. One goes back a couple of months and one is just a couple of weeks old and I thought that today would be a good day for me to comment on them. The first matter is that a couple of months ago, three employees of one of our local newspapers were charged under the Protection of Children Act. The case was dismissed and in dismissing the case, I noted that the acting magistrate was quoted as saying, burying your heads in the sand will not solve any of the social issues in the country.

Speaker, if the learning magistrate was correctly quoted, I thought when I read this that he showed very poor judgment in his choice of words and really ignored the various initiatives across several ministries aimed at addressing the social issues in Barbados. And the particular initiatives targeted our young people. When I read that, it would be dishonest of me to say that I wasn't taken aback, even if annoyed, because I thought that the learning magistrate had gotten it wrong. And in particular, given the sensitive nature of that particular matter, I thought that he really should have tasted his words, as my mother would have said before speaking them and stuff.

But not to be outdone, the editor of the same newspaper then wrote an article suggesting that persons were somewhere, I think, at the airport discussing this matter and discussing how charges had to be done, et cetera. I believe he spoke of government officials and stuff. So I want to say this, sir, I want to say this as attorney

general, and I know my name wasn't called, but I want to say this as attorney general and I want to venture and speak for my colleagues on this side, that we don't get involved in who charges whom in this country. We don't get involved. But if we used to get involved, you'll be charged for stupidity. We don't get involved. We don't get involved in charging and charging people.

Sir, I want to make this point. I'm sorry, I got distracted. I will refocus. Mr. Speaker, we don't get involved in who gets charged in this country, sir. And if the editor, if the editor is so confident in terms and is so confident in terms of what he published, he should feel free to call the names of the individuals as opposed to leaving the impression out there in the public domain that someone, because, you know, when they speak of government officials, they think of us. They think of us. That's why it's left like that, that someone on this side influences who gets charged.

Et us, sir, speaking for us, I want to say, sir, that we don't get involved in this. Free, sir, you are free to contact the Commissioner of Police. You are free to contact the Director of Public Prosecutions and they will tell you that there's no interference in their processes. This is not how this government operates. We don't pick up the telephone like other people we are told, used to and demand that things are done, et cetera. The integrity of our legal process is important for us. It is one of the pillars of our democracy. And certainly, sir, this government will ensure that pillar continues.

Sir, the rule of law is important. It must be fair and fearless and equitable. And we will not be part of any process and nor will we allow anyone. Because you see, sir, I have a friend who tells me that don't mess with the fourth estate, that when you mess with the fourth estate that you can't win. So you should allow the newspapers to say whatever they feel like about you and don't respond. And don't respond well. I have no fear of the fourth estate. I have no fear of the fourth estate because I know and I believe - earth and father said it and I said it more than one occasion - if they don't make you, they can't break you. Right?

And the other thing I say to you and you know, Mr. Speaker, we chat very often. Stuff is that I have no new friends. I have no new friends and I want no new friends since I came into elective politics. Have none, want none. Because friends carry favours. And I understand how that works. But the more fundamental point, the more fundamental point is that not one of us, to my knowledge, and certainly not myself as attorney general got involved in that matter. You read it, you looked at it and stuff. And save for reading the newspaper reports, I never asked one simple question, one about the process, et cetera, et cetera.

Indeed, sir, I remember seeing the three accused persons in the newspaper and I called up the editor of the said newspaper and asked him how are things going, et cetera. Because I've known him for quite some time, et cetera. We chat. We began chatting more because we had two youngsters at the youth thing up by Paragon, et cetera. I'm a genuine person. When I care, I care. And it doesn't bother me to pick up the telephone and call and know how are things, et cetera. Even if I don't know you because that's my nature.

The other matter, sir, while I'm at it, is I was away when this matter involving some substance at the NUPW was located and I heard about why the attorney general not saying anything, et cetera. But I have a history, sir. I don't get involved and I don't comment on matters where the police is conducting an investigation unless the police gives me a report and say, well, these are our findings and you are free to comment. I allow the Royal Barbados Police Force to do their jobs. I don't get involved. What would they want me to comment and say? I don't understand that.

But as I said, fortunately when I received the call, I simply said, but I'm not sure what you want me to say, so I said nothing. And if saying nothing because I respect the processes, if saying nothing because I respect that the Royal Barbados Police Force have the job to do and it's not appropriate for the attorney general to comment, then the media and whoever else is free to say what they feel like. But I understand my role and I understand the role of the Royal Barbados Police Force. I understand the role of the Director of Prosecutions, I understand the role of magistrates and of the judiciary as a whole. I understand my role clearly. So I want to get those couple of issues out of the way.

Sir, there are presently 1 540 established posts in the Royal Barbados Police Force. The present strength is 1 399, which leaves about 141 vacancies. Yes, sir. You've heard me say on more than one occasion that we have had some challenges with finding suitable male applicants. In particular, there's no shortage of female applicants. At our last parade earlier this year, there were 38 new constables added to the force. We hope to have another batch recruited before year end.

I have heard, and this is really part of the point that I want to make. I have heard and seen in writing by persons who should know better that the current economic recession has impacted recruitment. Sir, this is simply not true. The Royal Barbados Police Force and the Defence Force, and indeed we have said any of our national security issues that we will ensure that they're given resources to discharge their responsibilities because we cannot compromise the national security of Barbados. And that includes recruitment. So there has been no slowdown in

recruitment in the Royal Barbados Police Force because of any economic situation.

They had some challenges in terms of accommodation. Yes, there's a process and of course they have challenges in terms of the nature of some applicants who come before them because the young men in particular are reflective of what's happening in our society. I have said in this chamber more than one occasion that persons have contacted me and said, why has my son, who is a good boy, been turned down? When I checked with the Royal Barbados Police Force, for instance, why has this boy, who is a good boy, been turned down? They say to me, well, sir, you should ask the child to give full disclosure to his mother or father so they actually know what he's getting into. We don't turn down suitable applicants. We want to encourage suitable applicants to us.

So I want to make that point that it is not true that we have reduced the number of intakes into the Royal Barbados Police Force because of any fiscal challenges. And further, I've also seen in writing, in fact, I've seen in writing to a report delivered to me that we have lowered the qualification standards in the Royal Barbados Police Force to attract additional recruits. Again, sir, if the qualification standards were lowered, they weren't lowered since

2008. Again, all of these things that people come up with, and I don't know why we're to sit down and come up with these things. There have been no lowering of standards to attract additional recruits. But I admit, sir, that there are some human resource challenges when one factors in things like sick leave, training leave, holiday suspensions, et cetera, you can see how from time to time, some shifts have challenges in terms of the number of individuals available. But that notwithstanding and the commission of police acting, he, over the last year and a half or so, he has been consistent in this, that he does have challenges in terms of promotions in certain rights. But this has not. Fortunately for us, this has not reflected in the overall performance of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

And I'm going to spend some time looking at crime in Barbados. I know my good friend from St. Michael South Central, my good friend from St. Michael South Central, when I speak to him about crime statistics and stuff, he says to me, AJ, I hear we are talking about crime statistics, but the core reality out there is that people are concerned about the level of crime in terms of guns, et cetera. But I am not ignoring that. But we formulate policy based on scientific analysis and based on our research and our statistics are the basis of part of our research in terms of guiding us where interventions are required in certain areas, et cetera. So that's why, when I speak of statistics, I'm not speaking of statistics in terms of, well, there is no crime, et cetera. I'm really just showing where we are as a

country in 2015 as opposed to 30 years ago, and whether or not, in fact, the common belief that there's this great upsurge in crime is true, or whether in fact the concern is not so much the escalation in crime, but the nature of and the violence of the crimes because of the use of gunplay.

And I believe, sir, that's what the evidence is pointing me towards, that we're not seeing an increase in homicide for example, as I will show, we're not seeing an increase in rapes, as I will show, but when there have been robberies, when they have been murders, we are seeing and hearing about gunplay. So that is really uneasy. And that's where I began my presentation in terms of crime in Barbados, discussing our concern and our extreme concern about the nature of gunplay in this country.

Sir, during the period January to June this year, to the end of June this year, if one looks at the raw statistics, there's been a 13 per cent increase in crime in Barbados. Increase, 13 per cent during the first six months of this year, and that's a 30 per cent increase on last year, which is 2014. But last year was a 14 per cent decrease from the year before. So when one looks at overall statistics, one has the impression that what is happening is really just a correction to us going back to more or less what our norm is. I think about 9 000 or so reported crimes per annum. And I will illustrate that a bit more. In other words, the 13 per cent increase from last year is against a background that 2014 was a 14 per cent decrease from 2013. So really what we're going back to is about the 2013 figures, which was consistent with previous years, and I'll illustrate.

So let me also say, and I'm asking again for the analysis to be done, that all of us - and when I say all of us, I'm speaking about within the research unit and within the Royal Barbados Police Force and based on what has happened in the past - that there's always an element of underreporting of crimes in Barbados and in other parts of the region. I think CADRES did a study quite some time ago and we need to get an up-to-date study because for various reasons, some individuals don't report crime, either because they reckon they can solve it themselves or they cannot be bothered, et cetera, or don't have confidence that it's going to get solved. So there's always that element of underreporting and stuff. We accept that and what we need to do is to do an analysis of that element of underreporting so we can get a complete picture, a true picture, of the overall crime situation in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I am satisfied that generally Barbados remains a safe place for people to go about their business, for people to go about their work and at play. I think that was seen over the last couple of months in terms of our Crop Over activity, that is seen when one goes to Oistins on Friday nights and Saturday nights. That is seen when one goes around to shop limes, et cetera, across in St. Philip and other parts of Barbados - that

generally people believe that they can go about their business and stuff. That has not changed.

And I'll use homicides as an example in terms of why I say to you, sir, that you need to still look at our statistics and see where we are trending, look at the areas where there's an escalation, see where we need to intervene differently, et cetera. We had a homicide study conducted - I think the initial study was for over a 20-year period, from 1980 to about 2014. And then what the author of the study did is thought, well, why don't I look at the last five years, as you've asked me to, and see what's happening and stuff, and what the preliminary results of that study has indicated is that, in fact, over the last five years, on average, there's actually been a reduction in the number of homicides in Barbados, not an increase. Of concern to me - obviously, there's always concern when there's a homicide - of concern to me, consistent with what I've expressed in terms of gunplay, is that in the old days, you hear about a murder and a guy got stabbed or got hit with a big rock, et cetera. Four out of every ten homicides is now by an illegal firearm. We still have quite a good clear-up rate in Barbados. 95 per cent of all homicides have been cleared up and that still signals the standard work of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Although, sir, I consistently say that when I think of crime, I think of crime not just in Barbados, but crime of the region. I still believe that it'll be useful for us to see how Barbados compares to other parts of the region, because that gives us a good sense in terms of our successes or our failures, but a good sense in terms of our position. Here, sir, is data of homicides in the region, per 100 000. In Antigua, there are 12.9 homicides per 100 000. In Guyana, there are 17.8 per 100 000. In Belize, there are 35.8 per 100 000. In Dominica, there are 10.4 per 100 000. The Bahamas is 21.2 per 100 000. In St. Kitts, there are 29.2 per 100 000. In St. Vincent, 19.1 per 100 000. In St. Lucia, 21.5 per 100 000. In Grenada, 10.7 per 100 000. In Jamaica, 51.7 per 100 000. In Trinidad, 26 per 100 000. And in Barbados, 9.7 per 100 000.

Again, sir, this is not a boast. This is looking at the statistics to see how we are performing historically and against what is happening in other parts of the region. Because, sir, you must accept, as I do, that what has led many of our young people to crime in Barbados are the same things in Trinidad, the same things in Jamaica, the same things in St. Lucia and Dominica, et cetera. And we seem, and we've always done, to be coping better. And I think in particular because of our strong emphasis on education and family life, because, again, I could have spent some time - because the research looked at the educational standards of many of the convicted or accused individuals on murder charges, looked at the level of education, and the information, if I remember correctly, actually showed that the higher the educational attainment,

the lower the rate of individuals being involved in homicide. Yes, it does indeed. It runs right across. And of concern, of course, is the fact that many of the perpetrators are between the ages of 20 and 39. And you've heard me say, and I know that any of us - and there are some on the other side who practise at the criminal bar - that when you go to Dodds, there is nothing as sad as seeing the large number of young men in particular, sitting around incarcerated for crimes, that I reckon that with some more care and attention and intervention, that they would not be there.

I want to use homicides and I will spend a bit more time on crime to just update this Honourable Chamber in terms of where we are as a country, but also the initiatives that are being taken by us on a continuous basis, to see that where possible we can have a reduction in crime. I'm a realist. We will never have a situation where there is a complete elimination of crime. Man being man is fallible. But during our lifetime, and us as policymakers, it is our responsibility to see how best we can intervene to ensure that there's a reduction in crime in this country.

So I want to have a look, therefore, at a few other areas, and I'll begin with domestic violence. You would have heard that in late 2013, I think, or in the middle of 2013, that a separate unit was established in the Royal Barbados Police Force for the first time to address specifically domestic violence issues. This year is the first time that we're able to track domestic violence related cases separately - they were all caught up in other crimes such as assault, et cetera. But the fact that they were domestic in nature wasn't being tracked. And again, we're tracking them to give us a sense in terms of what's happening in their homes, if we are making any inroads, given the level of training that is being done, not only in terms of police officers, but certainly persons generally. So this year, for the first time, we're able to have at one place a snapshot in terms of what's happening. The one thing I will say to this Chamber that I looked at, even though it was only for the last six months, is I was concerned. It struck me that in modern Barbados that we are still seeing cases of incest being reported and not to mention cases of rape of the domestic nature and stuff. So there is still much work to be done in that regard. We continue to see how best we can intervene.

Let me take this opportunity to probably thank UNIFEM, with whom I think about two months ago we executed an MOU to continue some work with respect to domestic violence issues. UNIFEM has committed over the next couple of years to make available to us, I think, just under \$200 000 for training - not only for police officers, and I believe, sir, that is \$200 000, but I don't have the MOU with me - training not only for police officers, but members of the judiciary, the ordinary man and woman in the street, NGOs, et cetera. We have established a small

committee that will look at ensuring the smooth implementation of the MOU, but moreover, ensuring that the programmes that we want to roll out will have traction, that we'll have good value for money, but moreover, that they will make and have significant impact in our communities, because it's to the community in particular that we want to go. The issue of gender-sensitive violence remains of great concern to this Government as it is to our wider society and we will continue our work in that area.

Sir, you would have heard me say that it is my hope that we can address the accommodation for the Office of Professional Responsibility. I want to say a few words on that particular office within the Royal Barbados Police Force, because depending on who you speak to, there is some level of satisfaction or some level of dissatisfaction with respect to the performance of that office. But you know, sir, I have said on more than one occasion, and I continue to say, that when I hear comments about police officers not being impartial to other police officers, et cetera, Barbados is one of the few places that I see - and maybe too often - police officers being brought before the courts in handcuffs by other police officers. I don't understand it. We do not have a history of things being swept under the carpet because police officers are investigating other police officers. It gives me no pleasure to say that. It gives me no pleasure to say this because we should all be concerned when police officers are indulging in criminal activity. I am fairly confident in the integrity of the officers that I see and that I know who work within the Office of Professional Responsibility.

Again, I've seen in writing some concern from members of the public in terms of the performance of that office. But, you know, sir, if you go - I don't want to be area specific - but certainly if you go onto some blocks and you ask a fellow sitting down on the block, how the police treating you? He's unlikely to say, man, good, he's come to sit down with us and have a drink and he's my best friend, et cetera, et cetera. And if you go into certain areas, you will hear a completely different report. Maybe because when the police officer passes through some areas, his disposition is different, not because of the area, but because of why he's going. So when I see some reports about the performance of this office, I always ask and I interrogate and I say, well, can you tell me a little bit about the persons who were interviewed? Were they ever charged with an offence? Were members of their family ever charged with an offence? Do they have a history of interaction with the Royal Barbados Police Force? All these things you need to interrogate so you can get a good sense in terms of the integrity of the reports that you're receiving and stuff. I am satisfied, sir, that office functions impartially. And, sir, the officers there are very dedicated and very senior. And the nature of the reports that we have been seeing are not the kinds that you see on CNN and other broadcasts of real police brutality. When one dives down into many of them,

they're domestic in nature, et cetera, and people come back and when their heads are cooling off, et cetera, are quite keen on withdrawing their complaints.

Again, sir, the area of training - notwithstanding our fiscal challenges that you hear about - we have made training available inside and outside of Barbados for many police officers over the last couple of years.

There was a time, sir, when we were missing training opportunities, in particular, training opportunities being offered by our international partners, in particular United States government and the Canadians and as attorney general, I asked, well, why are we missing these training opportunities? As a matter of fact, at one stage, what is commonly called the bridge Clown Club were of the opinion that Barbados didn't need any training because we were missing so many. I've put an end to that. So our officers have been going off, they've been going off to Colombia, to El Salvador, to United States, to Canada. They've been doing training, as I said, cyber training. The RSS, which is the regional security system, is doing a lot of training wherever possible. And the training opportunities available. I am suggesting, and I'm saying to this honourable chamber, that in fact, that these opportunities are being made available to members of the Royal Barbados Police Force. So there'd be no reduction in the level of training. Indeed, we have tried, in particular in the areas where weaknesses have been identified. We have tried to provide additional training under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. That particular facility have been good to us in terms of providing training opportunities. We have been taking them where there are kinks in the system, in terms of individuals being able at short notice to travel. I've been saying, let us see how we can address that. For example, we know that sometimes it takes a bit longer to have allowances being made available for individuals to travel - that would be warm clothing or otherwise - all these things that people find reasons not to make training available. I've been saying, let's put an end to that. And there have also been a greater cooperation, level of cooperation between the management of the Royal Barbados Police Force and many of our international partners. To the extent where we are seeing an increased number of opportunities for training inside and outside of Barbados being made available and such, there's always a requirement for training because as technologies change, as methodologies change, as new knowledge is made available, as new ways of committing crime is done, et cetera, we need to keep our people on the cutting edge, and we are so doing.

Let me also touch the issue of equipment, because, again, there are some individuals who like to say that the shortage of ammunition, shortage of uniforms, et cetera, et cetera - no, I can go there because you see more often than not when one dives down into why sometimes there's a

shortage. The shortage is not because of lack of money. If you ask the Minister of Finance, for example, believe it or not, there are certain departments, including the Royal Barbados Police Force, that return money to treasury. You would have a situation where I saw in the newspaper, for example, a couple of months ago, that a prosecutor said that he could not photocopy paper because there was no paper available in the courts. Right. I was so mad, Mr. Speaker, because when you see that in the print, you get the impression, well, government brought a kind of - buy paper - not that someone who's responsible for purchasing the paper and taking it into court, into it. Right. I know no one is interested in telling the whole story. When it comes to reporting incidences, it is more sensational to say that there was no paper in the court than to ask a question: how come you come to work without your tools? Because that's what it amounts to. How come you come to work without your tools? Why didn't you ensure that you had the paper required to do your work anyway? But that's what happened. So there's no reduction in the level of training and such.

Sir, we accept, and I saw recently one of the assistant commissioners, I think, in New Orleans at a graduation ceremony for some individuals who had done the 11-plus there, advising them in terms of how to conduct themselves when they're going to secondary school. Because we have accepted that we need to have additional resources in community policing. In fact, we do accept that we do need a few more bodies into the community to engage more of our young people directly. Even the community itself has been saying that they would like to see more police officers walking around the communities, that they may see them driving around from time to time, but they don't see the officer coming around, interacting, and would like to see more of that. And we have started doing more of that. And as I said, I saw the assistant commissioner at this graduation and we've had, I think, an intervention in that particular community for a couple of years. So this is just a continuation of efforts and such interventions at the community level redounds well for the benefit of the relationship between the police and the community, because we need to ensure that we get that relationship right. And one of the things that the assistant commissioner said then was that he wanted to encourage young people that where there were witnesses to crime, that they should report that, in fact, that they should not listen to individuals who call them snitches and all the other things that you hear, that our society cannot function and will not function how it does if individuals who are witnesses to crime do not report crime, and even worse, if they do report, then do not give evidence for whatever reason, because they've been encouraged not to give evidence, either because they have been paid or otherwise to change their testimonies, et cetera.

Again, via the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, one of the programmes that we have had, there has been a no witness, no justice programme, because you cannot have justice in Barbados. You cannot have justice in any society if the witnesses are unwilling or unable to come forward and tell what they have seen. So I want to say this morning, sir, I want to add my voice to that of the assistant commissioner, that in fact, that we want to encourage Barbadians to continue to come forward, see it as their civic duty that when they are witnesses to crime, to report same to the Royal Barbados Police Force and be willing

to give statements of what they have seen. That one of the cornerstones of our present system is the rule of law. And the rule of law cannot exist in a vacuum. It does not exist in the offices of the Royal Barbados Police Force. It exists because the community, the police, the lawyers, the judges, the magistrates, that everyone who has a role to play plays their role. But witnesses in criminal matters, nothing can go forward without their cooperation. So that no witness, no justice - a programme that we have rolled out. When I heard that, I said, I'm going to encourage a resuscitation of saying, because we need to drill that down into our young people in particular, that they need not be afraid, that they have a civic responsibility to report crime if they see crime in Barbados, happening in Barbados.

Sir, I want to again, with the work of the Royal Barbados Police Force and the committee that I'm on, I just want to touch a little bit on human trafficking. I was away and I received a call from a journalist and the journalist asked me if I had seen the State Department's report on human trafficking in Barbados and if I knew who the government official was that was allegedly being investigated for being involved in human trafficking. That was it. That was a question. Well, I hadn't seen the report, fortunately, but because I am chair of that committee and because I know of the hard work that has been going on to ensure that victims of human trafficking are supported, are identified, that perpetrators are reported. My only question to that journalist was what rating did Barbados receive? Because I wanted to ensure that we were still listed at tier two.

Given the level of work that has been going on in Barbados over the last couple of years and if one examines the tier structure used by the US State Department, and if one examines where we were four years ago and where we are today, it is reflective of the hard work of members of that committee that I chair, including the Royal Barbados Police Force, including immigration, including the NGOs who are part of it, including welfare, all of the actors that have a role to play. So I want to publicly thank them for their dedication, for their efforts, for going beyond the call of duty. In the case of the Royal Barbados Police Force, the two officers there, they have been doing a lot of training across the police stations to ensure that where there are

victims of trafficking that they can be identified, that charges can be brought, that support can be given.

So what we are trying to do is that we're trying to bring training from District C in St. Philip to Crab Hill in St. Lucy. And it's a continuous thing because we want to refresh the training, et cetera. There are some legislative amendments that have to be done. They will be done within the next couple of months. So overall, sir, notwithstanding the tone of the report, the fact that Barbados has been listed as a tier two country on the State Department's trafficking report - and it's not a bad thing, it's actually reflective of the work that we have been doing over the last couple of years. And you know, sir, I have said to members of the committee that given how this report is compiled, given our legal structure and given the nature of the questions asked by the US State Department, et cetera, that it is kind of difficult for us to maybe move to tier one.

There are some things that we need to do. There are some aspects of the report that you read it and you say, well, I cannot deny it nor can I support it, but you do hear things by innuendo. But when you read in the report, for example, that foreigners are subjected to forced labour in Barbados, most notably in domestic service, agriculture and construction, I said, but that's not the Barbados that I know. And when I go around Barbados, I don't hear about these cases, et cetera. But if by innuendo or otherwise persons let that into our community and into the international community, that's what they pick up and report. That's what they pick up and report. But I don't know on which construction site that these persons are being forced to work, right? I don't know which plantation or which plot of land that these persons are being forced into agricultural service, and the domestic service is even harder for us to prove. So I see things like that. I see NGOs report foreign women have been forced into prostitution in Barbados. Right? Again, you hear stories like that.

But I want to say, sir, that in essence is what human trafficking is about. At one o'clock this morning, sir, I wasn't even going to touch this report, but at one o'clock this morning on CNN, there was a report about a lady called Katie Ford who had an international modelling agency and who is now using the wealth generated by that modelling agency to address the whole issue of human trafficking, recognising that modern day slavery, as it is called, is the most heinous crime known to mankind today.

And when I see - because, as the young people say, some of us get caught up - when I see some individuals publishing reports that we need to free up the adult industry and allow dancers to come into Barbados. And I saw a report recently or an advertisement by one of the same individuals encouraging young Barbadians who are interested in a career to travel the world as an escort, that it is lucrative and how much money they can make per month

travelling the world as escorts and such. I'm not going to call that individual's name, but I do wish to say, and I want to say to our young people, both male and female, but in particular our young females, look to see what happens in the international community. Watch CNN like I do, see the reports of beautiful young women brought into London and other places and being promised modelling careers and other fantastic careers and then end up having to spend time with the person who paid for their tickets, with their friends, with their neighbours, with whoever else, et cetera. So don't get caught up or don't get tied up with these fancy advertisements, with these individuals who would have you believe that you're just going escorting people and you don't have to bother. There's something for nothing - in that case it's something for something, right? But you have a choice. Come and see the world, et cetera. Our young people must not be drawn in to that type of lifestyle.

We will continue to work. We will continue to work educating our people with respect to trafficking issues. Those individuals who from time to time are brought into Barbados - there's a difference between someone who comes to dance and is free to go about his or her business. And there's a difference between someone who comes and is placed in a room in an apartment somewhere and is told that you need to perform certain services until I get back all of my money, et cetera. There's a big difference. There's a big difference.

And I don't have any sisters, but certainly my brothers are all big men. You know, sir, a couple of weeks ago, one of the churches - and Ms. Johnson, forgive me if I don't remember the name of your organisation, I'm sure you will forgive me, my brain doesn't work as well as it used to - brought a young man into Barbados who did a few presentations on his life, how he was trafficked by a member of his family. And this went on, according to this young man's presentation, for years. His family did not believe him and he suffered. He's now moved from being a victim to being an advocate against human trafficking. And when I listen to his story, you sit back and you question, well, man, how does a big man sit down and allow this to happen to him, et cetera? But you also have to understand the psychological and physical abuse that even men can be placed under that prevents them from escaping, and the psychological and physical abuse that women can be placed under that prevents them from escaping.

So when you hear of these cases, it is not a case where, as the old people said, that these are wayward young people and that's what they want to do. These are real victims that need our support and that's why I want to touch on this and to signal the work of our committee and to thank those members for the hard work that they're doing and have been doing over the last couple of years.

Sir, in the year 2014, the Royal Barbados Police Force had a customer satisfaction survey conducted because it is important for us and for them to continue to build a relationship between the Royal Barbados Police Force and the people of Barbados. Because without partnership, then the challenges that you hear me speak about will continue. Overall, sir - and I believe that I did report this previously to this Parliament - overall, there was a large measure of satisfaction with the performance of the Royal Barbados Police Force. Overall. The average man and woman reported that they felt that they were still able to go about their business in Barbados freely. Naturally, and this has always been the case, in the case of females, there was a bit more apprehension, in particular, walking by themselves at night. But this has always been the case and there's nothing new about that.

They've asked us - the community has been saying to us and we have accepted - that they would like to see, in the words of the military, more boots on the ground, that more police interaction in communities. We need to do some work in terms of victim support in particular. That is very important. From time to time, individuals write to the office of the Attorney General, write to myself as Attorney General complaining that they have been a victim of crime or that their family member was a victim of crime. They've not been getting the feedback that they would like, they're not hearing what was happening, et cetera. We accept that, that there's some work that needs to be done - that has been communicated to the management - that it is important, that it is equally important for you to charge the perpetrator but it's important also for the victim to feel that he or she is part of the process and that you care about what happens to him or her. So we accept that and we are working on that.

So my point is that where there have been weaknesses identified and where there have been legitimate weaknesses identified, we have been working to address them. Sir, the reality, however, is that there probably is no police force in the world that you don't have complaints against. It is the nature of the job of a police officer, and indeed - not to quote anyone who expressed some surprise as an aside, that I actually listened to them - but there's someone that I know very well who says that anytime everybody likes what you're doing, you better check, you've got to be doing something wrong. And the nature of the job of the Royal Barbados Police Force is like that, that in fact, if they did a customer satisfaction survey and I saw a report that said that every Tom, Dick and Harry was happy with the performance of the Royal Barbados Police Force, I will send back the report and I will say, go and find out what they're not doing. They don't answer me wrong. They don't answer me wrong. Right.

But overall, though, sir, overall I am saying that there is a level of satisfaction. Overall, sir, I am saying that the performance in terms of the solving of crimes in this

country is such that the Royal Barbados Police Force, in very trying circumstances, should be commended for the work that they're doing and continue to be doing.

And that is - you know, sir, the Member for St. Michael Central last afternoon said to me, AG, I don't get the sense from you that you're enthusiastic about this debate, but you should be, because in truth and in fact, what you are trying to accomplish - but others have spoken about it for quite some time, others, former AGs, et cetera, have said that this is what they're going to do, publicise what you're going to do, et cetera - but you are actually doing it. And my response to him was, I am going to be happy when you see me put on a hard hat and go up to Hastings one afternoon, that's when I'm going to be happy.

I want, sir, to commend this resolution to this chamber, sir. I want, sir, to commend the work of the Royal Barbados Police Force to this chamber, sir. They are not perfect. There are men like you and I - I was reading a case recently from the Caribbean Court of Justice where the issue of a police officer reviewing his black notebook was being discussed. I don't remember the name of the case - one of the criminal lawyers would remember - and what the learned judge was quoted as saying. He says that we take men and women from our society and place them as police officers. We send them to work. We gave them a black notebook and we gave them a pencil. And then they come into court and we expect these same people, who are ordinary men like you and I, to remember everything that they have done when you and I don't remember what we do from day to day. And it's for that reason that the officers were allowed to review the notes, to refresh their memory and indeed to read the notes into evidence.

I say that to say, sir, that there are ordinary men and women like you and I. They will make mistakes, but as a collective, they make us proud. They make this country what it is. They're an important cog in what we do. When you speak to persons outside of Barbados about the fact that the Member for St. George North, for example, can drive home at four o'clock in the morning - you know, when you think that the Attorney General can drive home beside the Member for St. George North at four o'clock in the morning without fear. There are many societies where that cannot happen. There are many societies where that cannot happen, but it happens because of the work that they do and because of our way of life. And what they do is maintain this way of life.

There are some challenges, as I said, and I go back and I will end on this note - there are some challenges in terms of the level of gun violence in this country that we need to address. We need to go back into what is causing a 15 or 16 year old to want to pick up a firearm. We need to learn from what's happening outside of Barbados.

If you could imagine a 16 or 70 year old sees nothing wrong with picking up an automatic assault weapon and shooting half a dozen people, or in a culture that he receives a gun as a gift from his mother or father, what else is he going to do with it? So we need to learn from their errors. Look within our family structures, see what is going wrong. Because I believe that most of our challenges, that they start at the family level. They start at the family level. They start at the family level.

It is for that reason, because earlier this year, sir, earlier this year, we had a conference here on juvenile justice where I brought together all of the stakeholders to see how we can improve the administration of justice for our young people. But moreover, what interventions we can use to target our young people to move more of them away from crime in this country.

Just last week, we met with the stakeholders from the Ministry of Education, from probation, from registration, magistrates, et cetera, and said, let us sit down and look. We crafted an interagency agreement to see how we can coordinate activities with respect to how we treat to juveniles in a criminal justice system.

But whenever I discuss juveniles in a criminal justice system, Mr. Speaker, I say this as I will say now, I do not wish to have the juveniles in our criminal justice system. I want the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Family and the Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Social Care, et cetera, through their programmes to deter more of them from coming to us. And that is why the interagency agreement is so important for us to work as a collective, to work as a very collective. And we need to examine our various interventions to see what is working and see what is not working, because we need to save more of our young people.

And I am going to end now because I see the member for Christ Church is smiling, so it means that he wants me to sit down so that someone else can say a few words. Sir, I will say two things. One is that there is no attorney at law in this chamber who will not tell you that when they visit a young man in the precinct of the police station that more often than not, you can hear us saying the same. Young man has so much mouth that you saw the week before, et cetera. You got to speak up, young man, so I can hear you, et cetera, et cetera.

This false bravado that you see sometimes captured in the media, et cetera, is not the same person that you see when you go into the police station or when you go into prison. I see them. It is misleading. This glamorisation of crime is misleading. It is part of the reason why I feel that we need to spend more time intervening for our young people, and we need to spend more time promoting the good that our young people have been doing.

And St. Philip South, when I go around, in particular, when I look at the activities of many of our churches, et cetera, when I can go, as I saw on Sunday night, and see young people sitting down by Amble City watching some programmes, I think Gaia facilitated and free and interacting and enjoying being young, because that is what young people are supposed to do, enjoy being young, not be encouraged to live a life of crime, not to be encouraged to take lives of other young people. We need to work hard to save more of our young people.

This resolution is an attempt to give the Royal Barbados Police Force and give police officers better accommodation. But they also have many targeted interventions to save young people because via their juvenile liaison scheme, for example, that scheme is not constructed to incarcerate young people. That scheme is constructed to encourage young people away from deviancy. That scheme is constructed to assist the young person and the mother in particular. Because much of what we are seeing are single mothers with problems, with one child, two children, et cetera. That is what we are seeing.

The Dare programme and other community related programmes of the Royal Barbados Police Force are geared at saving young people. So when I see this resolution, when I see what we are doing in terms of accommodation, it is just not about detecting crime, but it is also about moving our young people away from lives of crime. Mr. Speaker, with those words, I beg to move that this resolution be read a second time. I thank a seconder.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended for lunch until 2.00 this evening.

The question that the House be suspended until 2.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: You, Honourable Member, this sitting of the House is resumed when the suspension was taken. We want Order Number 18. And with that we shall continue.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, we are in Parliament this afternoon having seen the entire Barbadian society reel in the knowledge, sir, that we have had nine shootings in the last eight days. Nine shootings, sir. And the Attorney General has spoken about shootings in Barbados and attributed them to the exuberance of youth, young men celebrating birthdays and those kinds of things

- in a manner, sir, I thought was rather cavalier given the fact that these nine shootings have resulted in one loss of life. Numerous injuries, sir, and perhaps the greatest injury of all, the trauma that the entire Barbadian community feels as a result of being besieged, Mr. Speaker, by gunmen in Barbados. What is in free fall, sir, is the Barbadian society. And the Minister of Health, who is presiding over a psychiatric hospital laid bare today, would talk about free fall, sir. An Attorney General comes in today and speaks about - in fact, his speech really could have been given by the Minister of Housing because it is clear to me that the Attorney General's only concern really is the buildings that this \$76 million is intended to provide, sir, but not a care. Not a care for the Barbadians who are going through and who have been going through for the last few years serious psychological trauma as a result of being under siege.

Mr. Speaker, I well remember elections past when a former leader of that party and now deceased Prime Minister was known for an ad where the constant refrain was crime and violence. Crime and violence - he had played on every radio station hour after hour after hour at a time, sir, when none of those things were factual or substantiated. But somehow, sir, that refrain is missing from today's debate.

Well, Mr. Speaker, free fall or not, I think that this opposition has an obligation to address the serious issues that are affecting us in the area of law and order. Sir, the Attorney General would like to consider that he knows exactly what I am going to say. In fact, in his speech, he said, oh, the member for St. Joseph will get up and say this and will get up and say that. He has come, Mr. Speaker, with his usual bag of insults, talking about people should be arrested for stupidity. But that is the stock and trade, sir, of this Attorney General. A cavalier approach to the things that affect us.

Mr. Speaker, we could have ended this debate after he spoke about the last of the buildings that this administration is finally going to try to put on the table because everything that he said thereafter has meant nothing to the Barbadian people. Mr. Speaker, the administration that presides over this country today, in a manifesto in 2008, promised a raft of things to the Royal Barbados Police Force. Their promise to provide better remuneration, their promise that they will get interest-free loans for houses. They promised to increase the ranks in the force, creating more promotion opportunities. Starkly enough, sir, they promised to permit the police force to function free of political interference. They promised to convert Glendairy Prison into a publicly funded modern drug treatment centre. And on, sir. And they also promised to improve and build new police stations.

I am delighted that after eight years this administration has finally seen it fit to at least come to

Parliament once and try to deliver on at least one of those promises to the police force. But this administration must remember, Mr. Speaker, that promises made to the police force are promises that they are really making to the average citizen because the Barbados Police Force functions within our society and it serves to ensure that the stability of all of Barbados prevails. But we have to remember, Mr. Speaker, that this administration does not have the best track record when it comes to promising the delivery of facilities. The member for St. John is still waiting after many years of promises by her own administration of having it delivered. Crab Hill has a police station. It has a police station, sir. So we have to wait and see exactly what will happen in terms of the delivery of these facilities.

But we cannot let this administration believe, sir, that policing is only about buildings. Policing is more than just about buildings. And I believe the Attorney General needs a tutorial on the subject that he has been charged with administering. You see, Mr. Speaker, it has long been recognised that policing will come in either two forms. You are either going to be a proactive police force, in which case you are looking at crime reduction, or you are going to be a reactive police force, in which case your focus is on arresting people and trying to solve crimes and so on.

Now, the Attorney General has seen it fit to cite some statistics. And he says that up to June of 2015, in comparison with 2014, the same period, the percentage increase in crime is 13 per cent. Now that worries every single Barbadian because 13 per cent, Mr. Speaker, in the Attorney General's eyes, is a number. It is a mathematical construct. But for the members of this opposition, 13 per cent represents lives that are affected through criminal activity. It represents a young man shot and killed in my constituency only months ago. It represents individuals whose houses have been invaded either by day or by night. It represents families who have lost brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, indeed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, numbers, as good as they might sound, cannot be viewed in isolation. Mr. Speaker, to hear that Barbados has nine murders, nine homicides per 100 000, brings absolutely no comfort to that young man who got shot and killed days ago. I repeat, sir, nine shootings in the last week.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a year ago - in fact, a year ago, almost to the day - this Attorney General said to reporters in Barbados, it cannot be business as usual, in the context of what the Attorney General said on that occasion was an apparent increase in gun crimes in this island. That is the Attorney General speaking, sir. It cannot be business as usual. And he went on to boast that he was having meetings with the Acting Commissioner and the Acting Deputy Commissioner and all kinds of things. But like all of the

idle promises made by this administration, sir, the Attorney General comes in here today and he does not reflect on the fact that he made a promise to the Barbadian people a year ago almost to the day. The newspaper stories on that occasion, sir, had 'Clamped Down on Gun Crime' as the headline and it has now fizzled away into nothingness. And in a week that we could have nine shootings, an Attorney General comes in here to promise police officers new buildings, new buildings.

Mr. Speaker, if he were honest about the numbers, he would not even be boasting about 13 per cent because if this debate had taken place only two months ago, sir, the percentage would have been 48. There would have been a 48 per cent increase. He would have reported a 48 per cent increase in crime over the same period last year. And Mr. Speaker, for the same period he would have reported a 245 per cent increase in crimes against the person only two months ago. Where I got these figures from, I am happy to make them a document to the House. They are sent to the opposition by the Royal Barbados Police Force. And not that we did not get them off on a bus when we were in government - we made sure and sent by email and by hand to the Leader of the Opposition's office copies of the reports for crime statistics. But of course, I know that this is the last one that we will see. We will never see another one. But the proof of the pudding is indeed, Mr. Speaker, these are not our figures. These are the figures of the Royal Barbados Police Force. And let me say I am thankful that they are at least decent enough to acknowledge that the tradition that we started, sir, by making sure the opposition is informed continues, because the opposition is not informed in any other aspect of Barbadian life, not even when it comes to Crop Over.

So what do these numbers mean, Mr. Speaker? I reiterate that they mean the lives of Barbadians. And, Mr. Speaker, we cannot minimise what the fear of crime will do to our society. The fear of crime, Mr. Speaker, is like an anchor or a millstone around our necks. I remember there were some years back a large number of shootings - it involved taxis, I think, and one or two taxi drivers were killed. And nightlife in Barbados ground to a halt and it had a significantly deleterious impact on the functioning of St. Lawrence Gap. Whenever you see all the wonderful things that have been said about Crop Over and all the pictures of Rihanna, all of that stands for nothing if at all we get a travel advisory brought against us. All of that stands for nothing, sir, if Barbadians feel that they are not free to go about their society.

Now, we have not had the pleasure of seeing the study which said that there is satisfaction with the force. I perhaps wish that the minister had asked the police force if they would complete the study themselves, because I rather suspect that the results might have been different. Mr. Speaker, today - well, I can explain it for the Minister of

Health, because the Minister of Health well knows that the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force themselves are not satisfied with the function of the force. They are not satisfied with the function of the force, sir. This government, despite promising in a manifesto that they were going to allow the force to function free of political influence, have done exactly the opposite. And so, sir, we now have a police force that is demoralised. We have a police force, sir, that is in litigation mode. We have a police force, Mr. Speaker, where there is rampant instability.

Now, sir, it is absurd. It is absurd to expect the police force to function with all the difficulties - to function in an optimum fashion, sir, when the very institution is falling apart at the seams. Mr. Speaker, it cannot be denied that key members of the force who were effectively doing their jobs in sensitive areas have been sidelined. There used to be something called a gun unit, Mr. Speaker, in the force. And the person in charge of that gun unit has been honed out of the force. Honed out of the force, sir, since this administration came to government. And you want to tell people that you are serious about gun crime - it is not a reckless thing, it is a fact. The entire leadership of the Royal Barbados Police Force, sir, is in turmoil and it is therefore going to be extremely challenging for the force to deliver to the country what is required.

The minister talked about the crime figures. There is another statistic that he could talk about - the detection rate - and ask the police force if they are satisfied with the percentage of reports that they are able to clear up. Ask them if they are satisfied. So we have those statistics too. But the Attorney General wishes to locate this debate in the narrow confines of a study and a few buildings that are going to be delivered, sir.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the history of the police force is one that as a country we have traditionally been proud of. And the Barbados Labour Party has done more than its fair share in improving the lot of the members of the force when we were in government, sir. And these are facts, Mr. Speaker. The Royal Barbados Police Force, sir, benefited from a flexi allowance which this administration has taken away, sir. A flexi allowance that was paid to police officers on a monthly basis. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it was that flexi allowance that allowed many of them to survive because, Mr. Speaker, the only body who was paying it is the Democratic Labour Party - it was paid when their party was in power. Police officers used to work a full shift and then have to go to court without any additional remuneration. The constables had to work two shifts, sir. Many Barbadians have seen policemen drive to crime scenes in their own vehicles. In their own vehicles, sir. And all of those things the Barbados Labour Party turned around. There were police officers, Mr. Speaker, who for the first time, because of the flexi allowance, were able to hold their head above water and to adequately provide for

their families. Perhaps the Attorney General can tell us why those payments have stopped and if there is a plan to restore them. They have been stopped, Mr. Speaker.

The clothing allowance, sir, and a whole raft of other allowances that the Barbados Labour Party put in place for members of the Royal Barbados Police Force. When we were in government, we put a \$10 million fleet improvement programme in place, a \$26 million Motorola project, four new police stations, a radar project. We supported significantly the RSS and the Barbados Defence Force because we understood that the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force cannot function in a vacuum.

A year ago, the Attorney General said that they were going to invite Customs to come and sit down. Well, they have gone further. They invite Customs not only to sit down, but to stand up and go on strike. Because the fact is that Customs has always been more than a revenue-raising agency. It has been a vital spoke in the wheel when it comes to border protection, keeping out guns, keeping out drugs. All of these things, sir, because the point about policing is that it is not done in a vacuum. There are connections regionally, there are connections within Barbados, all of which we have to rely on. But what is happening, sir, is that all of those things are being dismantled by a myopic administration.

Mr. Speaker, we have to get back to the fundamentals. We have to get back to the fundamentals, sir. The police force, regrettably, is now so short of resources, is having such significant manpower challenges that the vital element of community policing has been diminished.

The Attorney General is very fussy that an Assistant Commissioner of Police went to a school graduation, where the police go to graduations every day. But that is not community policing. We have to get back, sir. We have to get back to the notion that crime reduction relies on a solid relationship between the members of the police force and our communities. And that is not something that you build when a station sergeant or an Assistant Commissioner of Police shows up once a year to a graduation. That is something that has to be put in place on a daily basis. There are some police officers, sir, who - and I can speak for the ones in Horace Hill, I can speak for the ones at Tamri Hall - who are constantly out in our community at all kinds of events, visiting the sick and so on. All of these things, all of these things, with a view to crime reduction. But the fact is that the proactive side of policing in Barbados is no longer receiving the support of this administration as it should.

And it is not just about encouraging police officers to go and mingle with the community. Sir, when we realised that community policing also required a partnership with the Government in terms of social intervention, we settled on a programme of putting hard

courts in communities across Barbados, putting up lights at hard courts and at playing fields all across Barbados, to ensure, sir, to ensure that the voice of the police was not a voice in the wilderness, but that as a Government we provided sufficient social intervention so that when the police officers went to these guys on the block, they could say, listen, you have some options. There is another way.

The Attorney General is speaking very cavalierly about young boys firing off guns to celebrate birthdays. If that is a feature that he enjoys, it is one that will cause us on this side not to sleep at night, because you do not have to move too far from shooting up in the air to shooting at somebody. Straight ahead, sir. We need to do social intervention to severely limit the interest of our young men and women in that kind of negative activity. And as a Government, that social intervention has to partner with the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, this whole issue of gun crime as well is going to need some new legislative intervention. Any society that hopes to wrestle gun crime to the ground has to have tough enforcement measures, has to have tough legislation with severe penalties. In 1998, the now retired Chief Justice Sir David Simmons, when he was Attorney General, enacted what at the time was a new Firearms Act, which then laid the way for a new approach to penalties in relation to gun crimes. Unfortunately, the attitude of the courts towards the separation of powers has now been focused on some of that legislation. And so things such as what would have been mandatory sentencing and things of that sort, sir, are being unravelled by our court system. But that is where the legislature has to come in. Sir, we have to insist that when you are found guilty of a gun crime, you receive the severest possible penalty. And I believe that everybody who is involved in the law enforcement sector will agree, and everybody who is involved in the judicial component would also agree, sir.

And I think that if we are serious about this, we have to start looking at individuals - I mean, you know, sometimes you say a remand is a little bit too harsh because somebody found with a bullet cannot get bail and things of that sort. That may be, but there is nothing that would destabilise this country - or there are few things that would destabilise this country more, sir - than a relaxed approach to firearms offences. And the Barbados Democratic Party will support, as we did in 1998, the strongest possible penalties to be imposed on these individuals. We do not have a choice. Our society, our entire society, is at stake. It is at stake, sir.

But in addition to stiff penalties, there also has to be community responsibility. And by community responsibility, Mr. Speaker, we believe that respectable individuals in our society - when they get information that there is a firearm here, or that young men have been doing

this and so on and firing off guns - they are under a duty, Mr. Speaker, to notify the authorities. They are under a duty to notify the authorities, and the police have to be ready and willing to come into those communities. And I mean, the Minister of Education is known for talking about cracking heads and shooting people and so on. That is not what we are talking about, sir. We are not talking about that. That is a different thing. What we are talking about, sir, is police coming in, working with those communities where these things are happening, sir, and trying to make sure that they are minimised.

Mr. Speaker, District A Police Station polices a populace of 60 000 people. 60 000 people. I want you to think about that, Mr. Speaker. District A Police Station. The Attorney General can give you the figures of how many police officers are on duty at District A Police Station at any given time. But all you have to do is work it out this way. You have three shifts. You have 1 500 police officers working three shifts a day. Now at some point in time some police officer is going to be sick or on holiday or for some other reason cannot report for duty. So you are left perhaps with 500 for the entire country, to be divided amongst all the police stations that we have.

So on any given day, you should not be surprised that the complement of police officers at a district police station is going to be below the level that it should be at. But that lower complement, sir, is charged with the responsibility of policing 60 000 people and in that population catchment area you would find several of the hotbeds in relation to gun crimes and drugs and other activity. I think Mr. Speaker and I would be the last person not to give credit to the members of the force. I do not know any BLP policemen. I do not know any DLP policemen. I only know professional policemen and women. And their obligations, sir, to the people of Barbados have nothing to do with who they may or may not vote for when they go into the polling station. And that is why, sir, we have always said, and perhaps this is a bit of a digression, that is why we have always said, sir, leave the police out of your political gimmickry. Leave the police out of your political gimmickry, sir. I challenge the Attorney General to come in here and deny that a lot of the instability that is happening in the police force now does not have its genesis. Does not have its genesis, sir, in the political strikes that people try to put on the police officers. And that bothers me, sir. We have policemen who guard the Governor General, we have policemen who guard the Prime Minister, who guard this very chamber. And I would hate to think, sir, that it would matter one iota to them whether we were Bees or Dees. Certainly when a criminal offence takes place in any part of Barbados, your political stripes are completely irrelevant. Completely irrelevant, sir. But we can only maintain that, sir, when we fully understand that the police force of Barbados has a responsibility to all of us and belongs to all of us.

Mr. Speaker, we could look briefly at the physical infrastructure of the force and the Attorney General has given very little information. That is why he said he could have been the Minister of Housing because the Minister of Housing is really responsible for government real estate. We would be very interested in hearing on this side what is to be the future of the Central Police Station. Central Police Station has always had a significant role to play in terms of policing the Bridgetown area, the heart of Bridgetown, going all up Bay Street, down the Harbour Road and so on, Bridgetown and the areas surrounding Bridgetown. Now, sir, I would like the Attorney General to tell us what is the plan that they have for Central Police Station? I am aware, sir, that there is hardly any staff at Central. There is hardly any staff at Central. And now, Mr. Speaker, that there is the idea of building a \$20 million new headquarters building for the police in the Pine. I would like to ask the minister exactly what is the strategy that is to be employed. We are told that it is a 40 000 square foot building. Now, sir, as recently as about five years ago, the senior command of the Royal Barbados Police Force was made up of about 80 people. Forty were police officers and 40 were civilians. Now, I would like the Attorney General to tell us exactly how this 40 000 square foot floor space is going to be utilised because a headquarters building is going to serve the purpose that the BNB building was used for. The old Barclays building a stone's throw away from Parliament was used for. Now, is it the intention of this administration to establish a full station at this new headquarters or is it only to be used for the purposes of the police high command? I reiterate that the number in the police high command is probably around 80, sir, and 40 000 square feet is way more than would be required to house the high command.

Now, sir, the Attorney General will not agree that at this point in time it is often difficult to have a full complement of police officers at any station and therefore the country is entitled to hear from the minister what is the plan in relation to that installation and also what is the plan in relation to District A? As I said, District A polices 60 000 people. But the Attorney General must remember that he is also the minister for Home Affairs. And Belleplaine was supposed to benefit as well, not only from a police station but from a post office, I think a new welfare department and more than likely one other government installation and a magistrate's court. Now, it is one thing to say that Belleplaine, that St. Andrew, only has about 80 reported crimes a year, but we have to remember, sir, that facility, that police station, is in a critical position in terms of responding to events to the north between that white coastline, sir, between Belleplaine and Boscobel, for example. And we therefore want to know, as much as you are closing a full station and only having a small post - the Attorney General said two or three police officers - we want to know exactly what is the scientific plan. And to say that it can be well serviced from Horse Hill, sir, I rather

doubt, because the Horse Hill station was designed and constructed with a particular complement of police officers in place. So the idea that you can just add an extra set of police officers in there who are going to keep an eye on the northern and northeastern coastline of Barbados, sir, is one that I have to say I have a little bit of doubt about.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I would like the Attorney General to make it quite clear to the people of Barbados what the plan is. And I do not expect the Attorney General to give us operational details. As a former Attorney General, I know that simply cannot be. But one of the important things that will come out of this debate, Mr. Speaker, is for the public of Barbados, at the end of the day, to feel somewhat reassured, somewhat reassured that the government is being put in a position, that the police is being put in a position, sir, to wrestle these things to the ground. Now, we have no objection to the police getting new installations. Let us make that clear. We have no objection to this. It was in 1997, surveying the proposal, when the proposal came that Gems would take over the Hastings Police Station and that a new station be built on that occasion. It was going to be built at St. Matthias, but it is a stone's throw away now and it is going to Hastings. No problem there. We have no difficulty with it. The plan that we had for the Pine was not to put a headquarters building there at all. Certainly when I was Attorney General, my own attitude was that we needed, as a country, to recycle some of the buildings that were being vacated when we put up other facilities. That was certainly the view that the administration of which I was a part had. We were building new buildings as we outgrew them and we were just leaving the old buildings to sit there. And we certainly felt, Mr. Speaker, that we should put those old buildings back into service. But I have no difficulty at all with making sure that in putting the old building into service you refurbish it.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that one of my great regrets is that the old police station at Horse Hill was demolished. It had outlived its usefulness as a police station and a magistrate's court. But the point is, sir, that engineers had the view that the building was still a serviceable building and that at a cost of about a million dollars it could have been completely refurbished and used for other community purposes. And I do not think anybody could object to that. In fact, our feeling was that we could put the care centre that we wanted in St. Joseph there. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have built a new High Court and the old High Court buildings, the old registry, all of those buildings are still there. Is it the plan of the government to demolish all of those buildings or is it the plan of the government to see how we can bring these viable pieces of real estate back into service? I mentioned earlier the campaign promise of the Democratic Labour Party, Mr. Speaker, to convert Glendairy into a repurposed facility, especially in circumstances where an administration claims that it is suffering from serious financial strictures. We have to think

seriously about whether we need to build new buildings on every occasion or whether there is an opportunity for us to repurpose. Certainly this is the approach being commended by the Attorney General in Belleplaine - to repurpose a facility that was used as, what was it, a children's home or something. So I would be interested, sir, in knowing exactly what is the plan for the buildings at Central Police Station. We are told that money is going to be used, I think, to refurbish the old barracks. But the point is, sir, that we have to decide where we are going as a country. Are we going to demolish the old and build new on every occasion or are we going to see how we can repurpose old buildings with suitable work and try and bring them back into use.

I also want to ask the Attorney General what has happened to the plan to build a police station and civic centre at Six Roads? Now, sir, it is not my constituency but when it comes to matters of law and order all of Barbados is our constituency and we have long recognised that St. Philip is the fastest growing part of Barbados. And certainly when I was Attorney General it was part of the programme of my ministry to see to the construction of a new station at Six Roads to replace the ageing District C Police Station and also to put other civic facilities - a new post office and other civic facilities - in Six Roads, all coming under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs. And I would be interested, sir, in knowing whether that plan still exists or whether it has now been put out to proverbial pasture, given that emphasis is now going to be put on the facilities that have been described here.

The other issue which I would relish hearing from the Attorney General about is the question of provisioning these buildings, sir. It is one thing to say that you are going to build four or five new police stations, but we have to ask whether the resources will be available to adequately provision these stations, sir. It is not going to be as simple a thing as dragging up some desks from an old station and sending them up there. In addition to that, sir, the technological requirements of policing today are going to be extraordinarily expensive. And therefore, any consideration of establishing four new police stations has to bring along with it exactly what manpower is going to be made available. And it is not going to be so simple as shuffling around people. You also have to have a clear view, Mr. Speaker, of how you are going to equip these stations. By no means a small task. It is very easy to come and say we are going to give everybody a new building, a new hospital, a new this, a new that. But government still has to have the resources to provision these facilities. Is the cost of the provisioning of these facilities included in the \$76 million loan? When I read the terms of the loan, Mr. Speaker, it appears to me only to relate to construction costs. It appears to me to relate only to construction costs, and I would be very grateful, sir. The resolution is for the construction, refurbishment and repair projects. So refurbishment and repair cannot apply to the new stations

that are being built. So based on my reading of this resolution, sir, none of this \$76 million is going to be available to equip and fully outfit these stations. And there is no point putting them there, sir. And like the St. John Polyclinic, you have neither people nor equipment to put into them.

Mr. Speaker, our administration spent a lot of effort in trying to modernise the police force, and people might not realise it, but the idea now - you go and you get a police certificate of character, you leave your fingerprint and it goes through an automated system, a digitised system, so that within a matter of hours, Mr. Speaker, the police can say whether or not your prints would have been captured in relation to an offence. And that is just one of the small ways in which we have tried to bring our police force into a new century. But as fast as we modernise our force, the criminal element in Barbados, especially as it relates to financial crimes, are also modernising. And I am happy to hear about the training that is being done in El Salvador and Colombia and so on. And I do not know what the training is for because police have always been trained. But the reality is, sir, what I am trying to get the minister to think about, or to give us the assurance that these things are already being taken into account, is that we need to continue the thrust of modernising the force. And it is not just a question of getting faster vehicles, it is a question of getting cutting edge detection tools.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we would also relish hearing what is the state of the Forensic Sciences Centre. When that was built by the Barbados Labour Party around 2002, 2003, we felt then that we were establishing a state of the art laboratory so that the Barbados police would be able to have at their fingertips the finest technology available. And we have seen it work, sir. We have seen it work, that laboratory. Did you think about the individuals who were found - the 47 individuals found in the boat off Barbados - where those bodies had become virtually mummified? The Forensic Sciences Lab that we built worked to the finest international standards in relation to the application of scientific techniques to those corpses. But what is it being used as now? What is its future? When we talk about modernising of the force, we have to take those things into account. And there is no point doing all of this unless we are going to ensure that the force has everything else that it needs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General was perhaps correct when he felt that he knew part of what he was going to say, because it remains a shame. It remains a shame, sir, that police still do not have adequate kit, still short on necessities, broken down vehicles, but they are being expected to deal with things in a proactive fashion. Now, you cannot expect the force to function effectively. You cannot expect the force to function effectively when

the day to day things that they need to function with are simply not there.

So whether the attorney general likes it or not, whether he wants to hear it or not, the truth is he should not be hearing it from me. His officer should be reporting it to him and saying, Mr. Attorney General, we are short of these things. And if he accepts the explanation that somebody didn't get around to buying it, well, then, sir, more than the police is suffering from instability, I would have to say that the Attorney General himself is suffering from a form of instability.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will close by reminding the government and reminding all of Barbados that in 2004 the report of a national commission of law and order was published. Members of this chamber might recollect that the Barbados Labour Party established this commission for the purpose of advising the Attorney General on strategies and policies and programmes that could be utilised as a method of ensuring that in terms of law and order, the Barbadian society met the highest standards. This document governed the approach of the Barbados Labour Party. It was made up, sir. That commission was made up of Professor Barrow, the current Governor General, Sir Elliot Fitzroy Belgrid, former Commissioner of Police Orville Durant, and numerous other individuals, including Station Sergeant Hartley Reed, an officer of the Democratic Labour Party, a vice president, I believe, no less. And this commission, not partisan, set about interviewing Barbadians, having town hall meetings and so on, and making a number of significant recommendations, a number of significant recommendations as to how Barbados can go forward as a society ruled and governed by law and order, sir.

I would commend it to the Attorney General. I would commend it to the members of this administration. The recommendations made by that commission are still vitally important. A lot of the things that they describe, sir, are things that are still relevant today. Only 11 years have passed since the report was published and it is still absolutely relevant. That's not the Khale report. We can get that another day, sir.

Mr. Speaker, we are a troubled society in a troubled place. We are in danger of losing a whole generation of young men and women. They may be enticed by the glamour, or what appears to be the glamour of easy money. They may be enticed by the notion that you can solve disputes through violence in a swift and permanent fashion. They may be watching a lot of television and somehow feel that there is a successful life to come out of crime. Whatever the causes of it, though, the only casualty will be the lifestyle and the livelihoods of successive generations of Barbadians.

I have certainly never felt that the Royal Barbados Police Force or any of our allied law enforcement agencies should be treated like a political football. I have never felt, sir, that they would function better if the political class told them what to do. In fact, when it comes to policing, I, sir, would like to echo the words of a judge who remarked that policemen should be able to function without receiving instructions from anyone other than from the law itself. That is the kind of attitude, sir, that has to inform Barbados as we go forward.

We can commit \$76 million to building new stations. We can do that. But unless as a country we commit to higher standards in terms of how we relate to each other, unless we commit to doing all that we can to save a generation or more of young men and women, then, sir, this \$76 million will mean absolutely nothing. Mr. Speaker, we have just spent way more than that to build a brand new hall of justice, a brand new Supreme Court building. And if you ask any lawyer in Barbados or any litigant, they would tell you that new building or not, the wheels of justice seem to be turning even slower than before. No new building will be a panacea. No new building will be a cure. I'm happy for the policemen and women to have the finest of facilities that the country can offer. But unless, sir, we commit to a completely different set of ideals, sir, these buildings will be nothing more than concrete and marble and will be worth nothing against the life of another Barbadian boy or girl shot tonight or tomorrow, sir. I'm obliged to you.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I entered this debate in support of the resolution before the House and to also indicate my support for the initiative of the Honourable Attorney General in bringing this resolution before this chamber. Essentially designed to improve the physical environment under which our police officers function. And of course, Madam Deputy Speaker, in doing this you cannot divorce improving physical facilities from the point, of course, raised by the lead spokesman for the opposition of the need to improve the general ability of the police force to do what they are supposed to do in terms of fighting crime. I think that the two are inextricably linked and I therefore believe that this is a move in the right direction.

I want to signal at the onset, Madam Deputy Speaker, that there are several of the points made by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph that I certainly embrace. I don't believe that the issue of crime or gun violence in Barbados is one that has any partisan political tone. Indeed, I believe that just as the opposition would like to see Barbados rid of gun violence, that is also the desire and indeed the focus of this government. So I don't believe that this issue has to be pitched within that kind of framework.

I believe, and I agree with the Honourable Member for the opposition who spoke, that we have to tackle gun crime if necessary. I believe that if there is a need to tighten the enforcement mechanisms, if we need to impose greater penalties in relation to the criminal law, then that is something that we will do. But I want to make the general point that nobody in Barbados can deny that we are not concerned about the current state of gun violence in Barbados. No one will deny that because we have to be concerned. The newspapers, of course, blaze across their pages and bring into your homes the rather dire spectacle of gun violence being practised across our communities. And therefore, we have to be concerned about that.

We are concerned about the fact that not only young people, but there are adults as well, who are gaining access to illegal firearms and committing crime in Barbados. And therefore, when that shows up in our communities, we have an obligation to meet it head on and we have to do so though, Madam Deputy Speaker, in a united manner. And this debate will not be one, I hope, of casting blame from one side to the next. I think this Parliament must be united in a position that says that where we are determined by measures to provide and to give to the Royal Barbados Police Force all of the facilities, all of the wherewithal to fight crime, that we will stand shoulder to shoulder as a Parliament in support and in defence of that.

Now, having said that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am a believer in tough legislation. I believe the former government did bring to this House a number of changes in terms of firearm legislation. I believe we had the new Firearms Act which imposed some mandatory sentencing.

Of course, we also know that the court struck down those elements of that law as being unconstitutional. But outside of that, I believe that we have to approach this issue of gun violence and crime within the context of a social ill. Crime is really a social problem that has to be tackled. And I believe that wherever possible, we have to find innovative ways to approach, particularly gun violence in Barbados. I am also concerned, Madam Deputy Speaker, about the callous nature in which guns are being provided and given to impressionable minds in Barbados. Not only guns, but you cannot remove the spectacle of drugs that is linked to the peddling of illegal firearms in Barbados. And I believe as a society we have to confront it because it is impacting and affecting our communities. There are families that this evening are hurting because some of their loved ones have fallen victim to gun violence. Oftentimes many of them are innocent victims. And we are seeing too much of a recklessness and a callousness involved in the drive-by shootings, reckless people who basically take guns wherever they go and use them. And I believe that we have to find - I certainly support any call where the police will be using measures to bring that kind of activity to a halt. And we have to speak to that. We have to support the

police because anytime you have persons attending events, we have seen, for example, even in Cropover, we have seen persons leaving home to enter into a band or stand by the sidelines armed with a gun hidden in their waist, intending to do harm to somebody. And I believe that we probably need to look at how we are going to face this particular type of criminal, because this type of criminal is not deterred, in my view, by the current penalties under our legislation. They certainly are not deterred by the current arrangements that the criminal justice system has in place to deal with that kind of activity, and we have to deal with it.

But I do say that we have to be careful, Madam Deputy Speaker, in addressing this issue. To paint all young people with one brush, it is always dangerous to start talking about we are in danger. For example, as the last speaker said, we are in danger of losing a whole generation of young men and young women. We are in danger of losing quite a number of young men and quite a number of young women. But I do not believe that we are in danger of losing a generation of young people because of what is going on now in society. Because when I look at that particular issue, when I juxtapose that statement to what a number of young people are doing, while we have some out there wheeling guns and peddling drugs, I have to stand in defence of those positive young people who are doing something meaningful with their lives. And we have to be careful that we do not label all young people in a particular way because we have a problem with gun crime and violence in certain sections of our society. And I want to underscore that - that we have a problem of gun crime and violence afflicting and affecting certain elements of our society. We have to determine that we will root those elements out. And therefore, I believe that what is necessary is a national renewed approach designed to ensure that this particular feature, which has now come about in recent time, which has now been, as far as I am aware, taken to a new level of recklessness. And I think that is something that we have to be united in tackling and in confronting.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to say that if we are to speak to certain matters frontally, I think we are in danger of creating a situation that does not exist. And that is why I made the point that in addressing this matter, we have to do it as a united parliament. There is no evidence - the former Speaker who led off debate for the opposition made the point that the police is being politicised and that there is political interference in the police force. But he made those points without adducing any credible evidence to support those kind of reckless allegations. And I want to caution that we do not become so reckless, even in our language in here, that we make a suggestion of that kind without adducing any evidence. There is no evidence, whether adduced by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph or anything that has been produced by any international

agency that monitors the activity of the state in relation to police forces, to even suggest that there is political interference in the Royal Barbados Police Force, that there is some politician who is giving the police instructions on a day-to-day basis in relation to how it should conduct its lawful duties. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph said that the police force in Barbados is subject to political interference. That is what he said and he said it. I am saying that he said it without adducing any credible evidence - any credible evidence - to support what he is saying. And this is not unusual. I am just trying to raise the level of debate in this House. He also said the society is falling apart at its seams. Now we are not suggesting, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are not suggesting that the issue of gun violence and crime are not areas that we are concerned about. But I want to focus on this statement that society is falling apart at its seams. And while we have to be purposeful and focused and responsible in tackling all aspects of the criminal element in Barbados, including gun crime, we have to understand that we still have a society in Barbados in which we have to live and which we have to project to the international community. So when we are talking about the society falling apart at its seams, and the police force being subject to political interference and so on, I really beg to differ. I beg to differ. I certainly do not hear any evidence which suggests that. I believe that when the government is making efforts to improve the well-being of the Royal Barbados Police Force, I think we should support that. I think we should support the government when the government comes to the House to make provision to improve the well-being of the police force.

In fact, this is probably not even a debate to hurl these kind of allegations at the government, because the government has come to the House asking the House to approve a resolution in the order of \$76 million - to do some things that I believe both sides must recognise are necessary. The police cannot function in an environment that is not conducive to policing. Both the psychological and the physical environment of the Royal Barbados Police Force have got to be addressed, and that is what we are doing in this chamber now. The fact that we have a current situation in Barbados that both sides of the House believe needs to be tackled is another matter. Now we have to look at what efforts have been made by the government to tackle the whole question of gun crime and gun violence. I have heard, for example, one of the first things the Attorney General would have said - I believe, if not early this year, but last year - particularly in relation to the use of illegal firearms in Barbados, was that there will be a heightened sense of surveillance at both our ports. Initiatives were announced in relation to proactive policing, because I heard the Honourable Member for St. Joseph saying that there are two types of policing - proactive policing and reactive policing. And of course, he sought to give the House what he called a tutorial on how this matter ought to be addressed. Now, I do not doubt that he means well in terms

of trying to give us a lesson on these matters, but I heard distinctly - and I believe the Honourable Attorney General will speak to it when he rises to wrap up - that there were a number of initiatives immediately announced, particularly when this matter of gun crime was peaking last year. I believe, and I distinctly remember, that there was a plan of action announced and put into effect that related to heightening the surveillance mechanisms at our ports of entry. There was also a plan of action involving the sensitisation and monitoring of sea craft, particularly fishing craft, entering and leaving our ports. Because, in fact, one of the things that we have seen over the years is the vulnerability of fishermen at sea who are faced with criminals on the high seas, attacking a number of vulnerabilities that they have. And that has been very early identified as an area that had to be tackled because, of course, of the influx of illegal firearms into Barbados.

I also want to say - and I made the point earlier in my presentation - that we make a mistake if we do not realise that crime in all of its fashions is by and large a societal issue. It is an issue that we have to tackle within the dynamics of our society. Two years ago I recall meeting with not only the Royal Barbados Police Force, but the National Task Force on Crime and a number of agencies, because I believe one of the things that we have to redouble our efforts to do - and I certainly, as Minister with responsibility for youth, we are very busy trying to come up with measures to help the Royal Barbados Police Force at the society level to tackle crime among our youth. And there are several of those measures that have already been put in place. We are going to try to put in place even more. And perhaps in this debate, one of the things that I think would be very useful is if we can toss some ideas into the ring in terms of how best we can deal with what is a highly complex issue faced by some of our young people when it comes to crime, even the use of firearms by some of our young people, many of them who are being poached by hardened criminals and drug barons. And we have to be able to infiltrate that kind of criminal net that is casting a cloud across our communities. And all of us stand to be affected by that unless we redouble our efforts at providing innovative solutions to this issue.

Community policing - I agree, and I want to agree with the Honourable Member for St. Joseph - I agree 100 per cent that community policing must be bolstered, improved, and encouraged. But in addition to that, we have to devise and support programmes that are designed to help the police in terms of tackling crime, particularly at the community level. And it is not to say that we have not been doing them. Certainly I can speak in relation to measures being done pioneered through the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, through our youth development programme, that are designed to ensure that we engage in proactive measures of prevention. Proactive measures of prevention have been used. We launched, three years ago,

Madam Deputy Speaker, a very innovative programme utilising one of the most revered draughts players in the world, Suki King. And we used a very simple technique of using draughts on our blocks. We have a programme, Madam Deputy Speaker, called the Draughts Blocks programme, where we proactively go out there and we engage our young people who are on our blocks, who play draughts. And we have an annual competition. And that competition has now spread throughout a number of communities in Barbados - in our blocks in St. Michael, in Christ Church, in St. Joseph. That programme has been very effective at bringing our young people who are on our blocks, who are playing draughts on a regular basis and who admittedly may have been themselves not only seeing violence - because many of our blocks, many of our blocks in Barbados, unlike what has been said about them, many of our blocks also act as protective mechanisms. Many of our blocks act as a protective mechanism. In fact, many of our young people who frequent our blocks are there not necessarily to commit crime. But they are very influential in our various communities. And we have found that programme to be very effective in diverting the attention of our young people on the blocks into a productive activity. And that is what we are talking about, Madam Deputy Speaker, when we are talking about prevention and assisting in being proactive in terms of tackling the issue of crime affecting our young people.

The other thing that we want to do - we are now in discussion, Madam Deputy Speaker - because I hope that when we speak in this debate, sometimes it is easy to reflect on the past about what has happened. But we are going to be challenged to come up with measures that can work in tackling the issue that is before us. And I want to refer to one, because we are in discussion, Madam Deputy Speaker, with a number of agencies, including the Royal Barbados Police Force. And we recognise that part of the problem in relation to crime and gun violence is that it is impacting on some of our communities more than others. We are seeing a heightened level of gun activity in some of our communities and therefore, the approach that we have to adopt could either be hard policing or it could be a response based on using mechanisms to assist the police in solving this matter in our communities. So through the youth development programme, we will shortly be launching an initiative where we will be targeting a number of these communities with a combination of approaches, many of which we have been using. We have been using sports among our young people to ensure that they could be preoccupied. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph talked about the fact that the former government had put hard courts and lights and so on as a means of helping to create the environment to assist the police in community policing. And these hard courts and lights have not disappeared. In fact, more have gone up. More have gone up. And therefore, we will be utilising not only the existing facilities, but those new facilities that have been put in

place by this government to help to ensure that we could create the environment and the social programmes - because we have to be able to tackle crime based on utilising social programmes, interventionist strategies to help our young people find their way into productive programmes. And when these programmes are enunciated, I think the opposition should support them. The opposition should support the programmes and work with us, because at the end of the day, we are Members of Parliament.

We are members of parliament. And these programs, many of them piloted through the youth commissioners. And all of us in here have access to youth commissioners and those youth commissioners interact not only with community organisations, but also with members of parliament. And there can be access to devise youth-centric programs to help with the same problem that we are dealing with. And I want to challenge members of parliament because we have an obligation and a responsibility as well. So when we have issues such as gun violence and crime in our communities, I believe, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have to ask ourselves whether we are ourselves, as community leaders, doing all that we can to work with existing government agencies to ensure that the same social programs that we talk about are supported by us and that we also come up with projects and programs that can be proposed to the same youth commissioners for implementation.

I don't know how many members of parliament, particularly on the other side, can say over the last six months that they have come up with a youth program, presented it to a youth commissioner for activation, and that they have not gotten a response. In fact, some of the problems could very well be that there is some kind of inaction. I think we are probably so caught up in having political meetings in the middle of a term than to go into communities and devise strategies and programs to help young people from getting involved in criminal activity. And I want to challenge members of the opposition when they get up to speak to at least two or three initiatives that they have done in their communities that one could say are designed to assist with fighting crime in your communities. And if you do that, I would humbly accept the fact that perhaps it was wrong in saying that you're not doing what you're doing.

So this debate need not be about casting blame and talking about police stations - that a police station alone cannot solve the crime problem. We know that, and that is an irrelevant point. I thought it was irrelevant because it really is nonsensical to say that the government is coming to parliament to build police stations as though it is a panacea for solving the problem of crime in Barbados. That is a juvenile argument. We really have to lift the standard of debate in this House, particularly when the government

comes with proactive measures such as the one before the House.

I thought that on this matter the opposition, particularly the lead spokesperson, who would have had unlimited time to inject into this debate some real strong recommendations to tackle this problem - all that we had, really, from the Honourable Member for St. Joseph were a lot of unsubstantiated statements, and I wonder if his colleagues will follow that trend in this debate. I mean, come on, we are talking about a social problem. Certainly the government cannot be blamed, and I would not blame any government, for that matter. Issues of gunplay, gun violence, and that kind of thing cannot be laid at the foot of any government. It is a societal issue. It is a societal issue that has to be solved.

And what I would want to encourage in this debate - and I really hope that the members of the opposite side who have not yet spoken in this debate would not follow slavishly what we heard from the Member for St. Joseph. And I always have to make the point, because I always try in debates in this House not only to be critical of something, but to offer some suggestions of meaningful alternative strategies. And if it is that the opposition believe that the country is falling apart at its seams because of drugs and that kind of thing, I want to hear where they stand in terms of their policy agenda. I also want to hear what are the proposals for consideration by the government. Because the opposition always says, the opposition always champions the argument that their role in this parliament is not only to identify problems, but that they should be championed because of alternative suggestions. I certainly have never shied away from accepting good alternative policy strategies.

And I would certainly say to the House that if the opposition comes up with any alternatives in relation to how we could move our youth-centric initiatives forward as they relate to tackling crime at the community level, that I would accept those initiatives, and I give the parliament that assurance. But this issue, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to underscore that we are as equally concerned about gunplay and gun violence as the members of the opposition. That is a given. That is a given. And indeed, the Honourable Attorney General, in his introductory remarks, made the point very clear. We will be crazy if, as a service-driven economy, we are not going to move with alacrity and swiftness to deal with matters such as this. And I believe that is what we will do. We will do everything possible to root out the scourge of gunplay.

We have to express sympathy to those families who have been afflicted by criminal activity, namely their loved ones being gunned down by lawless gun activity in our communities. And as members of parliament, we have to be concerned about that as well. And I think what we have

to say as a parliament is that we have to adopt a zero-tolerance approach across this divide that says to the criminal elements of our society that we will not stand for that kind of activity, and that we pour scorn on what is going on in terms of those elements that are using fear and guns to put our societies in danger. And that, to my mind, has got to be the message coming from this House.

I certainly, Madam Deputy Speaker, we will continue, particularly in relation to the youth development arm of the youth development programme and the ministry. We are convinced that this issue has to be tackled at two levels because you have to tackle it at the level of ensuring that persons who offend are apprehended and prosecuted. But you have to deal with the underlying cause - those young people who are being taken and used by the criminal elements of our society. We have to find ways of ensuring that they understand that there are alternatives to crime. And that is why I said that we are discussing a very targeted programme which will be targeted at several of our communities, those that we believe are the targets currently for criminal activity.

We have already, through the youth development department, done a number of walkthroughs. They are using sports as part of the intervention. They have been talking with the Royal Barbados Police Force and therefore I expect that within the next two weeks or so there will be a proposal given to me which brings together all those discussions and where we will now put in place a targeted programme, a social intervention programme to help to move this issue of crime and violence, particularly impacting our young people in some of our more vulnerable communities in Barbados. That programme will be done. Madam Deputy Speaker, as an immediate response to what we are seeing happening here, I hope it is embraced by the members of the opposition, because as I said, this issue

is not a partisan issue. This issue is not about how many police stations are built and who built them. This issue is about recognising that there is a problem affecting our societies and that the problem has to be confronted by us as lawmakers.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would wind up my presentation by simply saying that the issue of ensuring that our police force, members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, are housed in proper facilities is really what this resolution is about. I believe it is critical in crime fighting to ensure that our police forces are properly housed. I don't believe that can be in any way contradicted. It is a truism that to a large extent many of our police stations have been left to literally rot away. Many have deteriorated. And when I say we, I am talking about us as lawmakers. And I am not going to say that this is the Barbados Democratic Party. The reality is that this is what

we have now. We have a situation of deteriorating conditions, physical conditions for a police force, and we have taken a very giant step in this resolution - \$76 million being put behind it to ensure that we not only talk about it, but this is a clear decision based on action.

I think it should be complemented by the Barbados Labour Party where we have come to the House. We have not just talked about it. We have come to the House with a resolution asking the House to sanction the borrowing of \$76 million and we have said what that money will be used for - to improve the physical environment of our police force. We can't have it better than that. And therefore I can only say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this is a very solid approach which, in conjunction with all of the other measures being used by the government to tackle crime, ought to be supported. And therefore I have no difficulty at all in supporting this resolution before the House. I am obliged, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. George South.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to add my voice to this debate on this resolution that seeks to borrow \$76 million from the National Insurance Board and this resolution - and I need to say policing is a very important aspect of the remit to look after the citizens of this country. But I wish to begin by complimenting the honourable member for St. Joseph in his presentation, in his hour-long presentation, because listening to the honourable member for Christ Church West Central just now who criticised the honourable member for St. Joseph - for those who did not hear, the honourable member for Christ Church West Central would have you believe that the honourable member for St. Joseph got into this House and said he was against building the police structures. That is not the case. The honourable member for St. Joseph said he had no difficulty with building the buildings, but what he had a difficulty with was building empty buildings. And if we want to get more technical, it is about building capacity and building capability. Because what the honourable member spoke to - you can build a building and you can build the capacity, but you don't have the capability. So the honourable member for Christ Church West Central misrepresented what the honourable member for St. Joseph has said.

But I wish to move on because I have had to - within last year I think I was in Parliament that Tuesday. I went to my fixed place of abode and I got a call. And I got a call, Madam Deputy Speaker, that one of my friends got shot in the district of Ellerton. Young man very close to me, vibrant football player. And I challenge the honourable member for Christ Church West Central - because yes indeed, I can mention many activities that support community policing within the constituency that I

represent. But I will get there shortly. And I got the call that the young man just finished a game of football and he got shot. And I journeyed - yet again, another gun crime in this country. And I left my home and I journeyed to the hospital, spent the entire night. And his battle for life was not successful. So I am here still grieving at the loss of a dear one very close to me as a result of illegal gunplay in this society.

And we can mention many, because many of you and many of us, both on the government side and on the opposition, we are close to people. I am sure some of us probably are close to Dwight Holder, who just got shot in the realms of St. Michael somewhere within Bush Hall. And these are some of the things that the honourable member for St. Joseph spoke about, because you can build the buildings - this is the capacity - but you don't have the capability to fight the crime. And I must at this time pause and compliment the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force because they have been doing a wonderful job with the minimal resources, or the little resources, that they have. And we will laugh and talk about not having a police van and not having a police car. But these are critical things because you can save a life with response equipment if you move on time. But if you don't have that equipment and if you don't have the capability that is built out through the entire Barbados within the police force, then we still have a challenge. And that is what the honourable member for St. Joseph was speaking about.

So when we talk about crime in this country, it is relative. The honourable Attorney General, member for St. Philip South, he spoke about crime being down by 13 per cent in 2015 versus 2014. That is what we can quote - statistics in terms of percentage. But after there are two or three deaths or gun-related incidents, it is just as bad as if there are ten. Because you know what, Madam Deputy Speaker? The lives of some citizens in this country - our citizens, our families - would be affected by that. And that is the point. And we as a government and we as an opposition, we have to put ourselves in the shoes of these families. I am still living among the Eiffel family. My good friend Shamar Eiffel - when I see his mother daily, a young man in his 20s who lost his life. So I can speak to that with respect to passion and the grief that I feel and I have felt as a result of gunplay that took the life of a friend of mine in the heart of Ellerton, St. George. So this is by no means a women's fancy debate. This is very critical to the citizens of this country.

Because I often go to do a little bit of research when I am in this - it is not an area of my core competence. And I often refer to certain aspects of literature with respect to policing, and I am not ashamed to say that. And one of the things that I stumbled on is: as a government, you are held accountable for public safety and the perception thereof in your community. In turn, you likely delegate to your local

police agency the primary responsibility for public safety. So clearly government has a major role to play. And I heard the honourable member again for Christ Church West Central - I mean, he likes to talk, but at the end of the day, community policing is the go-to form of policing and it is just not sending policemen into the community. Because certain aspects - in fact, government has a direct role in addressing crime and disorder in their communities through their ability to develop broad collaborative partnerships among government agencies, businesses, and private citizens to implement effective public safety strategies. And when you research the literature, it speaks to government's role in providing that safety net for the citizens of our country.

And yes, the honourable member for Christ Church West Central spoke about tennis and he used a term that was very derogatory to the young men who play draughts. He said "bad men." I have a group of men who play draughts and they would have won the tournament and they are not classified as bad men. Some of them are men on the block. And I wish to correct the honourable member for -

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Yes, honourable member. I never used the word "bad men" in describing those persons who participated in that draughts tournament. I never used that word. I would challenge you all as a member to prove that, but I never used that word. Never did.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Continue, please. I have better things to do than to spend my afternoon debating whether he said "bad men" or not. But the record will reflect what the honourable member for Christ Church West Central said. So let us move on because community policing has a lot to do with what the honourable member spoke about, even though he used the wrong terminology to describe what is occurring within the communities. And it is a good initiative by his agency as well, because the draughts and the road tennis - they are good areas by which police can get involved through government intervention. And I would like to see that when we have these tournaments, you invite the police to submit a team. That is what community policing is.

I would like to see the police going to the schools because I heard the honourable Attorney General mention the aspect of not being able to find male policemen. There is a shortage, and I am saying that should not be the case because you have rampant unemployment in this country. You have rampant unemployment in this country. But yet the learned Attorney General gets up in this honourable chamber and says that he is having a difficulty finding male policemen. And we are saying men are in crisis - then there is something wrong with what is being done to recruit these young males. Because I am saying if you go to the schools - and the honourable member for Christ Church West Central is saying that the policemen go to the schools,

likewise I am hearing the member for St. Philip North saying that - but if we are going to the schools, then I am saying you have young men coming out of schools at age 16 and 17. Offer them some incentives. Not just these young men, but young men with A-levels. If you want to attract a good calibre of person in the police force to build out the capability that we require to maintain that safety net and to fight crime, I am challenging you that you find those gentlemen and those ladies with the A-levels and fast-track them in the force. They will go through the same training, the regional training school, spend the time - whatever the year. Then they go into some aspect of policing, mainstream policing, but you offer them an incentive: say, okay, after two years I will allow you to go and study for your degree in sociology or do law. These are some of the things that will attract young police, young male and female.

But just to go there and say, okay, we are on a recruitment drive - we have to change the way we do business in this country and the way we as a government and opposition see our people. Because if we have a crisis on our hands, and it indeed is a major crisis with respect to illegal guns and crime on the whole, then we have to be creative. We cannot just sit down on our laurels and say we cannot find males, we cannot find females. That is an indictment on the government. You have a responsibility, as it says here in the literature, to empower the police force and those in charge to find suitable candidates or create suitable candidates to fill those vacancies. So stop going around saying that you cannot find policemen when we have rampant unemployment in this country.

Now, community policing - which I believe strongly in - because when we look at businesses, we look at apartment owners. These are some of the persons who can help fight crime and gunplay, because these are the people who can deal with burglary, whether they put up the necessary systems, security systems. Retail stores - these are some of the persons who can fight crime with respect to shoplifting. Bars and nightclubs - these are some of the persons who can fight crime by minimising offending opportunities and not creating that haven. Because in all fairness, some of the nightclubs and the bars - when you go in, that is where the police presence is needed. And there is a case - I am not sure, I am asking the question - when you ask the policemen to go into the nightclubs and the bars, if they have to be paid, I am not sure if that is one of the reasons why they are not going. Because these are some of the areas. This is a major aspect of community policing that we need to speak about. And I did not hear that coming from the learned Attorney General in his presentation, because he may be saving it for his wrap-up. But these are some of the areas that we need to focus on, because tactics must be heavily dependent on engaging the community to reduce crime. We can build as many police stations as you like and you do not have the capability - the capacity can

be there and you do not have the capability - then you still have a problem.

Now we have also to look at some of the other aspects of this resolution, because this resolution came to this House and I heard the honourable member for St. Philip South - the learned Attorney General - say that the National Insurance Board was happy to loan this money to the government. And it is a clear case again that this government continues to use the national insurance funds. Whether the honourable member, Madam Deputy Speaker, for Christ Church West Central likes this statement or not, it is a fact. Whether they borrow the money or they pay anything or they take it and they use it on Four Seasons, it is a fact, because I know very well. Madam Deputy Speaker, while the National Insurance Board might be happy about loaning that money to the government - that \$76 million - the National Insurance Board should be more happy if the government pays in the \$220 million that they owe to the National Insurance Board. And I can break it down for you.

So the honourable member for Christ Church West Central can say whatever he likes in this honourable House. He can say whatever he likes. Because when you look at Four Seasons Clearwater - \$9.2 million owed by government to the NIS - and we are going to take it further because it is just not Four Seasons. Statutory corporations: I can come to - government, QEH \$12.42 million; Transport Board \$9.61 million - this at 2014. And I beg the question: how much of this has been paid? I would like to see the revised and the current figure of money owed by government to National Insurance. BAMC \$5.65 million. SSA \$7.63 million. National Housing Corporation half a million. This represents - statutory corporations represent \$36.3 million out of the \$220 million owed to the National Insurance Board.

But I heard the honourable Attorney General say that the National Insurance Board is happy to loan this money - the \$76 million - to the government. And they would be happier if the government - the proposed settlement by the Minister of Finance of the \$130-something million from the central government - if that is paid in addition to the \$36 million. So we as members on this side, we do not have any issue with the buildings that are being built with respect to the police. But when you continue to use the people's money - and the honourable member for St. Michael North West, he will get up and he will challenge, he will say certain things, but I do not mind - because he keeps saying that these monies will - I see here a 6 per cent interest. The rate of interest to be applied to the principal sum outstanding should be 6 per cent per annum over the term of the facility. I would like the government, when you utilise this \$76 million, do not treat it like the \$220 million that you owe the National Insurance Board. Pay as you articulated here in this resolution. I will hold you to pay as

you articulated here in this resolution. Do not leave anything for us to clean up with respect to this \$76 million. Please pay to the National Insurance Board as articulated in this resolution.

But I am not finished with respect to NIS, because the Minister - the honourable Minister of Finance, member for St. Michael North West - he plans to settle the amount owed, the \$130-something million dollars owed, in long-term paper and medium-term paper, minimal cash. Minimal cash. And he knows that too, because we know very well that out of this \$131 million from central government that is owed, cash represents only \$32 million.

So you have 100 million that is being settled in long term paper and in medium term paper. And you know from the actuarial report that the actuary said that NAS is holding too much government paper. So we continue. And it's a fact, if you read the 14th actuarial report, you will see that the actuary said in their summary that the National Insurance Scheme is holding too much government paper. But I also noticed that the Minister of Finance is planning to pay, I think he said, monthly \$2.5 million in cash, that is the arrears, to assist with some of the arrears.

Now, I don't know if that is being paid and I am asking the question to you, the members of the Government - if the \$2.5 million that has been promised to be paid on a monthly basis, if it is being paid to the National Insurance - because whereas this resolution may in fact be heavily bent on policing and aspects of community policing and also what this Government should be doing to fight crime, we still have a duty of care to this National Insurance Fund. And I'm asking this Government to exercise the duty of care with this money. Borrowed this \$76 million to pay as per the resolution stated. And do not treat this like you have treated the Towers at Warrens that you want to settle in medium term paper.

Again, the Towers at Warrens is supposed to be settled - the Towers at Warrens that is supposed to be settled in medium term paper - \$8.16 million. This is not George Payne Tower. I don't know whether George Payne has a tower, but I know this has to do with what you built at Warrens and you have to pay back and you're paying in medium term paper, please, Madam Deputy Speaker. So I am hoping that this rental income and this service charge at Warrens Towers be paid as stated, because this is really not good, Madam Deputy Speaker, to continue to use the National Insurance Fund without paying what is owed.

And I questioned the National Insurance Board because when you brought this resolution to me, I will be putting a clause in this resolution that states that you have to furnish the National Insurance with a certain amount before I can give you the \$76 million. I am not at all against building the police stations, but what I am against is

using the National Insurance Fund as if it is yours. It is not yours. It is money held in trust for the people of this country.

But I am one, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I wish not to go there. Because if I go there, some members in this Honourable House, Madam Deputy Speaker, will get vexed with me. But I will steer like a respectable married man and I will discuss the issues that are at hand. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So, being the wiser thing, Madam Deputy Speaker, this resolution has two parts to it. It has the aspect of policing and it has the aspect of utilising the National Insurance Fund. It is a very serious resolution and it speaks to the safety of our citizens in this country. And this Government thus far has been unable to reduce the crime rate or deal with the perception of the high crime rate in this country. And that's a reality. Whether the fact is that 13 per cent relates back to an increase from 2014 to 2015 relates back to the 2013 figure of the crime statistics is irrelevant, because all theory speaks to perception as it relates to crime. And if you go and you do your research, it has nothing to do with 13 or 5 per cent. It is how the citizens of this country perceive crime that you have to address.

And we, as an opposition, we are willing to assist you - the Honourable Member for St. Joseph who spent many years as Attorney General. And we must forget calling people clowns and things, insulting people in this Honourable House, Madam Deputy Speaker. And utilise the skills that are available to you. On that note, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not going there because I don't know who's criminal from who ain't criminal, Madam Deputy Speaker, because there is a verdict from my side saying that there are criminals over there. And I'm hearing over there that they are criminals over here. And I know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we have all credible members on this side on the opposition, but I can't speak to what is over there. So I will not get into criminality in this debate.

I am speaking about the Honourable Attorney General who has come to this House with a resolution and has not brought any solutions with respect to fighting crime in this country. I am hoping that in his wrap-up, he can present those solutions to this Honourable House. And I'm certain the same way the members on the opposition would have agreed with the resolution with respect to building capacity with respect to the police, we will support your resolutions

as it relates to fighting crime. But I want to end on a note because this is very serious and I speak on behalf of the residents of St. George, both St. George South and North. And I know the Honourable Member for St. George

North would endorse my comments. Sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker, because we have a serious challenge.

I said earlier, I am living through a death that occurred just over a year and a half ago, and there are many citizens, not just in St. George, but who are living in the City and who are living in the St. Michael area, who want to leave their residence as a result of gunplay occurring at night. Whether it is friendly gunplay or not, it is unwelcome gunplay. It is unwelcome gunplay. And I am asking the Government and the Honourable Member for St. Philip South in his wrap-up if he can give us some strategies and how he intends to fight crime in this country and how he intends to fight gun-related activity, unwanted gun-related activity in this country. And with those words, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm obliged.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Deputy Speaker, I also rise to speak on this debate and to correct some errors that were placed before this House. Because the impression has been placed before this House that when government borrows money from the National Insurance Fund that the government is doing the National Insurance Fund a disservice. The truth is that at least \$38 million of this money will be spent on wages. And straight off, the National Insurance Fund will be reckoning about nearly \$7.5 million in contributions because of this investment. And it has nothing to do with this interest that it would have earned from the investment.

And may I also say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the National Insurance Fund is getting from government a rate of return per year at 6 per cent, whereas within the banking system they can hardly get 2.5 per cent. So you can clearly see that the government is paying the National Insurance Fund nearly 3.5 per cent more than what they can actually get on the open market. But you know what is interesting? And sometimes we have to be very careful how we employ external sources to come and tell us things, because I heard the honourable member referring to the Actuary study and how it said that they should be careful how they lend government money. But in that same study it tells government that these monies should be invested overseas to employ people elsewhere at a rate of return much less than what we are paying. And on top of that, what they are actually saying is that we should not help our own economy but we should take the National Insurance funds earned by the people of Barbados and employ other people and also prop up the economy of other persons.

And I am saying that when you get an opposition to come to this Parliament and to repeat that type of foolishness, one must ask the question. No, not the opposition saying foolishness - I am saying what the

Actuary said is foolishness and they are repeating it. That is what I said. Madam Deputy Speaker, one must be very careful how you can just lift something from a document and come to this Parliament and behave as if you are not educated enough to analyse what is in that document and then come and regurgitate it as if you do not have an understanding of yourself. And I am so prepared to repeat it that you do not even have the common decency to stop and see how you are insulting yourself and insulting your country and trying to destroy the economy of your own country.

So when one gets an argument coming to this House and it being repeated by the opposition and the members cheering it on, one must ask where are the loyalties of the people within the opposition - whether they care about the country or they care about external forces and do not care about the country of Barbados.

I also want to make the point that, yes, one must admit that this debate goes back as far as 1997. We have been discussing these issues as they relate to the police as far back as 1997. And if you doubt me, one only has to go back to what was said by the former Attorney General who spoke on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party today, even though he was not in the House at the time. He said that these things were discussed as far back as 1997. And we know that the opposition do not care too much about the police, because as far back as 1997, that was when VAT first came in and within nine months of VAT being introduced, there was a surplus of nearly \$200 million. So we should not have been in here today discussing borrowing money from the National Insurance Fund. We should have used some of that surplus money to build the police stations and so on.

I also want to ask a question. If you all are talking about the \$76 million that is being spent on the buildings and then asking what is going to happen about the vehicles, what is going to happen about the furniture - are you all saying that we should also approach the National Insurance Fund so that we can not only give them buildings but we should also furnish the buildings and also give them money to buy a proper fleet? If that is what you all want to say, put it on the table. But do not behave like the honourable member for St. George South who is saying that we should not use the money to give the police proper facilities or to give them vehicles or to furnish buildings for them to work in. In the other breath you are saying these things and then you are asking us to solve the crime. You want us to solve the crime but you do not support us providing the provisions and the facilities to enhance the police force and give them the tools to solve the crime.

Madam Deputy Speaker, how can you win with these people who cannot say anything positive - every time they open their mouths it is as if only negatives can come

out on behalf of country Barbados. And in the other breath they will then turn around and tell you they want to run the same country. They are not matching up, Madam. I beg them to at least see something positive for once. Everything is negative about country Barbados and then they will tell you how they love country Barbados and how they would do everything to be able to run country Barbados after trying to destroy it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you would not believe that they had over 14 years and did nothing. They did not even build one police station. The last police station was built by the Democratic Labour Party where we had to refurbish the whole police station, and they had all the money. Now I am hearing about crime. I am hearing about crime. But you know what is worse? I am hearing about vision. I am hearing about vision. But you would not believe, Madam Deputy Speaker, who was the Attorney General. You could not believe that the honourable member for St. Joseph was the Attorney General. And you hear all that long talk today by him giving the impression that all of a sudden crime is out of hand.

Let me say this to you. I have lived in Barbados long enough to know that if we have nine gun crimes, that is serious. And that is what he said - that already we have nine gun crimes. Listen, everybody knows that nine gun crimes exist just as nine attacks by a cutlass did, or nine big rocks being thrown. All that has happened is that people are no longer using big rocks or cutlasses. They are using guns. And do not tell me that people - I remember going to school every day, people used to throw rocks and so on. I also know people used sticks to beat people. So if you are counting crime, you have to compare what used to happen when they used to throw big rocks, when there used to be sticks and when there used to be cutlasses. So do not make people believe that a gun crime is any different to when somebody used to throw big rocks or use a stick or use a cutlass, because the analysis must be that you use what you had at the time. We do not write letters anymore - we use the cell phone and we use email. So we have to equate the occasion and what is happening at the point in time. Because there is a gun, it does not mean that gun crime is new and that there was not something before the gun.

And we have to appreciate that when they come in here and give the impression - and you know why they are trying to give the impression that Barbados is worse off - it has nothing to do with this \$76 million. It has to do with the tourism statistics. And they want to send a negative message out there to tell people do not come to Barbados, that they have all these gun crimes and that this is the first time Barbados has ever had crime. Everybody knows that this is not the first time. And in every country in the world you have crime, and yet they understand these things. They come from countries - some of them come from countries

where you cannot even walk by yourself. So all of a sudden now we are hearing all this foolishness.

I am hearing now that we should not only build what we are building - they are even asking us now to go and finish the St. John polyclinic. They ask us to build a police station at Six Roads. In other words, they are criticising us and at the same time asking us to build a police station at Six Roads. They had all the money to do it and they never touched these things. But they were very selective - they knew why they wanted something in St. George and they knew why they wanted something in Crab Hill. They knew. But they come in here today and behave as if this is the first time Barbados has ever had crime. Whatever they tell you, they can talk what they like - we are going to build these police stations and that is why we are here today. This is not talk, this is action. And the reason why it is action is because we are here for the money. And it is not only about police stations - we are creating jobs, helping with the economy and sending the right message. So it is not just \$76 million. We are coming here and we are also ensuring that we are sending a message that we know how to use investments wisely.

In Singapore, the money paid into the national insurance fund is used to build up the country and expand the country so that the fund can generate greater returns. In England, the same money is used for healthcare. And so in Barbados, the Barbados Labour Party and their friends will want us to take this money and bury the talent, Madam Deputy Speaker. Are you hearing me? What they are asking this country is to take the money and bury the talent given to us by the Lord. Why? Other countries can take the money and use it to expand the economy. No, but not in Barbados. Barbados has over \$9 billion in the bank - do not use it. The National Insurance Fund is full of money - do not use it to help your country. But yet when they were in government, they used some too. Yes, but they borrowed a lot. But right now, after all the money they have borrowed, the only thing you can see are assets that never produced one cent in foreign exchange. Not one cent in foreign exchange. A prison cannot service itself. I do not even know why they had the gall to come in here and talk about what we promised to do.

They got a new prison. And what it does - every year \$30 million you have to find for it. And you know what was disgraceful? We should not even have to worry about what to do with the old prison. I do not know who concocted the decision that the kitchen should be burned down so you could get a new prison, because all that was damaged at our prison was the kitchen. There was no need for a new prison at that time when we wanted money to develop the productive sectors. But what did you get? You got that and you got a highway. And I also heard - how much money was spent on the judicial centre? I challenge anyone to show me a penny in foreign exchange that they

generated. Anyone? The amount of debt that we have to pay every year.

And I can tell you, I can show you - this is to protect the number of tourists that we are going to bring into Barbados. I can identify, I can tell you why we are borrowing this money: because of the number of tourists we are bringing in, the number of people that we have living in Barbados, to ensure that everything goes well because we are protecting the growth. That is the \$76 million. But you cannot tell me anything about your prison.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have a situation now where because we can identify and show how we have to protect the citizens of Barbados and also the economic growth based on the number of tourists we have coming into Barbados, they have a problem. Look, I can tell you this - this August, you are still seeing a lot of tourists in Barbados, and they are vexed about that because anything good offends them. Yes, you are vexed. You have not grown up yet, as I was saying.

So when they built the Hall of Justice and all of that - and then build the police station - you do not build the Hall of Justice first. But you know what about them? They love to lock up. They love to lock up. You know that they came in here with a prison to hold over 2 000 people and after we criticised them they dropped it to 1 200. They said the prison was bursting at the seams at the same time they were saying they had to get a new prison for 2 000 because the one at Station Hill was bursting at the seams. And I have to go back because I know it pains you. They said that the prison at Station Hill was bursting at the seams and that they wanted a prison for 2 000 people. The only economic growth in their figures was the increase from 1 200 to 2 000. That was their economic growth - that is what you were building: a prison with 2 000 to lock up the people of Barbados. But you know what happened? They allowed for a prison for over 1 200 and we still have room, and somewhere now we might have to rent it out to other countries because we intend to reduce the rate, not increase the rate like how they were doing it.

But you know they do not like us. So they come in here talking about the 2004 Law Reform report. I would like to know how much out of the 2004 Law Reform report they were able to put in place with all the money they had. So all the talk you have heard about how crime is creating trauma in the entire Barbadian society - the trauma that I see, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the growth in tourism. And if you call that trauma, well I will not be part of that one. So they can come in here and they can say whatever they like.

The point is that we have been able to demonstrate that we did not abuse the national insurance funds and that it was for justifiable reasons. Let me tell you something.

The only fund that the nationalist fund has is the government of Barbados. All other investments do not get the return that it gets from the government of Barbados. So I want the actuary and all those persons, even some of the people who sit on the board to understand that the government of Barbados is a friend to the National Insurance Fund and because of the government above it that is why the fund is so healthy. So all the bad motion that is going on I want to stop and I hope that the board will look at the opportunity cost and look at the advice given by that actuary and let him justify what he is paid by our national insurance fund because I personally do not consider him to be a friend of the fund for the simple reason, if he is a friend of the fund and can give that advice, to demonstrate that the fund should be earning less money by not lending government money, but then to take the money and to lend it outside to stop the economy, he is not only, in my opinion, an enemy of the fund, but he is also an enemy of country Barbados. I thank you.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, ma'am. Ma'am, I want to lend my support to this loan of \$76 million for the construction and the renovation, in some instances, of police stations in Barbados. I am happy that the Cane Garden complex will hopefully be included in this set of construction and projects. I learned from the honourable Attorney General that it will be a \$15 million amount to be spent over a two-year period. I still pass and look at this spot daily because I knew that over two years ago it was cleared, fully cleared, and I sensed that something should happen. But of course, you know, with the rainfall in St. Thomas, it is all covered in bush again. But I wait with bated breath for the project to happen and I pray that the conclusion will come sooner rather than later, after the construction has started.

I know that the Democratic Labour Party started some projects between 1991 and 1994 in St. Thomas that remained in bush. Bricks in some instances, and of course a whole lot of steel. The King Garden -

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: - housing project. On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, the honourable member is misleading the House by saying that we started projects between 1991 and 1994, which is when we ended our term. So the honourable member is blaming us for the non-continuation of projects because after 1994 the Barbados Labour Party would have been in government for 14 years. So if we started the projects, we could not be blamed for not completing them. Thank you.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Continue, Madam Deputy Speaker. Between 1991 and 1994, the Cane Garden housing project was started and it remained full of bush where even the tractors and other large pieces of equipment as part of the project had rusted by the time the election was called in 1994. Similarly, the Lester Vaughan School. I

can see the picture in my mind's eye even now, and those are only two, but it was only bricks and steel. But they have been brought to completion. And the Cane Garden project has more than 150 houses in it. And the Lester Vaughan School houses children from across the length and breadth of Barbados.

I am not, ma'am, going to speak about the St. John Polyclinic because I am waiting with bated breath, as you are, ma'am, for it to come to completion. It is a project, ma'am, that I know your late husband and you had a vision and a passion for its completion because your constituents mean a lot to you, you care about them, and therefore you ask your questions every time. And I share your pain, ma'am, because I am suffering as a result of no police station in St. Thomas. So the honourable member for St. Lucy should really leave me alone and let me complete my presentation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe that the project, which will comprise a magistrate's court, a police station, and I am not sure what else, ma'am, that it is important for those two components of that project to happen. But I think it was near-sighted to have taken out the aspect for the library, as was outlined by the honourable minister this morning, in the light that this would have been a project that would have been in existence before - by my predecessor - and changes had to be made, it had to be taken back to the drawing board to be able to make some adjustments, because at first, I understand it was only a police station. But in these times, where the technological world has taken over almost everything, a little query - not only of me or necessarily of me, but the people of St. Thomas who matter - would have been able to say to the honourable minister and his team: make it a community technology project. Leave the location there. There are persons who will give computers and other forms of equipment that residents from the surrounding communities could use, especially in these harsh economic times when there is limited money and people have to focus on other aspects of their lives.

When we look, ma'am, at the demographic shifts and the way St. Thomas is now building out, and you look at places like Bridgefield, Whitehall Village, Jackson, King Garden, Shop Hill, Hopewell and others, a lot of impoverished people live there who cannot afford the technology. And that aspect of it will add to the kind of character we are looking at, will merge in the community with the police station. And I am sorry that component of it has been left out of the project. It would have been a library requested before because we knew what was going on in the early 1990s and thereafter, but that technological resource centre would have been a better deal.

I want to recommend, ma'am, through you to the honourable minister, if you will allow me to have that

magistrate's court, when this project is finished, returned to the people of St. Thomas as its community centre. That community centre would have been more than 50 years old - it is still a community centre - but it was changed under the Democratic Labour Party years back. And I am not complaining about that. I am just making the point. When you remove a community centre that would have been as active as the community centre at Rock Hall, where everything happened when it came to community life, and turn it into a magistrate's court, then the community life started to dwindle. Ma'am, that community centre serviced the people of St. Thomas for their cultural activities as well as the other social aspects of living, and it has been terribly and sorely missed. And therefore, I am requesting that whenever the police station complex is completed or the Cane Garden complex reaches fruition, that the magistrate's court be returned to the community as the community centre. And I am sure that it will serve a wonderful purpose because you are talking residents in Content, Rock Hall, Spring Farm, Pori Spring, Dunscombe - communities that are there where the people really need opportunities. The pavilion is too small and cannot even accommodate a simple meeting of 50 people. The community centre will help in that respect. So I am asking that be given some consideration.

I recall, ma'am, in the 1990s as well, when Minister Simmons was there, I think there would have been three ministers of education -

during that period. And there was a lot of talk about gangs, and we were told, there are no gangs. They're just giddy headed young people who don't really mean any lot of harm. And we saw a spiral, a spiraling of gang related activity that was halted. But I want to highly commend the youth affairs department for working in communities, helping to empower persons. But at one point, more particularly, working with the youth on crime. I will never forget, ma'am, young people in Prout, at Hopewell, and at times Bridgefield, where there were always tension. And my predecessor worked with the youth affairs department to go into those communities, to be able to work with them in a lot of physical activities, in sports, football and so on. And the police officers were told, don't even come. These young people can control their own. But the director, Mr. Richard Carter, worked closely with the groups, and that whole set of tension was brought to naught. It came to an end, and the guys in Hopewell and the ones in Bridgefield and so on are all happily living together. It was the intervention of the Youth Affairs Department through the youth commissioners who were key at the resolution of those challenges.

I cannot say the same for today, ma'am, because the youth commissioner I had, who was a St. Thomas person, the youth commissioner who would have been in St. Michael North East, the youth commissioner who would

have been in St. Michael South, and so on, all of those youth commissioners, ma'am, have now been scattered. The former member for St. George South said it in this honourable chamber that they were scattered and other members on the side of the government supported. Yes, scattered them. They were Barbados Labour Party acolytes. Today, my youth commissioner tries, because I know her now, but she would not have the kind of direct impact on the youth in St. Thomas because she doesn't know them, they don't know her. They're not interested in knowing because the way that it has been done, the youth commissioner has to be out of touch. The vision for youth commissioners was to choose individuals from the communities where they live, where they knew the persons, the aged, the youth, the not so old, the working class and so on. That was completely removed. Unfortunately, the youth commissioner for St. Michael South is now in Christ Church South. Nobody now has to become familiar. And there were so many interesting and impactful projects that were undertaken by those commissioners because they knew the people and the confidence level was there. We are not seeing that anymore, ma'am. And I think that was a retrograde step in changing it up to create confusion.

Another thing I saw the youth affairs department do at that time was to indicate to the youth the dangers of guns and other weapons. And the same youth affairs department developed a project where parents who had bought guns for their children were encouraged to bring in the toy guns and they were given educational toys in exchange for them. And that changed that whole outlook. I never bought guns for my children or my grandchildren, ma'am. Never mind. It could be a water gun. I don't care what kind of gun it is. Once it's a gun, I dislike it. And therefore that project went a long way in helping to change parents' attitudes around about buying toy guns.

The other thing, ma'am, I want to say is that a lot of youth are restless, giddy headed. They are getting the wrong influences and as a result they're displaying their ignorance in communities across the length and breadth of this country. Some of them are very soundly educated and I think that their economic potential has now been thwarted by some of the policies of this government that are impacting on them. They have no employment. Every year we turn out 3 500 young people from schools, approximately. Because when you look at common entrance, if 3 500 are writing, then 3 500 will most likely come out if they don't get into the community college and the other institutions. Many of them are not going to community college now because their parents don't have the funding to pay for them up front. Many of them are not in the polytechnic as a result of the funding that is unavailable because parents have lost their work. Over 16 000 people, Madam Deputy Speaker, would have lost their work in the private sector and another 3 500 would have lost their employment in the government. Who are they?

Working class people who do not know how to make ends meet today.

Because my mother always said, you have to mix the spiritual, the natural to be able to make your point. A lot of them are now unemployed. I know some of them who have been waiting for the national insurance, the unemployment monies that has not come to them yet. And they're still waiting and relying on others to help them with their day to day activities. There are many young men who were on the block that were brought off the block and were working in NCC, NHC and the other agencies. They are now back on the block and are scrunching to find money to pay for their children's textbooks and to prepare them for school in September. And I'm not going to say so. What do you expect them to do? I don't share that view at all. Madam Deputy Speaker. Because Barbadians must learn how to cut and contrive, and there's no easy way to lead into crime. Because when your character is tarnished, if you care about character at all, then you know that you can never, ever get it back. And therefore, I am saying to them, you must learn to cut and contrive. You must become creative in what you do.

But a lot of the opportunities for young people have been thwarted because of the economic situation and some of those poor policies that were instituted by this government, that has caused them now to be on the breadline and literally begging. It is unreasonable. It is unconscionable to have put some of those measures in place. And now the same people who had employment two years ago, a year and a half ago, six months ago, are now on the breadline. And it is easy, when you have hardship, to be enticed by negatives, to be able to raise your money to do what you have to do, because you can't go anywhere for money. Others are saying, you're always begging, man, don't hide from him, hide from her. Always begging, always. But they're asking because they have no other avenue through which to raise the funds to look after themselves or even to feed their children or pay their bills, which is very critical at this time.

Their opportunities for study, as I said, have been thwarted. Leicester Vaughan School used to have more than 300 individuals on an evening, Monday to Friday at the school. That whole continuing education programme is now closed. The university students - when my lady from Arthur C. was dismissed and she has 15 children in her house, she said, the thing that hurts me more than anything else is my daughter was just accepted for UWI and she now has to have her plans dashed. And I hope the honourable minister will give more poor people some of the funding to help them in the stipend or whatever it is that's being offered, because the poor people need it. There are others who can afford that will still go a begging. But I wish for a proper means test to be done so we can bring some more of

those youth into the environment where they can study and they can be trained.

I lament every day, Madam Deputy Speaker, over the situation where there was a vocational training board project at Holy Innocents Pavilion. And I'm going to say it every time because it hurts me. It hurts me to the core. And those young people who were performing the duties in the skilled area are now at home or on the street or doing some mischievous thing because that department has been closed, has been renovated, and is housing the constituency council. Where are the priorities then? I want to hear members saying, speak. Where are the priorities? How do you dislocate all those young people? Have them now somewhere around doing something that they should not be doing when that facility has been closed and that is another door shut in their face in their development in this country.

Well, I am one of the persons who said that there has been political interference in the police force. I say that because we saw a commissioner of police being removed. More than two years have elapsed and nothing has happened yet. We have seen senior officers who opposed, who opposed that they were being overlooked for promotion. I think there were 14 of them. And all, like today, appointments have been given to others. Those gentlemen are waiting for the court cases to happen, for their rights to be put on the front line.

I am tired. And the honourable member and minister of youth kept saying that this should not be bipartisan. And I agree. When you're talking crime, you should be talking a bipartisan approach, not tearing down and pulling down. But when other comments came in after the honourable member spoke this morning, the honourable minister and attorney general spoke this morning. I intended to go down a smooth line and I will not support anybody in Barbados, Madam Deputy Speaker, whether it is a politician or a regular parent or a banker or anybody who chooses to go to a police station and demands a bullet that his nephew has taken to school and the report be taken from the station diary. That is political interference, Madam Deputy Speaker. I don't know who it is. I think it is wrong, it is unconscionable, it is unreasonable, it is unfair. And if we are going to be speaking the truth, we must speak the truth and speak it ever cost it what it will.

I think, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we have too many trigger happy young people among us. Some of them are in their thirties and forties too. In their forties. They're no longer young and some of the gangs are out of control. I have lost some decent young men that were my friends and my neighbours, not just constituents. One of them I knew from birth. And he lost his life on Christmas morning at Ealing Grove Highland around 3:30, 4:00 - one of the best barbers, Madam Deputy Speaker, you could ever want - from a foolish boy in St. Joseph who had a semi-automatic

rifle. They don't even think the police have them. And lick a shot. Lick a shot. That's what you were hearing. And the shot went in the air and four fellas - he didn't know how to use the gun either - came down and Halbert Nichols lost his life on the spot. He had just got on the scene to celebrate. It is wrong.

And then I had Don from Naya Castle, who turned up to a Guinness Rush Hour in July 2013, was left dead on the scene near Mahogany Gully and two young ladies who are my neighbours, they had shots in their feet and so on. I don't even think to this day that anybody was found responsible for the murder. You've come to enjoy yourself and to drink some Guinness and have some fun. Why are you coming with guns? Why are you coming with any weapons at all? And I cannot understand. Where is the love for mankind? Where is the love for my neighbour, my friend, when it comes to a matter like that? If you're leaving home with a gun, you're leaving home to create some kind of felony. You're leaving home to destroy, to kill, to maim and to disfigure and hurt.

It is hurting because I know the honourable member for Christ Church South has a tremendous challenge on his hand. He and his team, every time you hear a shooting - ordinary taxpayers of Barbados have gone to the hospital to get treatment, whether it be their diabetic attacks or they met some sprained ankle or they met some injury that they cannot go down to the private institutions in the night to have it looked at. And then you hear this body come in with bullet wounds, the next body come in with bullet wounds and they have to be pushed on the back burner to accommodate young people who have not turned a straw against the wind. Madam Deputy Speaker, they've never worked for anybody's dollar bill, they've never put a cent in the national insurance, they've never given the church a \$5. But all decent citizens who are waiting in the casualty have to be put on the back burner. And they can understand that because the lives of the persons who may have been shot might not have even been a part of the confusion. But innocent bystanders at times have to be in it as well.

The hospital has gone out and had to upgrade its security. And that is understood because when you're going into the casualty, you have to be screened because another madman or two went in and threatened people and shot somebody. And I know the name of that boy too. Anyhow, I don't know him, but I know the name because some of the names register for life - and threatened those patients. And so in the hospital, it is wrong. And we may ask where are the parents and guardians and other mentors in this society?

In respect of that, I am concerned, ma'am, of what I've been seeing over the past weeks. There have been too many incidences of gun touting. People are moving around Barbados in fear and I think the entire society is concerned,

even though everybody may not come and speak out. And these villains now choose to go into public places. Funerals where many - well, the funeral too, but where people are enjoying themselves. Ma'am, I was jumping in a Kadooment band from 1977 before some of the other honourable members on that side may have been born, on this side as well. And the first time that I decided I will not ever go back, my life is worth more than Kadooment, was in 2012 when two persons were shot near Brighton entrance. Why are you jumping in a band with a gun? And every year since then, shooting.

And that will be fine. That will be fine. I could have jumped behind a Roberts band because I know that people love me and not a felon going to touch me, but I don't know where a stray bullet will go, a bullet might hit somewhere and ricochet. And therefore, I'm not even taking the risk because I feel my life is more important than that. But the point I'm making, how do you become so selfish as an individual who would have benefited by free secondary education at all levels and walk with a gun, to shoot through a crowd on Kadooment day, to injure people?

How do you get so stupid with all the education to go into a neighbourhood and start shooting around and destroy the life of a teacher, destroy the life of a child, destroy the life of a neighbour or some innocent or not so innocent person? Because for me to resolve matters to do with conflict should not be through violence. There are so many other avenues through which one could go to resolve issues. All of a sudden, everybody becomes trigger happy. Madam Deputy Speaker, there are too many heinous crimes in little Barbados. And I know that is not only impacting on us, but if you don't have strategies put in place to curtail it, it's going to interfere with our tourism industry, and we all know that. But Barbadians must be protected first, and we will extend it to our visitors among us, because when we travel, we expect to be properly protected as well.

I am a strong proponent of capital punishment. I am, and I will say it here, never say anywhere else. And I believe that if the agreement we have made internationally does not work, we should be able to find some ways of stepping away from it to be able to make sure our society is safe. I know that in 1994, when the former Attorney General was speaking on his platforms and so, and he spoke strenuously about capital punishment, the crime level in Barbados dropped. Because those persons who have been involved in the shootings this week, the nine shootings, half of them have now gone into hiding. They want their life saved. But the persons that they've injured or maimed or killed must go for nothing.

You know what hurts even more? Sometimes that person is the only breadwinner. The only breadwinner. And

then the family falls apart. Because if the major breadwinner is gone, then who will look after the children? Who will help to pay the bills? Who will help to mentor and guide those children involved? Those are the problems. And it hurts me even more when mothers get involved hiding their children, whether it be girl or boy, and say, not my son, not my daughter. What is happening to the psyche of Barbadians all of a sudden? Ma'am, something is definitely wrong with what is happening in this place.

And I know, and I congratulate the police and the constabulary for the commitment and dedication to protect and to serve this country. Even when a kite is in the air, you call the police. I never heard the dog is barking and you call the police. I am not understanding it, but I know that is what they are subjected to because you are told they are here to protect and to serve and therefore they do their best under the trying circumstances to be able to make a difference in the lives of others.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I also want to indicate the Honourable Minister would have spoken this morning about providing evidence for the police. I know that is a very ticklish one because sometimes confidentiality goes through the window. Confidentiality goes through the window. And I don't think there's any malice intended when persons call your name to say, you know what? X just called me and told me that drugs are in the neighbourhood in such and such a galley near them. And then the persons for whom the drugs belonged is looking for X because X is seen as a snitch or too malicious or minding people's business or took bread out of their mouth or whatever. So we have to make sure that the police are properly trained that if the confidence of the public goes into them even further, that they do not, in a naive way, seek to expose those who are giving them the evidence that is critical in helping them to solve their matters.

I also want, ma'am, to find out if persons give information and act as witnesses. Does the Honourable Attorney General have systems in place for safe places for those people who come up to say, I have witnessed the murder, I have seen the drugs growing. Mr. So-and-so is involved. Is there a safe place? Because Barbados is no longer small. It is as the world is shrinking because of the technology. And so Barbados is getting smaller and smaller. And, you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, I cringe when I see the photographs of some of our persons in the judiciary in the newspaper - magistrate so-and-so, justice so-and-so - in a big picture. Barbados is so small, people sit down and they target you and they ask questions. And then you never can tell. If people feel that they've been given a raw deal in a case, you don't know what they can do. And therefore, I think it is important that safe houses be provided for those persons who are key witnesses so that they don't get cut off before they can actually give the evidence and let those perpetrators be brought to justice.

We know how our lives can be threatened as a result of such.

I also want to say, ma'am, I am very, very concerned at the high level of drugs and the access of it among our young people, particularly our youth. I know that there are some schools that have gangs in them, and our young people are sitting and watching the movies and all that. And I think that's what is helping to add to the foolishness that we are seeing with the shootings and the access to guns and the use of drugs. And so I think that the police force has got a tremendous task on its hand when young people seek recruitment and you have to test them. And if it reveals that they've been using some marijuana or some other drug shows up in the system, some of them have appeared six and seven times, a ring in the nose, a ring in the tongue, tattoos all in the neck. There can't be no police. We need people of good character and moral standing in order for us to have our police force as the impeccable police force in this hemisphere. And we cannot just take in any and everybody who seems to think that, well, I want the work and I got the certificates. These certificates will not be enough. It has to do with character as well in order for us to take them in.

I agree that stronger measures should be instituted at the airport and at the seaport. I don't know how the guns are coming in. I don't know how the drugs are coming in fully. But I believe that the police have some tremendous tasks. I am happy to have seen over the last two or three years that those few police officers that are alleged to be crooked, let me say it that way, are being weeded out of the system and brought to justice. It is important that the public sees that because that helps to build their confidence, to know even their own they will deal with when it comes to a situation where they have sought to breach the law or to do things that are not in keeping with the standards. It helps with that confidence.

I am glad to have heard the Honourable Minister speak to the whole issue of not cutting back the resources for the police or reducing the posts, because we need them now more than ever. And they need the resources to be able to move around, to be able to come on the scene of an accident, have the caution tape, have the spotlights, have all the necessary things for those in the forensic department to be able to come and carry out their duties as required.

The Royal Barbados Police Force needs all the help it can get because I see it as the backbone of building a stable society. And unless we have good, decent men and women carrying the police force forward, then we will meet tremendous challenges. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, they deserve all their allowances, what they were to be getting. They deserve to have them back. They deserve a better working environment, hence the construction of these facilities. They deserve those better resources I

mentioned. And they also deserve better opportunities for training, to be on the cutting edge, as is the world with the cybercrime and everything else. They deserve the training and they also deserve promotion once they meet the criteria.

Finally, I think mentorship of our youth is critical. Too few of us in here and other distinguished people out there who have been born and come to the villages have given a blind eye and deferred to what is happening in their communities. We need to get back into them. I have a character to protect and I have young people. I want them to see and to do well. I want to see them do well in life. And therefore I know that others in this Honourable Chamber devote their time, resources and energies to help the youth and put them on a straight and narrow path. All of us need to get back to the church and carry the children, not only our own, but those in the villages. The church and other community groups and the social groups and civil society are the ones who will help to bring our young people back on board and show them what it is like to live in a just society and let them make their contribution.

At which other level parents are abdicating their responsibility. In some instances, too many parents, I should say, are abdicating. They think that the brand name and so on is the only thing that's necessary for living. They do not understand that good manners, treating people well, volunteering their services and things of that nature are important anymore. You cannot leave your children for only the teachers and others at that level to guide them, to show them what it is like to become a good citizen. I am amazed at the mentality of so many people who have climbed the social ladder and have forgotten from whence they have come. We are feeling it in our communities.

I call on the Honourable Minister for an amnesty of firearms in this country and for a search of vehicles, because a lot of the activity in the gun-toting and the drug transmission and transportation happens at night. I am ready to open my doors and if I am driving at night and any police officer stops me, to let them search - because it has to be a police officer in a uniform and a government police vehicle. Any and everybody can do it because we have so many mock police now. Somebody will steal a police uniform and stop somebody and rob them or whatever. I don't want to be a part of that. I support searches. I support the call for amnesty. I support all other programmes for at-risk individuals, especially in school. Target the students who are at risk. And the community policing that everyone knows will help to make a tremendous difference in our communities in and around Barbados, where we can nurture, we can guide, we can protect, we can do all the necessary positive things to change this country around again.

I want to express without any reservations my support for this resolution. I wish to thank you, ma'am.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the sitting be suspended until 20 minutes past 5:00 this evening.

The question that the House be suspended until 5.20 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: When suspension was taken we are at Order 18 and with that we shall continue. Yes, Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, I just wanted to add just a few thoughts, express a few thoughts in relation to this particular resolution. Of course, as you know, because it is a money resolution, it comes in the name of the Ministry of Finance or the name of the Minister of Finance to effect the borrowing. Therefore, it would be remiss of me, of course, as Minister of Finance if I did not say a few words. But beyond that, the matter to which the resolution is addressed is sufficiently important on its own as to merit an intervention from as many members of the House as is humanly possible.

I want to begin by congratulating the learned Attorney General - and I think the term is the learned Attorney General - for really being the person who conceptualised and designed, along with his staff, and really motivated and pushed for this particular resolution to get here in relation to the work that is proposed, the capital works that are proposed for the various facilities to be put at the disposal of the Royal Barbados Police Force. As I said, it is an important national issue because it is a national security issue in relation to the work which is done by the Force. But I say also in a broader context from this particular point that I am making, in the sense that it also brings yet another stage in the work of this administration in making available and providing for proper facilities for our public servants to work in.

And I do not think, Mr. Speaker, sir, that can be understated or overstated too much, in the sense that one of the challenges that this administration faced when it came to office was a high level of disgruntlement and dissatisfaction - not only by public servants but also by their representatives, the unions in particular - about the quality of buildings and accommodation in which several offices across the general public service and all of those attendant agencies attached to the body of state were made

to work. And even in the most challenging of times financially and fiscally, this administration has found very, very useful and efficacious ways to at least meet some of the basic and minimum requirements of a modern and modernising public service in relation to the facilities and accommodations and the equipment and other capital injections that are required for the workings of that public service.

And we can point to several things. I heard at least one honourable member from the other side make comments very flippantly along the way in his presentation about the Warrens - the so-called Warrens towers - and who is going to pay for them and all of that. But the Warrens towers were designed and implemented, constructed and opened by this administration as a testament to our desire and commitment to lift the quality of workspace environment for public servants in Barbados. We have also gone in other areas where we have done upliftments, improved maintenance for several offices across the government, finding new accommodation, renting new space at tremendous cost to the government through the Ministry of Housing and Lands, who we are advised in this system is to be regarded as the superior landlord for the government. In fact, I believe our rental bill for space is in excess of \$60 million a year - the figure does not come to me with certainty - but in excess of \$60 million on an annual basis. And several of those instances have been because of the vision of this administration to prepare our public service through the provision of appropriate accommodation to them.

So I want to say that the honourable Attorney General, in his quest to bring this resolution here in cooperation with the various ministries which would have had an input in this, and of course with the approval of the Cabinet, must be lauded, must be highlighted for that tremendous piece of work. Indeed, when one considers the fact, Mr. Speaker, sir - and this is not to pat oneself on the back - but when one considers the fact that this is the most substantial intervention by any Attorney General in relation to issues pertaining to accommodation in the public service for the last 30 years, it means that this is something that is worthy of our praise and indeed worthy of the merit which it deserves. And it says something about what we as an administration believe are the priorities for us, because we are not doing this at a time when we have loads of money, when we have the best fiscal situation, when our economy is growing at its peak or near so. We are dealing with this in extremely challenging times. And when one juxtaposes the fact that these situations existed prior to our coming into office, at a time when the country was supposedly awash in money and resources, it says how you can justifiably juxtapose the prioritisation of the two administrations in relation to this. So I say kudos to the Attorney General for the work which he has done in this particular regard.

And I hope that with some degree of alacrity we can begin the actual physical works, particularly, I believe, starting at Hastings going forward, and then we work our way down. Of course, those of us who frequent or represent - as in this case, myself and the honourable member for St. Michael West Central - the area of Blackrock, we long to see a return of a fully operational space for the Blackrock police station, which of course is a major catchment area for the Force and indeed for the communities in terms of population and demographics. It is a major area. It is myself, the honourable member for St. Michael West Central, and you, of course, Mr. Speaker, yourself. So we know very much how the presence of a fully operational space for a police station at Blackrock - in fact, added to it a lot of other things that can go in as well - would be welcomed. So we no doubt would welcome some of that intervention as well. But I think the point is made in that particular regard.

The second point that I want to speak to is this whole issue of financing, because we have heard this issue about financing - not only of this particular body of work, but of the Police Force generally. And I want to give light to any view which has been expressed, or any thoughts which have been held, or any impressions which have been harboured by people in this country, either in the opposition or otherwise, that this government has been cutting short or cutting corners in relation to the financing of the Royal Barbados Police Force. That is simply not the case. In fact, as Minister of Finance, I did every year in the Estimates - and we really have the disciplined forces, certainly the Police Force, visit us in the Estimates to present their estimates as a matter of requirement in relation to having a better understanding of what their requirements are, not to bring them up to Government Headquarters to see what we can cut. In fact, we are very particular and very sensitive about any cuts which we may put to the Police Force vote. Indeed, we only entertain such if they recommend the areas that they believe resources can be lessened and invite for resources to be increased in other areas.

One of the things that comes up every year in particular is the question - as the Attorney General will remind us or can attest to - of the issue of vehicles. The vehicles are always the rolling stop, always a major issue. And both he and I have been trying to explore ways in which we can, not permanently but certainly with some degree of longevity, deal with this issue. And we have been looking at various scenarios in terms of working with some of the garages in Barbados about having some level of consistent supply, maybe on a lease basis, because we have been looking at the lease-based approach to the use of vehicles, knowing that the police vehicles will be heavily used, will have a certain degree of wear and tear because of the heavy use, and will have to be retired - or should be, let me put it that way - retired much earlier than the normal

vehicle that the average person would utilise. And we are looking at those.

Of course, some of the laws do not always permit these things to fit naturally. Especially this issue of how do you deal with getting vehicles on a duty-free basis if the vehicles are being leased? Because the Ministry of Finance will provide to public services a waiver of duty and other taxes in relation to vehicles. But that is on the basis that the vehicles are owned by the department which is asking for the waiver. If the vehicle is leased, the vehicle is actually still owned by the lessor, and therefore the lessee has no real equity in the vehicle. It is being leased and paid for by instalments. So the question is, the law has collided with that in the sense that it said you are not actually going to be giving that duty waiver to the department that is utilising it - you are actually going to be giving it to the owner of the vehicle. And that has caused some issue, but we are trying to work through that to see if we can get around it. It has come up as well with the SSA because we are also looking at equipment for the SSA and the Transport Board. So it has come up in all three of those instances. And we need to have some expeditious examination of this and a resolution of how we can deal in terms of the assignment of the ownership and responsibility for the benefit of having it on a duty-free basis.

So this is an issue that we are looking at because we know it is important. And various Commissioners of Police have come, Attorneys General I am sure have come to Finance on the issue. And I think it is a legitimate issue to raise. But there is no running away or hiding from the responsibility in that particular regard. And it is something that we have to ensure that we continue to look at.

One of the issues that I think is of major importance that we have to look at - and this is not a matter particularly for, well, it is not a matter ideally placed in the Ministry of Finance, but it affects Finance in the sense that it might mean, or will mean, additional resources, so therefore we are enjoined in that particular discourse - and that relates, Mr. Speaker, sir, to the issue of grading. I know the Attorney General did not speak specifically to that issue, but there is a whole question of the regrading of certain positions in the Police Force to be able to ensure that we maintain a level of salary provision for members of the Force, particularly those who operate in the lower ranks, especially in relation to what is happening. And our economic condition has constrained us from giving salary increases over the last few terms - in relation to two salary terms and now almost into our third in relation to that. But it is an issue which we cannot ignore. And I know the other parts of the public service - the teaching service and so forth - I know the Minister of Education would shake his head at that, in agreement, not in disagreement, in agreement that the other parts of the teaching service and so forth, the nursing profession, others who have had to

hold strain in these very difficult and challenging times that we have had to navigate. And I am hoping that very soon we should be able to move beyond that and be able to give some level of increased compensation for our public servants. But of course, that all depends on how our economy turns out and what happens. So that is an issue that I think, coming back to the Force, we have to look at.

We also have to look at the issue of the workload of our policemen and policewomen in the Force. They are doing a lot more work now than they would have done 20 years ago. When you think about the amount of activities - and I am speaking about activities outside of what you will consider to be the normal police work - in relation to all of the fêtes and parties and events that are being held and so forth and so on. And even though people may say, well, of course you have to pay the Force to provide that, if you are not having an expanding force in relation to numbers, it means you are having the same people who have to be redeployed to all of these different events and different activities, even if they are working on an overtime basis or whatever the case may be. It still takes up their time from the regular hardcore policing work which has to be done. And that is something that we have to pay very close attention to in relation to the continuous coverage for Barbados as the Force continues with its mandate to serve and protect, as the saying goes.

Then there are the other auxiliary and attendant services that go with the general policing and crime fighting. The issue of the labs - I do not recall hearing the Attorney General mention that point, but he could really have mentioned it as well. If he did, I apologise. We have had to spend a considerable amount of money on maintaining and upgrading the forensic labs in relation to the forensic centre, which of course we inherited with a number of challenges as well. And that has cost money. A lot of the equipment out there, or some of the equipment out there, has had to be maintained, and a considerable amount of money has had to be spent to upgrade and maintain it over the last few years. That has also cost us a bit of money and the Attorney General has had to fight through to ensure that we maintain those labs at a level that could be considered to be of international standard. You would recall only a few years ago, I believe it was, that we had an issue of fungus or mould out there that we had to deal with and spend some money that we never expected we would have had to spend so early after the labs were redone.

Then I heard honourable members speak about the court building out at White Park Road. The Attorney General - he does not have a whole lot of hair left on his head - he has had to scratch his head about that and how to deal with it. I can speak as Minister of Finance about the condition I found the financial situation in relation to that court, but I am not going to this debate now to do that.

How we found that in a state still of bridging loan stage left by the last administration, millions of dollars being spent in servicing a bridging loan which should have been taken out by a full mortgage. There are tales to be told about that, but this is not the debate for that particular thing because I am not trying to be partisan in any particular way, but we've had to deal with that. And then all of the subsequent issues that have arisen expose the conclusion of the construction and the opening of the building. And we know that there have been challenges over at the court building in relation to that. So government has not shirked in its responsibility in meeting these things in relation to that. And that's why some of the comments from the member for St. George South were a little unfortunate, were very unfortunate actually. But I forgive the honourable member because clearly the honourable member was given a speech. In fact, he was so bold as to actually be scrolling up and down the phone trying to find the text to continue the reading. But I understand, I really do think that after two years or so in this House of Assembly he should really be preparing his own speeches. But yeah, when the phone ran out he had to change the battery and all.

The point really is that this government has stepped up in front of its responsibility in relation to law and order in Barbados and the spending of government resources to ensure that we maintain, even in the most difficult times, a fully functional police force, that we ensure that all of the other attendant services that are necessary, that we have had those services continue, whether it be the forensics, whether it be the court, the court structure and so forth and so on. And those things have cost money. And as a state we have to provide those resources and we have been providing those resources. Indeed, even when we had to take the difficult decision of severing some employees from government, some workers from government's employ, one of the things, the areas that we said would not be touched or affected was the law enforcement services. And we said that upfront. We also said it for teaching, we said it for care of the elderly, we said it for nursing and so forth and so on. There are some core areas in the society that we felt ought to be insulated or isolated from those circumstances and well, they were. And the police force and the police services and so forth and so on, and the general national security areas were shielded from that particular thing.

So therefore, I don't think that one can use this as any partisan debate today. Try to give the impression that the spikes in crime that we have seen in recent times are periodically, as we have seen throughout Barbados's history in the last 20 or 30 years, should draw us to any unfortunate conclusions that there is some crisis of crime in Barbados. I think that is a very, and this is my third point and perhaps the final point. I think this is a very unfortunate thing to do. I really do wish that the media,

particularly the printed media, should stay away from these sensationalisations to give the impression that, and we've heard some members of the opposition latch on to it, that the country is just imploding into a thing of crime.

We just had a Crop Over festival. And as is the case with festivals all over the world, they have had incidents - in Trinidad only like this, here in carnival they have instances going on, incidents occurring in carnival, in Brazil the incidents happening on Eastern Parkway for Labour Day. In fact, at one point in time somebody tried to ban the use of alcohol on Labour Day. Not that we want these things to happen or that we want to brush them aside, but these things happen. But we've just had a Crop Over festival in which we've had some of the biggest fetes with thousands of people attending, properly policed, well manned and very, very few incidents occurring in these things. We've just had thousands of people come in and out of Barbados in a festival, large events, larger than we have seen in recent years. And we were able to navigate that with a degree of success to which when you listen to what people are saying, you would not believe that such a thing happened.

Now, that is not to say, Mr. Speaker, sir, that we should not be concerned about the level of gun violence in Barbados, gun crimes, that we should not be concerned about the number of burglaries that happen, the number of home invasions that happen. One is one too many and that is just simply a fact. One shooting is one too many, one house breaking is one too many. And we have to have a zero tolerance approach to these matters as far and as long as is necessary as a government and as a society. And we have to empathise, not just empathise, but we have to work with communities to ensure that we keep them as safe as is humanly possible.

That is why the over generous recommendations of the member for St. George South are just that, about community policing. Community policing has been happening in Barbados now for I don't know how long, you know, and we've had community posts, we've had officers going into schools, we've had counsellors, we've had all of these things. But it is when we try to denigrate that interventionist thought into politics that you have a problem. That is why when we decided to establish community councils, constituency councils, to see a way in which we can work with the communities to solve their own problems and we invited the opposition to be present, they spat all over them. If I was in a parliament, they would use a different word, but they spat all over them. They refused to join them, they criticised them, they pulled them down, they said everything that was wrong with it. Yet we are now to be lectured about community policing and working with communities. Apparently working with communities only happens or is only good when certain

people are proposing it and doing it. When another set of people doing it, it is a political thing.

I heard all this talk about youth commissioners, youth commissioners and how we're doing all this great work with these youth commissioners. And, okay, I credit you that if you want praise for it, you did wonderful work with the youth commissioners. But we started initiatives as well in the Ministry of Youth, youth mainstreaming. And again, endless possibilities. Again, this is a political thing by the Democratic Labour Party. They spit all of it, poo it and treated as though it is some activity conjured up in the mind of the minister and his colleagues to be able to give somebody money and do something political. You have the same situation where we decided to do an excellent community project with the same young men that they're saying that we should go now and work with. When we did the David Thompson Memorial Classic football they spat on that, too, and called it political football, that we spending the taxpayers' money and promoting political football. The same thing happened when the late honourable member for St. John came to this parliament and spoke about the trouble we were having and the culture with the minibuses to take the school children off of that. They criticised that and said it was a political gimmick by the government to buy votes from people and that school children should not be riding for free, that they should be made to pay - spat all over that, too.

So when we come with this sanctimonious argument, Mr. Speaker, sir, about working with communities and trying to give this view, after you have held an oppositionist position on everything this government has done at the community level - we decided to do summer camps so that we can have our children in a controlled environment to work with them over the summer to instil some values, continue to instil community and family values in them, to instil other life learning skills on those young people.

Again, another political gimmick by the Democratic Labour Party intended only to catch votes because the thing we are interested in is politics. We can't be interested in the wholesome livelihood and upbringing of ordinary citizens in Barbados. And I hear all these people on these calling programmes, including the moderators - I should say especially the moderators - with a lot of sanctimonious foolishness that give the impression that this administration is trying to blame crime in Barbados on the government by saying that we promised not to send home anybody and we sent home people. So therefore, people are looking at this. And that is apparently some licence to go and shoot at somebody. All of this kind of simplistic reductionist - but I can't even call that logic - simplistic reductionism that befalls even the very average person into a state of incomprehension, because nobody can comprehend the ignorance that you hear coming out of some of these

people. But you see, it is all about politics. I'm saying, when it comes to national security and crime, we play a dangerous game if we are playing politics.

Well, you know, in 1999, when the Democratic Labour Party and its then leader was speaking about crime, that was made a mockery of, too. Crime and violence, all of that. But you know, time is a very funny thing. And as the Honourable Prime Minister says, truth is not like milk - it does not spoil. And eventually it will come back and it will show out, because that is the reality of what we are dealing with. We are dealing with a society whose value systems have been shaken and are changing. And we who are in the leadership - whether it is in politics, whether it is in business, whether it is in civil society - have a fiduciary responsibility to the people that we lead or claim to lead, to ensure that we strengthen that and that we adapt the systems in the country to accommodate the values that we know are so important, so that the shifts, the ups and downs, the this today and that tomorrow, the fads are always, always undergirded by a fundamental core value system in the country.

And we know what it is. We don't have to go and buy it in a supermarket. We don't have to watch CNN to get it. We don't have to read any books for it, even though they are documented there. We know what those values are and we have to impart those values. So people who believe that it is some form of punishment to invite children to go to church - because it seems a punishment; in my day, you had to go twice, one morning, one afternoon - but it is now apparently a form of punishment. You send children to church to punish them, and if they don't want to go, then you don't send them, because if you send them it is a form of punishment. If that is how we want to take it - if we know the core value, that a lot of the moral bedding that people get from going and hearing a little bit about the word of the Lord and Christian values and whatever other religious values that you can impart on them is something that is useful to have - and you want to dodge it, then don't be surprised when those people get older and they don't know how to navigate the choices which are presented to them, because they don't have a core norm. They don't have the grand norm, as the lawyers, as the legal minds would say. If they don't have that grounding, then don't be surprised if they go for what is easy rather than for what is right.

So these are the things that we need to look at - the value of sharing, the value of helping people in a community, starting from the home, that the big ones help the little ones. These are the things that operate. There are some homes, unfortunately, where you have two children, both going to do the Eleven Plus but in separate years; there is one that passed, but the one that passed and gone is not helping the one that comes along. And all told, it is unbelievable. We have seen these things happening

because the culture of sharing, of passing on, of including is no longer there. Well, then, of course, if everybody in the house has a cell phone and when they get home they log on to the Internet and nobody is talking to nobody - you own a house and somebody knocks and says, 'May I speak to your sister or your brother?' and you don't even realise the person got home, because when they came in your head was down in the phone and you didn't even know they were present. If this is the type of thing that we are building, Mr. Speaker, sir, then what do we expect to reap if that is what we are tilling into the ground in Barbados?

So when we are talking about crime and violence and that kind of thing in the society, let us begin to get serious about it. And as a nation, as a country, begin to work on those things which we know that we have to work on at a very, very basic and core level, and not look for people as though you are doing pin the tail on the donkey. You are looking for somebody to pin this thing on and say there were five shootings last week, and this is because people got sent home from NCC - and all of that simplicity of thought, because that is not it. That is not it. We have had periods of spikes in crime even when this economy was doing well and money was supposedly flowing and things were rosy and good. We have had that in this country - precisely in 1988, to deal with it, yes, the Honourable David Simmons, Attorney General, had to deal with it precisely. And everything was well, all was doing good and all was rosy.

I read this thing and I hear it and I say to myself, it is really amazing. And you don't need to use Barbados as an example only for that. If we look at, for example, Trinidad - and it is one of our sister countries, so I am not reflecting poorly on them - Trinidad went through one of the most difficult recessionary periods and had to do an IMF programme. And it came out of that and has done exceedingly well. Oil prices spiked, Trinidad's money was flowing. There is more crime down there now than there was when they were at their lowest. So it says to me that this simplistic logic - that unemployment is 11 per cent or 12 per cent, it was 7 per cent when I was in government, and the reason why you are getting more shootings is because more people are unemployed, or because you have been reduced to investment grade and you have fiscal challenges - is the most basic and infertile form of reasoning.

The reason why it is worrying, Mr. Speaker, sir, the reason why it is worrying is because if that train of thought is allowed to invade people's minds, they will begin to focus on the wrong things for the crime situation that may be developing in the country - or the level of indiscipline, because that is really what it is, a level of indiscipline that is invading the society. And they will make the excuse: oh, as soon as you elect me, as soon as I can get the economy turned around, all these problems will disappear. And that,

sir, is the cardinal and fundamental error that we are leading people down the path to believe will happen, because it is not going to happen that way. In fact, it may very well happen in the reverse.

And I am saying, as I close, Mr. Speaker, sir - I know I have exceeded my time - that I want again to congratulate the Honourable Attorney General for this very outstanding piece of work that he has done to bring this substantial body of capital works, upgrades and interventions for the police force. That we recommit ourselves in the Ministry of Finance and the Government generally to work with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Attorney General's office to ensure that we focus on those things which are important to us in relation to our national security. But overall, as a Government, that we see that there is a need for a continuous assessment and intervention in all areas of human endeavour in Barbados - political, economic and social - to ensure that we continue to protect those things which are cherished by us and by the wider society, so as to contribute to our stable and safe development in the future. I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I rise to make a small intervention in this debate and I want to say from the outset that I wasn't here when the Attorney General presented the resolution but I heard him very eloquently speaking on the radio and I thought that he was very mature in accepting the fact that - sorry - that a crime rate was up by 30 per cent. And I thought that set the debate in a good tone. The last speaker, however, was too defensive and I think the government must govern and I think the AG did accept the fact that we have too many guns on our street and that's the position that we want to start off from. Accept that there's a problem and then try to correct it. And I think when a government is too defensive then you have problems. The government must govern. That's why you were elected. You were elected, Mr. Speaker, in order to not only take the criticism, not only take the blame, all the successes, but also, Mr. Speaker, to formulate policies and programmes to carry the country forward. And I thought that the speech of the AG this morning was very important because it set that standard.

However, I must say that I have seen most of these in my time. In fact, I was the Minister of Housing when Cairn Garden was bought, and that's over 12 years ago, so that this was around for a long time. I have seen Boarded Hall refurbished over the past 20 years, three times over and over. Boarded Hall. I have seen also a number of other police stations being built. I have seen Glebe built in St. George, a new police station. I don't remember who built it because the member for St. Lucy said that we did not build

any complex, even though he was around here 20 years. So I believe that he's lapsing in memory. But the government, the minister, must not jump up at everything. Yes, minister, I said, except for Crablow and Glebe, and that they knew why they built those very well, because we know that he's now approaching the age of 60. And some of us, especially if you're from the north, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we criticize, and I have seen, Mr. Speaker, that this government and our government, and I have said before that we seem to criticize ourselves on every front. I believe that this whole debate, which was set this morning, should continue in that vein, accepting the responsibility and putting our heads together to see how we can make the change.

Because, as the member said, I go home at four o'clock in the mornings, five o'clock, and I feel quite secure. I feel quite secure. I feel very secure, Mr. Speaker, going home at every hour. And I would hope that this continues to be the vein - we want a Barbados that is quite secure, safe. I want to see our society remain safe and secure. But there are a number of things that we have to change.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at why it is that so many of our people in our society do not want to join the police force - remember, it was said that there's still a vacancy for about a whole hundred young policemen, and more women are now being attracted to the police force than males, and we have to ask ourselves why. First of all, people still see the police force as lick and lockup. They still see the police force as historically an organisation that beat people, that lock up people. And do they see the society as one in which the police is to serve and protect? Now this is the same argument that has been advanced in the US. Do you see your police force as one in which you're going to protect the society and to serve them? What is it that we see in the police force today that we still see that was seen over 100 years ago? The police force is still a very old organisation that needs to be changed, to modernise our thinking, because the society has changed, values have changed.

I heard the member for St. Michael North West talk about values and not going to sell the school and so on. And this is where I believe the Minister of Education must formulate policies in order to help protect those people in society that do not go to Sunday school. But do we send our children to Sunday school these days only for values? I think I have advanced the argument that they may very well start Sunday school on Monday mornings. I think the Minister of Education needs to formulate a programme where all schools are taught Sunday school on Monday morning - some sort of values. I don't know if you understand what I'm saying, but it must change to start teaching Sunday school on Monday morning first thing, so that children who do not go to Sunday school at least learn some values within the school system.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that we have to discuss why it is that our society is now cheering on crime. Many persons in our society continue, Mr. Speaker, to behave very badly and we cheer them on. We are cheering on, Mr. Speaker, bad behaviour at funerals - families are cheering on bad behaviour at funerals - and many reverend pastors and so on have commented on these things, but we take them for granted. So it's now out of hand. How do we stop and where do we stop and how do we get back into bringing a society together? Where is it that if you have a crime scene that so many people turn up? And to protect those persons, we need to look at a number of these things. And I understand that there are studies being done within the Ministry of the Attorney General. I believe that some of these studies need to underpin and ask the question: why is it that our society has changed so drastically and how is it that we can protect our society to get back into the norm, into the values where we can see persons not cheering on crime but helping to protect the society?

Mr. Speaker, we have to be able to discuss these matters with the church, with the youth groups, with the community groups. We must be able to discuss in society why it is that many of our people do not want to inform the police about things. I must say over time that the police have come a long way. They have come a long way. I believe that most of them are now high-tech officers. Many of them are trained. But what it is - I heard the member for St. Michael North West talk about remuneration for the police - there are a number of police officers that are trained in forensic studies. Many of them are into computers; they have to detect white-collar crime, crime in the society. But how do you pay those officers who have gone and trained? And what about recruiting new officers into the police force? Now we have to ask ourselves this question, and what about the remuneration levels that you are paying these officers? You have high-tech officers within the police force who otherwise can be out there making a lot of money in the public service either as computer specialists who could do forensic work in many private sector organisations, but are still paid peanuts. I am saying that we have to look at this remuneration.

I remember it was discussed over ten years ago that you must remunerate officers who go beyond the call of duty to do things, but how do you do it? Now the government has to discuss within the Ministry of Finance what remuneration package are you going to put in place for senior officers, because we said that doctors - a doctor who has gone and trained and in the private sector can do and make a lot of money - a lawyer, a number of agricultural scientists and so on can make money. What about those officers who are well trained and are still in the police force? Do they get enough to help them and their family? And you want to keep them within the police force? You have to train them.

A number of persons in society are saying we need more policemen, but do you know - and I have discussed this with the Honourable Attorney General - the application form. The application form that is used to recruit officers always asks the question: have you ever been in touch with illegal drugs? Have you ever smoked, are you smoking, or are you involved in any substance - any illegal substance? Now many persons who fill out that application, if they want to be truthful, may very well say yes, I have, but I do not know - and then that person, who may very well turn out to be a good officer, cannot now get into the force. So we have to look at the recruitment drive within the police force.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: I don't want to say order but just sort of a point of clarification, because I'm sure my friend from St. George North would not like to mislead the public. The reality is that the fact that a young man has said yes, that he smoked marijuana, does not automatically disqualify him from being a suitable applicant. That may have been so in the distant past, but is no longer applicable.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I'm very happy that the member for St. Philip South has intervened because it is important for these points to be made. Why is it that you cannot attract male applicants within the police force? Why is it that you cannot attract persons who are high-tech within the police force? Within the state of New York, we now have a number of policemen drawn from a variety across the society. You have Indian policemen, Chinese policemen, policemen from Asia, all across the society, because you want to be able to attract not only your language, the culture, but you want to be able to attract persons who are well able to tell you what is happening within that particular society. Do you realise that in the city of New York a number of crime prevention measures were achieved because you attract persons who came from the same gangs? And we have to be able, at this juncture, to attract a cross-section of people within the police force to help notify and inform the police about what is happening. The policemen have to go into the society. They have to be informed of what is happening within each community.

I am saying that the whole notion of getting policemen into the force - we have to change a number of those things. And I'm happy to say that a lot of changes have taken place, and the AG says that these things have happened. But in terms of the historical perspectives within the police force, there need to be changes. I'm not sure if it is the uniform, which dates back to colonial times - I'm not sure if that has to be changed - but it needs to be changed. There are a number of things that need to be changed within this organisation called the police force. Not only remuneration, not only the buildings, new buildings and proper seating for the policeman, proper beds and so on for them, but there needs to be a cultural change. There needs

to be a change today, in this day and age, of the entire police service, and we need to see it coming true. So therefore, the AG's chamber, the various organisations that are responsible for doing the hard work in terms of looking at how these changes can be made, should take these things into consideration so as to get the community and the policemen in sync. This will indeed help what is happening today.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that when we talk about unemployment, when we talk about these things, it helps. But I do not think it is the only thing that we should be looking at. I think a number of persons are unemployed, yes, and we have to accept this. But I do believe that the society needs to come together and help one another in times of difficulties. This is something that the government must put in place in order to help this society to rise above this whole mentality that I am unemployed, so therefore I'm going to commit a crime.

I think I heard one member say today that there are a number of young people who are doing good things. Which is true. There are a number of young people who are doing good things. But when a few people do bad things, then it terrorises the entire society. When a few people do bad things, then the whole society gets upset. Only two or three people within a society throwing stones - then the entire society goes home and cannot sleep. Two or three persons can terrorise a society. And we do not want those two or three persons terrorising the society. It is too many. And I believe Barbados is still a good place. We want Barbadians to succeed. We want to succeed, but we criticise ourselves.

For example, I heard some member talk today about the prison - that the prison is too modernised, that we should still be having an old prison up at Glendairy. That's nonsense. The prison is a modern prison and we must hold our heads up. Because I believe the prison at Dodds was built - I don't know how many it was built to hold - but I am saying to you, it is a modern prison that is suitable for inmates and is secure. And we must accept the fact: you are the government. The prison is there. Protect it and stop criticising it. It's a modern prison. I prefer to go to the prison at Dodds than to the prison at Glendairy. When I go there, I see inmates who are treated properly. And that is what a society must look at. We must not look at going backwards. We cannot go back to the days of Glendairy. We must go forward and make Dodds work. It is a good prison and we must not go back. And that's why I am saying we hit ourselves too hard. Glendairy was built, had its time. We have Dodds now. It is a modern prison, suitable for inmates in this time and in this day and age. So we must protect it. Whoever built it, it was a good prison that was built at the time.

Now, I also heard members talk about the Firearms Act of 1998. In 1998, the Firearms Act was passed in this

House. And it was passed because it was envisaged that we must protect our society. And I hope that the government does not send a signal that they want to amend it. I hope so. I hope that the government does not send a signal that they want to amend it. Because I was hearing signals. I was hearing signals. I do not remember from whom. I was hearing signals but I do not remember from whom.

And I hope that the person who was given that signal will come and say they're not going to change the firearm act. I am not sure. Another lawyer if it has to be amended because some lawyers felt it is unconstitutional. Some people feel so. I do believe it was done as a deterrent from persons who have firearms. There are also people who are talking about amnesty. I am not sure it will work. But whatever, Mr. Speaker, we have in this society, whatever it takes, we have to be able to protect our society and to make this society what we want it to be. We want investors to come here. We want investors to come here.

Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that this society remains just Barbados that we know and therefore the government has to govern. The government has to make sure that the crime rate is reduced from this and we hope that by next year the rates does not increase, whether it is 30 per cent. We want to hear a reduction in crime so that the government has to inspire the private sector, the government has to inspire the community, the government has to inspire parliament, the government has to inspire the police force. I believe that we have the capacity in this parliament. I believe that we have the capacity in here, within our society to reduce crime.

Now we depend heavily on tourism and there is no doubt about this, we depend heavily on tourism. It is our lifeblood. And therefore a signal, a signal of increased crime to the visitor. And what is happening in Barbados gets around and we have to understand this, so therefore we need a reduction. I want to send a signal to my people in St. George and to the people around Barbados that are not coming back. I know you're glad, Mr. Speaker, if they're not coming back, the member for St. Philip North, St. Philip South, will want me to come up St. Philip and maybe socialise with him all day. We had a very good time, but of course.

But I cannot say what is happening at this stage. I always say, Mr. Speaker, it depends. I am not God, it depends on my health. I always say so. And of course the people of St. George. Only yesterday evening a guy almost got knocked down, ran across the front of us and said, I want you back. So you and the people are asking all these things. I am sure that is not good news for the government, but Mr. Speaker, people of St. George are happy with my performance and I speak on behalf of the people of St. George. I will continue to speak on behalf of the people of

St. George. Whether I am here or out, north and south, on my performance.

So finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the government has therefore brought a piece of resolution here, which was with the EDIBA for a long time. We are happy to see it, we will support it. But we hope that the police force, the courts and police stations get going soon, because we know in Barbados everything takes a long time, two years, in order to get started. But we are hoping that this can help the unemployment situation in Barbados. And I hope it is not, at the minister's side, a drain on the National Insurance.

And of course, I don't agree, again, with the member for St. Lucy, that I don't totally agree that we must invest all of our money at home. I don't totally agree with that. But of course, that is another debate for another time. But I believe it is a good investment. It is a good investment by the National Insurance Board. And I hope that the government can put plans in place to ensure that the economy gets going and ensure that the National Insurance Board is repaid its money. Because very soon I will be calling on the National Insurance Board for a pension. And I do not want to have a situation that when myself and persons of my age call upon that, we are told we do not have the money and that the member, the Minister of Finance, in the day and the year of our Lord 2015 was the cause of this. I don't want to hear that. I want to hear, well done. You have the investment, we have the money, and you can receive your pension. Mr. Speaker, I oblige you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Member for St. Philip North.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I rise to support this resolution. And I want to congratulate the learned Attorney General for bringing this resolution to this House. And I believe, sir, that we on this side, of course, we are concerned with the upsurge or the recent upsurge in the use of firearms. Of course, Mr. Speaker, sir, when we listen to the lead spokesman for the other side, one would believe that this issue in relation to firearms only came up a couple of weeks ago.

Mr. Speaker, sir, the member for St. George North spoke about the Firearms Act and I did some research, Mr. Speaker, sir. And it came across the debate that introduced the Firearms Act that has been struck down by the law courts as unconstitutional - part, section 30 of it deemed to be unconstitutional because it fettered the discretion of the judge in sentencing in relation to possession of a firearm or any firearm-related offence.

But Mr. Speaker, sir, I crave your indulgence. Mr. Speaker, sir, I want to read from the debate of Tuesday, August 25, 1998. The then Attorney General, Sir David Simmons - this is what he said. He said: Mr. Speaker, I am

under the weather today, I am fighting the flu, but I am not going to be long on this bill because much of the background to this was dealt with at length last week. And that is to say the enactment of this particular bill has to be seen in the context of an increase in the use of guns by certain elements in the society - a use of guns that is almost wanton, really. That is what the Attorney General said in 1999. And yes, he contributed to the debate at the time. And he too spoke about the increase in criminal activity. In fact, he said that there are so many stabbings and use of knives and whatever.

But then the then Attorney General went on - he said information he has from the police, and I think it is pretty obvious to members of the general public, is that there are far too many illegal guns in Barbados. But I mean, when you listen to the member for St. Joseph, you would believe that it just started and we were grappling with it. But the answer to it at the time was to rush through Parliament a Firearms Act that later - well, as far as I am concerned, the learned Attorney General now has to bring a comprehensive Firearms Bill to this House to treat the issues and to treat the offences related to the use of firearms in this country.

And I have heard the member for St. Joseph too spoke about - he said, you must read the law and order report. Read the recommendations. Look at it. But the truth is that the Labour Party, they were grappling with the problem. And as far back as 1999 they established a national task force on crime prevention. And the remit of that force was to prepare a green paper on the reduction of offences in Barbados, paying due regard to international criminal evidence. But even further again, in 2001 a green paper was produced setting out the anti-crime policy for Barbados, inviting the public to engage in discussion. And then it went on in 2002 and established the Barbados Commission of Law and Order in 2002. And there were a number of recommendations settled in that law and order report.

When we were asked to look at the law and order report, I honestly believe that the recommendations coming out of the law and order report - that those recommendations were acted upon and actually implemented to fight crime in this country by the Barbados Labour Party. But I went through them line for line on the recommendations. Again, Mr. Speaker, I crave indulgence to take a peep at the law and order report. And the recommendations are - in order to maintain order in Barbados and address the perceived threats to social stability in Barbados - these are the recommendations: it spoke to the creation of a national prosecution service. At this very day there is no national prosecution service in Barbados. It mentioned the creation of night courts and a drug treatment court. And this Attorney General is

responsible for the implementation of a drug treatment court in Barbados and he must be applauded for that.

I could go on and talk about more rigorous enforcement of existing laws. Nothing. So it was then - it is just a collection of people who met, had a discussion, put together a document, and then it was tossed aside, because none of the recommendations in the conclusionary part of this report were implemented. And that is why I had to go to the Firearms Act and that is why I had to go to the debate, to really find out what was the true intent, using it as an aid to statutory interpretation and to find out what was the purpose of the bill, to really get a true understanding of why the Firearms Act was passed.

In fact, during that time there was a leading case in Barbados. It was so serious - Jerome Babel, alias Geese, Jerome Babel and the Queen. A case that dealt specifically with sentencing in relation to the use of firearms. That is how serious it was, because the courts had to intervene and set guidelines. So this is not a new problem that we are grappling with. It is not a new problem that we are grappling with.

And what was interesting is that even during that debate, the member for St. Michael South was actually picking up a section in the bill and in fact mentioning indirectly that a certain part of the bill fettered the discretion of the judge. And this is what happened. So, Mr. Speaker, sir, the member for St. Philip South must be applauded because he came here today with a vision - a vision to improve substantially the working conditions of the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force so that they could carry out their mandate effectively, or more effectively.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I practised for a number of years and I experienced the conditions that members of the Royal Barbados Police Force had to work under. When you visited a station like Blackrock Police Station and you had officers coming to you and pleading and begging for better working conditions at the time. Police officers had to use interview rooms to interview suspects, prepare files - the barracks at Blackrock Police Station, I mean, the conditions. The building was in a dilapidated condition. And I vividly recall a sign being placed at a staircase at Blackrock Police Station saying to officers - in fact, the officers had to put up their own sign - do not use this area, do not go into this room, do not use this staircase because it is dangerous. The member for St. Michael South Central can speak to that. It was in a horrible state and when I was Minister of Housing, we had to go about getting a building in Blackrock on lease to provide better working conditions for police officers.

So when the member for St. Joseph mentioned or spoke in terms that we neglected police officers and

allowed a whole set of promises - the fact is that a number of police officers, some have now settled claims against the Crown and some are about to settle claims against the Crown for compensation for personal injuries they suffered on the job at police stations. I can speak about those stations because I traversed all of them. Again, Holetown was in a very bad condition - extremely so. The courts at Horse Hill, the courts at Boarded Hall in St. George. But I am hearing that the member is not leaving out a building. What is he going to do? Is he going to outfit the building?

But we have outfitted the buildings - in fact outfitted some of the stations with modern technology. It is a fact. I do not want to get partisan, but I do recall that when the Evidence Act was passed in here, when the offer was made or the promise was made to bring technology in terms of the interviewing and interrogation of suspects, none of the stations were ready. None of the stations were ready to be outfitted so that we could protect the rights of suspects and also preserve the integrity of investigations in relation to criminal offences.

I do not mind the talk, but what has happened under our tenure? I am reliably informed - in fact, I had to ask the Attorney General - I can say that police stations, particularly at District E, District A, and Holetown in St. James, have been outfitted with modern recording equipment, and equipment has been upgraded so that the police can properly carry out investigations and carry out their work. It is a fact. I think it could be more by now - could be all of them by now. And we are moving towards using modern technology in terms of the improvement of police working conditions at these stations.

But I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, sir, that I am reliably informed that very soon - let me put it this way - that the new Firearms Act will deal with certain aspects in relation to the tracing of firearms and ammunition, sir. And so there is a move by the learned Attorney General and this Government to tackle firearms in this country. There is.

Well, I go back to that debate again. Somebody mentioned - I believe it was the former member for St. Michael West - had asked the Attorney General at the time to introduce an amnesty, that people should be - once you bring in the firearms, you pay \$200. And the learned Attorney General said he would look into it. I do not know what became of it or what happened thereafter, but I know that there was a proposed amnesty. There was an amnesty. I do not know how successful it was. My information is that it was not as successful as they believed it would have been.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, the police force - let me say they are an important component of the criminal justice system. Very important. And anything that comes to this Parliament that improves the lot, improves the working

conditions of police officers to make them more productive - that is a fact. The learned Attorney General said this today: police officers work extremely hard. In fact, in some instances, work beyond the call of duty, work on their off days to ensure that files are properly prepared and to make sure that persons are properly charged and placed before the courts. And we have to support the Attorney General in this visionary resolution that he has brought here today.

Mr. Speaker, sir, the other point that I want to speak to - the member for St. Thomas raised an alarm that the learned Attorney General should really look at a safe house or some way how we can protect witnesses in this country. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that we have reached the stage in Barbados that we need a witness protection programme. No, we have not reached that stage. In fact, witnesses openly still go to court and give evidence. People are still being prosecuted, witnesses still go to the police station and give statements. In fact, I am reliably informed that there are certain crimes that are committed where owners of property - in fact, citizens who are on the scene at the time - use their cell phones and they use footage from those devices to identify the suspect and really prosecute them. That is happening. Barbadians are still cooperating. We have not reached that stage. I believe that is an alarmist statement. I dismiss that, Mr. Speaker, sir. I dismiss it.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, the member for St. Thomas had her time. And like the member for St. Joseph when he said that there is some political interference with the Barbados Police Force - which to me is alarmist and it is untruthful and it is wrong to say it. Mr. Speaker, sir, I just want to make that clear.

But Mr. Speaker, sir, if we are going to tackle this problem, the public must also feel confident, sir, that the criminal justice system - when these persons are apprehended - that they feel the full weight of the law. But I am not here, sir, to say to any judicial officer how to sentence or in what way to sentence. But there are some components, sir, of the criminal justice system that I believe we have to improve and we have to really tighten the reins on.

For instance, the learned Attorney General said that a case was dismissed because of the lack of the prosecution having a file and the fact that there was no disclosure of statements, and the particular case was dismissed. Mr. Speaker, sir, I am not casting aspersions on the judicial officer, but I know that times before, judicial officers would ask the defence counsel if they could assist the court in terms of the copying of witness statements to ensure that there is full disclosure and to ensure that the matter can get off the ground. I do not know what is happening now. But I was very surprised that a serious matter that the public was watching was dismissed because - to my mind - of a very

trivial matter, and I agree with the learned Attorney General on that issue, agree with him wholeheartedly.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I have been involved with young people - before 2003, in fact, I was involved in politics from 2003 to 2004 on this matter.

And I have seen many a young man, as a president, come to my office and lament on the lack of opportunities, lament on the fact that his structure at home is disintegrated. And of course, we as politicians and as professionals, had to use our offices to counsel some of these people and counsel some of these young men so that they will not go on that path. And so we have a responsibility. We have a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, sir, and I know that members on this side are members on that side, too, that they make their contribution in terms of ensuring that these young men and young women, too, that they keep on that straight and narrow path. And that is

why, Mr. Speaker, that things like the Constitution councils are extremely important, extremely important, because I know for a fact that the councils, that they are doing sterling work in terms of bringing educational programmes, bringing educational programmes, bringing other activities, hosting activities, so that young people can be engaged in them. That is a fact. And I do not understand why they were criticised. I do not understand why they were criticised by the opposition. I do not understand it.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I've said from the outset, and I said to the Attorney General, that I'm going to make a brief intervention, but I want to say to the Attorney General that I've sat in here from 2003. I've heard promises coming from that side about improvement in police conditions, the use of technology and a whole set of promises came to members of the Royal Barbados Police Force. And most of those promises were not fulfilled.

I want to make this point that when I was Minister of Housing and Lands, we have constructed some houses at Parishland in St. Philip. And we had a discussion - I remember having a discussion with the Attorney General in relation to the houses at Parishland. And we believe that given the fact that the police station is in close proximity and given the fact that there was a need for some police officers - maybe I examined the list - there actually was a need and a demand for housing by police officers. And in terms of allocation of those houses, I don't want to be presumptuous, but I believe that we should look at, in some way, that a number or some percentage of police officers benefit and prison officers benefit from the housing policy at Parishland in St. Philip. I certainly believe that. And in some way that we can find a way that some financial institution or whatever mechanism we can put in place to make it easy, that these police officers can have access to

one of the houses at Parishland in St. Philip - there are 123 houses, I believe about that. 123 houses.

Well, it was discussed with the Attorney General. It was discussed with the Attorney General, and it was believed that the matter could be taken up again. At least a third of them, in fact. It is done in Trinidad. Part of Trinidad's housing policy is that part of the housing stock in any area is allocated to the armed forces - allocated to police officers, nurses, police officers, civil service. I believe that is a policy that we can adopt, particularly using a model at Parishland in St. Philip. And that is to me a step in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, sir, again, as I said, the difference between these two governments is that on this side we implement - on this side we bring policies and thereafter we have implementation. What we have over there is a lot of talk: we have this in contemplation, we are thinking about it, we believe that we can do it. All of this information in a report. Speaking about what they are going to do about the social ills, and about the church must get involved, and they're going to bring policies and they're going to bring all and we're going to institute these recommendations and this conclusion. And nothing was done. A lot of talk, a lot of wastage of money because this was costly to the taxpayer. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move that the sitting be suspended until a quarter to eight this evening.

The question that the House be suspended until 7.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Dr. M. M. AGARD: Sir, I rise to join this very important debate where the government is seeking approval for the borrowing of \$76 million for the construction of a number of police facilities in the national interest. And let me say from the outset that I have no fundamental objection to this resolution. In fact, I certainly support it. I believe that national defence is critical to the development of a nation and we should, with one voice, support any opportunities for improved conditions for our police force.

I am certainly happy to see that there will be the construction of headquarters at Hastings for the Hastings police station which is to be amalgamated with Worthing.

And I want to say that since I have had the opportunity to represent the constituents of Christ Church West, I have had a fairly close relationship with the policemen at both of those stations. And certainly any opportunity I have had to seek their intervention has met with approval, cooperation and support. And it really didn't matter what the event was. At Hastings and Worthing there is considerable community outreach. If it is a town hall meeting, a sporting event, a public event, they were always there. And I certainly want to give unreserved support to these policemen, not just in Christ Church West but throughout Barbados. I support you in the work that must be done on behalf of Barbadians.

Just to give you some sense of the type of community outreach that actually happens. Whilst most people are concerned about their national disaster plans and so forth, at the urgency of the community policemen in Christ Church West we have an active vulnerable persons list that is actually manned by the resident beat there. We know our vulnerable constituents and we are fully prepared to address their needs in the event that there is a national disaster of any sort.

Now, considering that the Worthing police station will be virtually closed and that there will be an amalgamation, I certainly take this opportunity to thank all the staff, not just the policemen, but also the administrative and the clerical staff associated with the Worthing police station. And I, of course, wish them the very best and continued intervention with them.

I want to say that we have had a debate here today and my intervention is going to be fairly brief, but certainly I take note of a number of positions held by the Attorney General. And the one thing that I wanted to address was his assertion that crime in Barbados is more or less under control. Yes, we have had some fluctuations in terms of the incidence of crime, 13 per cent increase for the first six months of this year, but that was followed by a 14 per cent decrease in reported crime for the 12-month period prior. But I want to take issue with that on a number of levels.

I want to say that the reporting of crime in Barbados really does not reflect the extent of crime in Barbados. And whilst I may agree with him that Barbados is still a very safe place to live, the incidence of lawlessness has increased considerably. And whilst we still live in a relatively safe place, there is considerable fear and there is considerable frustration. There is a lot of what I call petty lawless crime in this country that we need to take hold of. I know that in the vicinity of the south coast, for example, after every huge fête, you find sometimes individuals just rampaging through communities, violating and vandalising property. Yes, you call the police, but by the time the police arrives, they are all gone. That remains a crime undocumented, but it does not reflect the frustration, the

fear, the irritation felt by property holders as their properties are vandalised.

But even more so, I want to say that the reason why the increase in crime should certainly concern us all is that for the victim of a criminal offence, the statistic is immaterial. It does not matter to a victim of a serious crime whether your statistic is 13 per cent, 14 per cent or 1 per cent. For the individual who has been affected, 100 per cent of that individual's life is now in turmoil. And therefore, we certainly need to take all of our crime as a very serious matter, with prevention being the most effective method, really and truly, of crime management. And I certainly see the provision of these police facilities in various areas of the island as a means of being able to police, manage and achieve much of the crime reduction that is needed in the country today.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General mentioned the memorandum of understanding that was signed on July two between himself and UN Women in an effort to end gender-based violence and to give women greater access to justice. That was one of the things that he mentioned, and I certainly wish to associate myself with this effort. But I wish to draw your attention to a statement that was made by the UN Secretary General when he addressed the gathering. And he expressed the fact that of concern was that the Caribbean had one of the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world, including the rate of sexual assault.

And in terms of the assertion that our crime is reasonably under control, I wish to raise the spectre of things that happen in Barbados that go largely unreported, undocumented, because of the taboo associated with certain crimes. And yes, we can skirt around all of the crimes associated with gun-related violence and drug-related violence and so forth, but the universal violence that goes unreported, for the most part, is violence against women and in particular violence against children. And Mr. Speaker, I note that in most of our statistics, we really do not have any measured, detailed statistics on violence against children, whether it be sexual assault, incest, or a collection of insults against children. And that is what I wish to speak about today.

Now, the UN Secretary General went on to say that in the eastern Caribbean, 30 per cent - that is almost one in three women - have experienced some form of gender-based violence. And for children, between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of our children have been exposed to sexual harassment or sexual assault of one form or the other. And I would say that this is a crime that we need to pay more attention to as a developing nation. We cannot aspire to be a developed nation unless we are prepared to address this issue frontally. It is a difficult issue to address because of the taboos associated with it, because for the most part, it

occurs by individuals who are known to the victims, individuals who are trusted by the victim, individuals who rely upon the victims for sustenance, really and truly. And it also occurs with the knowledge, the complicity, the silence, and the defence of other adults in the home who are torn between having to protect a child and having to protect a spouse.

But I say that the state has a duty to protect our children. We are signatory to a number of conventions on the rights of the child, and so we must ensure that our children are not in any way being violated with impunity. Now, there are some people who may very well take issue with the view that we are not doing enough, but I really feel that we are not doing enough to protect our children. I need to be informed. I don't want to state for certain, but I know that in the past, one of the limitations of giving evidence was that the police station, and indeed the court, was an intimidating place for a child who has just experienced violation and some form of ravaging. Proposals have been made for in camera delivery of evidence. And certainly that is an effort that should be pursued if it has not as yet been pursued.

We also have the issue of individuals refusing to give evidence, as the Attorney General suggested that there are times when evidence is not given, whether it is because of a change of heart, a financial incentive, or bribery to not give any evidence, whether it is the desire to save the child from that harsh judicial system. But I am suggesting that mandatory evidence provision should be a requirement when a minor has been violated. I believe that very harsh punishments should be levied against anyone refusing to give evidence in cases of sexual violations of our children.

The other issues, of course, that we need to contend with is the revictimisation of the child and this is probably one of the most difficult circumstances to navigate, because as a society, it is unfortunate that at times it would appear that we inadvertently support this culture by our silence. So that rather than being absolutely outraged at these circumstances, you find our society making excuses for perpetrators. Victims are revictimised. You hear that the young child was precocious, that the child was provocative, that there must have been some extenuating circumstance, or you hear things like: but it was not complete penetration, and therefore it is not a violation of the body. But certainly penetration is not the only offence. We need to consider that children are traumatised by the exposure to pornography. They are traumatised when they are forced to watch others engaged in these acts. They are traumatised when they are fondled. Even in non-penetrative acts, children are traumatised. And these things should be considered criminal offences and reported as well.

I am certainly desirous to see a number of incentives introduced to ensure that our children remain safe. I also

want to see changes in the prosecution of the cases where sentencing actually reflects the very vicious reality of the offence. Because the length of time that it takes for a case to come to court after the initial violation is far too long. For example, a child is violated before they leave primary school, but the case does not come to court until that child is a mature adult of 18 or 19, with possibly children of her own. The jury cannot contemplate, simply by hearing a discourse of facts, the experience that little baby virtually had to endure at the hands of a predator, whether it was male or female, for that matter. And it is difficult for the jury to fully appreciate that. What we are actually seeing is that even in terms of sentencing, sentencing for predators of offences against minors seems to be far more lenient than sentencing for violations against adults. And these are things that must change. We must change these things.

And I believe that in the provision of facilities to ensure that our policemen are properly equipped, not just with a physical structure, but also with the necessary equipment to accurately and faithfully take statements, to properly prosecute these cases when they eventually come to court, is absolutely essential. It is important that in the protection of our children, that we ensure that predators are sent a message that the state will not turn a blind eye to the ravishing of our children. And so I want to see greater reporting of this crime. I want to see more intense prosecution of predators, certainly rehabilitation of the victims, but opportunities for the victim to seek and receive justice for these violations.

I want also to say, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the provision of facilities for our policemen, that we need to be very careful when we condemn others for not participating in the event of reporting adult crimes that they witness. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas raised that issue and we were told that Barbados has not yet reached a point where a safe house is needed. But I want us not to be romanticised into feeling that inasmuch as a safe house may not now be required, that individuals who witness vicious crimes do not actually feel fear in reporting those crimes. Barbados is a small society. There are very few things that occur anonymously and people have every reason to contemplate that they may be placing not only themselves but their families at risk when they report such crimes. And so we need to equip our police force with all of the relevant equipment to ensure that they can speedily respond to incidences of crime when they are notified, and in doing so, ensure that those who are guilty of placing an entire nation in peril would certainly receive due sentencing that would serve not only as a prohibitive measure for the repeat of their activities, but also for those who would contemplate and who would be inclined to think that this can be a viable consideration for them.

I do not necessarily buy into the view that unemployment leads to an increase in crime because I

don't want for those who are of a working class background to believe that we are a nation who believe that they are the only ones who commit crimes. We do have a number of white collar criminals that also need to be brought to justice. And one of the things that grieves me the most is that it seems that whereas all of our effort, so to speak, is directed toward the prosecution and incarceration of working class individuals, it seems as though those of white collar crimes can almost get away with murder. And this is reprehensible in a society, in a society that we claim to be socially just. And so I propose that not only do we pay attention to the simple crimes or the petty crimes of the working class, but that we look as much with a jaundiced eye at those who can steal millions and get away with a simple reprimand and community service. And with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat.

Mr. SPEAKER: Attorney General.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you. Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll first like to thank all honourable members for their presentations during the course of the day. As usual, not everything that I have heard that I necessarily agree with, and I'm not going to spend any time discussing what I agreed with and what I did not agree with it, et cetera. I just want to make two points about this democratic Labour Party administration, of which I'm a part of - one is that we are not into the wastage of taxpayers' monies where in fact information comes to us regardless of the source and in particular where the information is as a result of taxpayers money spent even if initiated by their former administration and there is credibility to any part of the information we look at saying we are not into. That is a BLP initiative, et cetera, and therefore let us be rid of it. I'll give two illustrations. One is recently I was reviewing the Henry Forde's report on our constitution and it will come upon a time very soon when we will have a chat about that because there are some recommendations in that report even though initiated by the former administration. I'd be interested to hear their approach to that report when we have this discussion. The other report which the member for St. Joseph brought to attention, which is a document of this house, the law and order report. I remember when I became Attorney General of Barbados, one of the first things that the member for St. Michael South, the honourable member, said to me is AG, you might want to have a look at the law and order report because there are some things in that report that has never been implemented and you might find them useful in terms of your policy creation. And we have gone about quietly accepting information from various quarters because at the end of the day what we want to do is to do what's best for Barbados. With your permission, sir, I just want to read one extract from this report and as life would have it, I opened the report and it came to this page. I kid you not, sir, and it's on page 105 and it deals with fear of crime and I'm going to read it. I'm going to read it because, sir, within the

context of one of the presentations this morning, this afternoon we heard that in fact that in 1998 then Attorney General of Barbados brought the Firearms Act into being - that he was discussing crime in this country and the fear of gun crime in this country, the escalation of gun crime in this country. This report, which was initiated in 2002 and finalised in 2004 in June 2004 under the previous administration also dealt with the issue of crime and the fear of crime and what was seen at the time as a pervasive use of guns in our society. The overarching point I'm making, Mr. Speaker, is that we have been down this road before. When I say to you, sir, when I say this honourable chamber, that in fact that Barbados on the whole, when I look at our crime situation we have never had a runaway situation. There have been some spikes and some ebbs and flows, but we have never had a runaway situation. But when it comes to gun related crime, it brings out a different type of emotion and therefore I want to read this passage that was brought to my attention. True act or omission, but whatever reason that I was able to open this document to it and it's going to take a couple of minutes, but I think it's important to share this with this honourable chamber and with the good people of Barbados.

It says fear of crime is generally considered to be largely influenced by the media's sensationalist portrayal of crime and the nature and prevalence of some serious crimes. However, students of criminology and law enforcement officers throughout the world are of the view that such reporting invariably bears little relationship to the actual situation. Often the reality is that serious crime of the kind being sensationalised is less common than is portrayed by the media. Thus, it may be said that the real fear of crime, although initiated by some incidents of heinous or persistent crimes, usually results from the manner in which these crimes are reported by the media. This phenomenon is recognised as an increasing one worldwide, and although the magnitude of crime could be questioned, it does nonetheless suggest that there may in fact be a crime problem which might be impacting on the quality of life of citizens and manifest by a pervasive fear of crime. The present level of crime in Barbados may have been associated with recent increases in gun related crimes. However, although there have been some reduction in this type of crime, public anxiety has not abated commensurate with its reduction. Except for the period in the early 1990s

when Barbados experienced severe economic conditions, official statistics suggest that crime has remained relatively stable. However, it is understandable that public concern has heightened with increased incidence of drive-by shootings and other forms of violence, much of which seems to have been associated with the drug trade. The evidence is clear that Barbados has been affected by fear of crime, seriously impacting on the quality of life for the victims of crime, the communities across the island, and the business sector. In addition, if a

situation is not contained, fear of crime can have a debilitating social and as well, psychological effect throughout the society and disastrous consequences for the vital tourism industry and other areas of economic activities. These factors can therefore do serious damage to the economy of the country. The police have had to deal with increasing crime at a time when unemployment was officially estimated at approximately 27 per cent. One response by the force was to intensify its community policing approach. Working closely with the residents of all communities in a proactive style of policing to discourage criminal activity and to strengthen and reinforce communities against all forms of deviant or aberrant behaviour. This approach proved effective for a while. But as this style of policing became neglected through a variety of pressures and greater demands on the police forces, the community programmes initiated were curtailed and their fear of crime gripped the country. Attempts have been made to sensitise the media to the realities of the phenomenon in an effort to reduce unduly high profiling of some crimes and to reflect more of the positive features of crime control. However, the commissioner is of the view that this phenomenon is best dealt with through meaningful partnerships with the community and the media and the employment of a range of collaborative strategies both at the community level and also at the macro level.

I share this with this honourable chamber, sir, to again reiterate the point that what might appear to some commentators as neglect - as the Attorney General or the Attorney General's office not responding with the kind of alacrity and energy that they expect. It is because, sir, that I've had time to look at our history. I've had time to look at what exactly is going on in Barbados and we have been quietly doing all the things that, as I said even in this report that was finalised in 2004 that dealt with issues in 2002 have said we as a country must do. Mr. Speaker, I'm a historian. I may not be a very good historian like my friend from Christ Church. Where are you again? From Christ Church East Central. But one thing that history has taught me is that there's nothing new, that in fact that what we need to do is to learn from the past. I as Attorney General of Barbados have certainly learned from past experiences in this country. I reiterate that we have passed this way before. We need to initiate strategies. We need to address issues like community policing. But I say continuously that I'd rather not have these matters addressed in the criminal justice system, that we need to look at the root causes. We heard, for example, from my colleague from St. Michael West addressing issues - sorry, sir. And I said my colleague, I should have known that I had the wrong constituency. St. Michael North West. St. Michael North West, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, the member for St. Michael North West spoke about the times that he went to Sunday school on mornings and on afternoons and now going to Sunday school and learning to have moral moorings is seen as an affront. These are the things that we

need to examine. We don't need to wait until we reach the law courts of Barbados. We don't need to wait until we reach the police stations that we are trying to build and retrofit. And these are the type of policies that myself and my colleagues have been working hard over the last couple of years to initiate. On behalf of the people of Barbados, I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank all honourable members for participating in this debate and with those words I beg that this resolution be now passed.

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

ORDER NO. 16 – SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 2015 – 2016, NO. 1

Mr. CLERK: Order Number 16, sir. In the name of the Honourable Leader of the House to move that the House resolve itself into committee of supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the service of this island.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, honourable member.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that your honour do now leave the chair and the House resolve itself into committee of supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the service of this island.

AN HON. MEMBER: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The House is now in committee.

Mr. CLERK: In the name of the Right Honourable Prime Minister, the Minister of National Security, the Public Service and Urban Development to move the passing of a resolution to grant the sum of \$650 000 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to submit the Estimates 2015 to 2016 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates Number One, 2015 to 2016. Head 13, Prime Minister's Office in the amount of \$650 000.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable member for [Inaudible.]

Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, between the second and the 4 July this year, Barbados hosted the 36th regular conference of CARICOM Heads of Government. It was the first time in eight years that Barbados had hosted

such a conference because on the basis of CARICOM rotations, Barbados's turn comes every eight years. So the last time we hosted such a conference would have been in the year 2007. And in 2007 the hosting of the conference cost Barbados \$917 195.46. Eight years later, hosting the same conference, the Government is coming to the House today to get the sum of \$650 000 to supplement the Estimates 2015–2016 because on present indications it is appearing as though the conference is going to cost us just over \$800 000.

Now, from all the reports which we have received, we had a successful Heads of Government meeting here in Barbados that had some novel features about it. We designed some novel features because we had seen enough of the conferences in other parts of the Caribbean, and we felt that there were certain areas in which we could make a difference. For example, I don't think at any other Heads of Government regular conference we have had four secretaries general present. We had the Secretary General of the United Nations, the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, and the Secretary General of the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. That was a novel feature. Of course, the presence of the Secretary General of the United Nations brought a kind of international flavour to the conference, since he spoke at the opening ceremony, but earlier in the day participated in another novel feature of the conference, which was a Davos-like dialogue on the issue of sustainable development, which was done at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, at which most Heads of Government present in Barbados were present.

That dialogue was moderated by Sir George Alleyne and had attractive participation as panellists from the Economic Commission for Latin America, from the OAS, from the University of the West Indies, from the UN Secretary General's office, and of course from the Cabinet of Barbados as well, and of course from the CARICOM Secretariat. And there was very good - and of course from the International Monetary Fund - there was very active participation in the dialogues. And as far as we are concerned, the dialogue set the tone for what was to happen for the remainder of the conference, since the focus of Barbados and of other CARICOM states is sustainable development. And we thought we had to get a good grasp of what was involved in developing these islands sustainably in the context of a world that had become rather hostile economically and financially, and a world that has forced us to go back to the drawing board to look at pursuing sustainable levels of production and sustainable patterns of consumption. And those dialogues did lay a proper foundation for that.

The other novel feature - well, it shouldn't be novel, because of course it's the CARICOM Heads of Government meeting - and it is held to coincide with the

fourth day of July. Not only because the Treaty of Chaguaramas was signed on the 4 July 1973, not only because the 4 July is also the birthday of the late Norman Washington Manley, who used to be Head of Government of Jamaica and who basically sacrificed his political future when he acceded to, succumbed to pressure to have a referendum which led to the end of the Federation for all practical purposes, because Jamaica had to withdraw and then Trinidad and Tobago withdrew and the rest is history - the famous Eric Williams mathematical utterance, that one from ten leaves zero. But the 4 July is also important originally because, as I said in my speech at the opening ceremony, on the 27 June 1965, Forbes Burnham of Guyana received a letter from Errol Barrow inviting him to come to Barbados on the 4 July to discuss the regional integration movement, to discuss the prospect of establishing a Caribbean Free Trade Association, which later became what we know as CARIFTA. And Burnham travelled to Barbados on the 4 July and he and Barrow discussed the establishment of a Caribbean Free Trade Association. They subsequently interested the then Head of Government of Antigua in their project. And of course the rest is history. So the 4 July is a sacred day in the Caribbean for all of those reasons.

And Barbados felt that for some time no particular focus was being placed on or directed at CARICOM - where it came from, where it is and where it can go, who were the personalities involved. And therefore we planned something special for CARICOM Day and had a very good presentation, a top-class presentation, at the Frank Collymore Hall on the evening of the 4 July, which again was a novel feature. We also hosted, of course, the President of Panama. Now, that is important and interesting because we are trying to deepen our relationship with Panama. Everybody knows now that sometime between 1904 and 1914, about 60 000 Barbadians left these shores to either directly or indirectly contribute to the construction of the Panama Canal. There is a significant Barbadian diaspora in Panama anxious to know more about Barbados. I was there for the Summit of the Americas and addressed them directly, and they are very interested in knowing more about the country of their ancestors. And in fact, the museums of Panama highlight many of the heritage practices - I would say the legacy practices - of Barbados and other parts of the Caribbean.

Not without significance, that in 1967, when a conference was held here in Barbados, chaired by the then Prime Minister of Barbados, Mr. Barrow, when all of the islands of the English-speaking Caribbean signed on to CARIFTA - because the CARIFTA agreement was signed in 1965 at Dickinson Bay in Antigua, where only Barbados, British Guyana at the time, and Antigua were signatories. But in 1967, all of the other countries signed on. But at that conference in 1967, there was also present a minister by the name of Bazan, who was a representative of

Panama. And in his speech, Mr. Barrow made mention of the fact that Bazan's presence was important because of the need of countries like Barbados to deepen their relationship with Panama, having regard to the fact that countries like Barbados and Jamaica in particular - but there were others - had contributed so massively to the development of the Panama Canal and of course what would result in Panamanian prosperity.

So we had a very successful conference. Mr. Chairman, I think that the regional integration movement is alive and well. Everything that happened at that conference convinced me that enthusiasm for regionalism is very high among CARICOM Heads. And across the Caribbean, two Heads of Government were not able to make it. The President of Suriname, because he had not yet become the President of Suriname - his party had won the election, but there were a number of parliamentary procedures through which he had to go before he could be named as President. He has been inaugurated, I think, tomorrow the 12th as President. And of course the distinguished Prime Minister of Belize, who was indisposed and therefore unable to come. But all other Heads of Government were present and participated fully in the conference.

I say the regional integration movement is alive and well. That is not another way of saying that countries do not have their challenges. CARICOM has a commission on the economy because all of the islands in the English-speaking Caribbean are economically challenged in one way or another. Some are still in IMF programmes. High debt-to-GDP ratios continue to cripple some. Some have serious crime problems. I hear crime discussed in the House today, but there are some of our neighbours that are experiencing very, very serious crime problems. I heard the learned Attorney General give some comparative statistics, and it is clear that we have to deal seriously with that crime challenge across the region. None of us is exempt from or immune to that crime problem, and therefore it is a matter of concern for all of us, and we have to deal with it.

Then of course there are other countries that have broader disputes. The old dispute between Belize and Guatemala just would not go away. Sometimes it flares up, sometimes this or that occurrence causes the tensions to be generated and then they abate. Most recently, of course, tensions have flared up between Guyana and Venezuela, which is the other border dispute that the region has been wrestling with. And in that context, of course, for the conference I am discussing, we also had to host the Vice President of Venezuela, who represented his President, who was supposed to come to Barbados during the conference. But of course, a bad weather event in Venezuela prevented President Maduro from coming. But his Vice President was here, and we had discussions at The Crane over not only the Venezuela-Guyana dispute, but over a decree that had been issued by the President which

had implications for the exclusive economic zone, not only of Guyana, but of even Barbados, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica and a few other countries. So all of that went on, and it has to be paid for.

As I said, in 2007 we held the last one. It cost us just over \$917 000. This one is costing us just over \$800 000. And that is the context in which this supplementary sum of \$650 000 is being sought by the Prime Minister's Office on Head 13 to supplement the Estimates 2015-2016.

So, Mr. Chairman, I just conclude by making the point that, yes, from time to time - and I said this when I spoke at the opening ceremony as well - from time to time you will have prophets of doom, prophets of gloom, obituarists who predict and prophesy that the regional integration movement is about to die or has died. The truth is, this region is more integrated today than at any other time in its history. And regional integration and togetherness is a lived experience by the thousands of people who move from island to island across the Caribbean, by LIAT or Caribbean Airlines, day in and day out, to do their business of various kinds. And our task as leaders is to make all of that movement even more automatic than it is. That is why the single market has been worked on and has developed as well as it has. The single economy will take a little more time because there are more technical issues involved there. But freedom of movement of goods and services and capital, and the right to establishment - the single market component - and freedom of movement of people - the single market component - has been well developed and is a lived experience by people all across the region.

So I have every confidence that with the passage of time, the regional integration movement will deepen more and more, and that the Caribbean civilisation, which we treasure so much and which has so much to teach the world - because we are special people here in the Caribbean - I have every reason to believe that that movement will grow from strength to strength. Let us not underestimate how important, as a people, we here in the Caribbean are. And our achievements are legendary. We take for granted now that six million people - if you exclude the population of Haiti - six million people here in the Caribbean tonight can boast the fastest man and the fastest woman in the world, can boast to have produced a number of Nobel laureates, can boast to be a zone of peace. There are many things that we take for granted here in the Caribbean; we can boast higher levels of literacy than you can find in many other parts of the world. We have done a lot in this region, and we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. We have to continue developing our civilisation, recognising and appreciating our specialness, behaving like special people, protecting what we have created from penetration by other cultures. We have to interact with the rest of the world, but we have to protect that which is peculiar to us, so that our

distinctiveness as a people will continue to shine as resplendently as it has shone down through our history.

So I am very pleased, Mr. Chairman, to seek the House's leave to get this additional sum of \$650 000 to supplement the Estimates so that we can defray all of our expenses incurred in the hosting of the 36th regular conference of CARICOM Heads of Government. And therefore, with those few words, I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Philip South, Mr. [Inaudible.]

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Just a few words in support of this resolution. First, I would like to congratulate the Honourable Prime Minister and Member of Parliament for St. Michael South for assuming the chairmanship of CARICOM at this point in time, and for successfully hosting the 36th meeting of the Heads of Government. As Attorney General of Barbados, Mr. Chairman, I am presently Chair of the Council of National Security Ministers, which is commonly called CONSLE, and also Chair of the Ministers responsible for SADEEMA. And as such, over the last couple of months I have had a pretty broad knowledge in terms of the challenges confronting not only CARICOM, but certainly many of our regional institutions.

I say that to say this - that in fact, at this point in time, CARICOM is in need of a chairman with the qualities of the Member for St. Michael South. And I therefore look forward over the next couple of months to us as a region tackling with success many of these nagging issues that have prevented us from moving forward. So I will end by saying again, congratulations to the Member for St. Michael South. And in that regard, I therefore support this supplementary resolution.

The question that Head 13 - Prime Minister's Office - \$650 000 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART, Mr. Chairman reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER, the passing of one Resolution in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART, the Resolution was read a first time and a second time and agreed to.

WITHDRAWAL OF BILL

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, currently on the order paper, Order No. 17 is the first reading of the Shops

Bill, 2015. It has since been determined that this bill should originate in the Senate in accordance with section 54(1) of the Constitution and Standing Order 52 of this Honourable House of Assembly. In the circumstances, sir, I beg to move the formal withdrawal of this item from the order paper.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, with that, we have come to the end of government business for today, and I beg to move that the sitting be adjourned until Friday, August 28, 2015, at 10.00 a.m.

The question that the House be adjourned until Friday, August 28, 2015 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; it opens with a garbled fragment of the prayers ('Of your son, Jesus Christ, give themselves the service of others wisdom you'), which has been omitted. 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 '[1.00 a.m.]' during the Attorney General's morning speech and '[12.30 a.m.]' after the luncheon suspension) and have been omitted. At several of them the text resumes in mid-sentence, so words may be missing at those points.

Q3. Committee of Supply. The source gives 'I beg to second that, sir' at the end of the Leader of the House's own motion to go into Committee; it is printed under AN HON. MEMBER and the seconder is not identified. Mr. CHAIRMAN is not named in the source; the Chairman of Committees, Mr. J. D. Paul, is presumed. Please confirm.

Q4. Messages. The source heads the message 'MESSAGES FROM HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL' and signs the letter 'Edith Fitzroy Belgrave'. The Governor General in 2015 was Sir Elliott Fitzroy Belgrave; corrected. Please confirm.

Q5. Suspension of Standing Orders. The source reads 'Standing Orders 6(16), 18, 20(42), 5(43) and 44'; printed as Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44.

Q6. Order No. 18, heading and reading. The Order as read gives 'from the Insurance Board', 'the Elaine Canterbury Home at Bell Plain' and 'the old mill barracks'; printed as the National Insurance Board, the Elaine Scantleberry Home at Belleplaine and the old male barracks, as the Attorney General refers to them. The St. Thomas site is read as 'Cane Garden' and called 'King Garden' by the Attorney General (Kean Garden in the Resolution of June 23, 2015), and the St. George site appears as 'Border Hall', 'Boarding Hall' and 'Borden Hall'; these are printed as in the source. Please confirm the place names.

Q7. Order No. 18, Hon. S. A. Lashley. No call from the Chair is recorded before Hon. S. A. Lashley, who addresses Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER; the change in the Chair is not recorded. Please check against the recording.

Q8. Order No. 18, Mr. D. G. Sutherland. The source has Mr. Sutherland refer to 'the honourable member for St. George' as the Member misrepresented by the Member for Christ Church West Central, in a passage entirely about the Member for St. Joseph, and to 'The honourable Attorney General, member for St. Philip North'. Corrected to St. Joseph and to St. Philip South, the Attorney General's seat, which Mr. Sutherland himself names later. Please confirm.

Q9. Order No. 18, interruption of Mr. D. G. Sutherland. The denial 'I never used the word "bad men"' is headed 'HON. MEMBER' in the source. Mr. Sutherland had just attributed the words to the Member for Christ Church West Central and replies that 'the record will reflect what the honourable member for Christ Church West Central said'; printed under Hon. S. A. LASHLEY.

Q10. Order No. 18, Hon. M. A. Lashley. Mr. SPEAKER's call reads 'Dr. Sonia Browne, Member for St. Philip North' in the source; she was not a Member of the 2013-2018 House. The name has been omitted from the call; the Member for St. Philip North in 2015 was Hon. M. A. Lashley, who is the speaker headed in the source.

Q11. Order No. 18, Dr. M. M. Agard. Part 4 of the source begins with this speech; the resumption after the suspension and the call from the Chair are not recorded. The speech is headed 'HON. DR. WILLIAM F. DUGUID, J.P., M.P. (Christ Church West)'; he was not a Member of the 2013-2018 House. The speaker represents Christ Church West and speaks of the Hastings and Worthing police stations in that constituency, whose Member in 2015 was Dr. M. M. Agard; printed under Dr. M. M. AGARD. Please confirm.

Q12. Order No. 18, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite (reply). The source has 'the Henry Ford's report on our constitution'; printed as Henry Forde's report, the report of the commission chaired by Sir Henry Forde. Please confirm.

Q13. Committee of Supply, report and Withdrawal of Bill. The source records the Prime Minister's motions that the Resolution be read a first time (incomplete in the source), a second time and agreed to, but not the Chair's putting of the questions; the formula is supplied. No question is recorded on the motion to withdraw Order No. 17, the Shops Bill, 2015, nor on the motion to adjourn, though the source records '[THE HOUSE WAS

ADJOURNED UNTIL FRIDAY, 28TH AUGUST, 2015 AT 10.00 A.M. J'. Please confirm from the Votes and Proceedings.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, August 11, 2015, with Mr. SPEAKER presiding. The Minutes of July 21, 2015 were confirmed. Mr. SPEAKER read a letter of July 30, 2015 from the Governor General informing the House of his vacation leave from August 1 to 31, 2015, during which Sir Philip Marlowe Greaves would act as Governor General. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce laid the Duties, Taxes and Other Payments Exemption (Emergency Room Incorporated) Order 2015 and the annual report of the Barbados Drug Service for 2013-2014, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite an amendment to the Post Office regulations, and Hon. R. L. Sealy the financial statements of Barbados Conference Services Limited for the year ending March 31, 2014.

Under Order No. 18 the Attorney General, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, moved a Resolution to borrow \$76 million from the National Insurance Board for police and public facilities: a station at Hastings combining the Hastings and Worthing stations, at \$14.9 million; a magistrate's court and police station in St. Thomas at \$15.3 million; police headquarters of about 40 000 square feet at Wildey at \$18 million; and works in St. Andrew, St. George and at Central and Blackrock. He said the Force had 1 540 established posts and a strength of 1 399, that crime had risen 13 per cent in the first half of 2015 after a fall the year before, and he spoke on domestic violence, human trafficking and juveniles.

After lunch Mr. D. D. Marshall pointed to nine shootings in eight days, said that two months earlier the

increase in crime would have been 48 per cent and in crimes against the person 245 per cent, and argued that policing was not only about buildings. Hon. S. A. Lashley said facilities and fighting crime were linked and that the issue was not partisan. Mr. D. G. Sutherland distinguished capacity from capability and raised the \$131 million owed to the National Insurance Scheme. Hon. D. St.E. Kellman said the Fund earned 6 per cent from Government against about 2.5 per cent in the banks. Miss C. Y. Forde welcomed the St. Thomas complex and called for an amnesty of firearms and vehicle searches.

After later suspensions Hon. C. P. Sinckler said the Force had not been short of funds; Mr. G. A. Clarke spoke on recruitment, and Hon. A. D. Brathwaite clarified that an admission of marijuana use did not disqualify an applicant; Hon. M. A. Lashley read from the 1998 debate on the Firearms Act; and Dr. M. M. Agard welcomed the Hastings station, spoke of community policing in Christ Church West and of gender-based violence, citing the UN Secretary General's figure of 30 per cent of women in the eastern Caribbean, and called for attention to white collar crime. Replying, the Attorney General referred to the Forde report on the Constitution and the 2004 law and order report. The Resolution was passed.

In Committee of Supply on Order No. 16 the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. F. J. Stuart, sought \$650 000 under Head 13, Prime Minister's Office, in Supplementary Estimates No. 1, 2015-2016, for the 36th Regular Conference of CARICOM Heads of Government held from July 2 to 4, which he said would cost just over \$800 000 against \$917 195.46 in 2007. Hon. A. D. Brathwaite congratulated him on assuming the chairmanship of CARICOM. The Resolution was agreed to. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce withdrew Order No. 17, the first reading of the Shops Bill, 2015, which was to originate in the Senate under section 54(1) of the Constitution. The House adjourned until Friday, August 28, 2015 at 10.00 a.m.