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# THE

## House of Assembly Debates

### (UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

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PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

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#### HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

*Tuesday, May 17, 2016*

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 17, 2016.

#### PRESENT

His Honour M. A. CARRINGTON, B.A., LL.B. (Speaker)  
Her Honour Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON, B.A., M.Sc. (Ph.Ed.) (Deputy Speaker)  
Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.)  
Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Q.C.  
Mr. G. A. CLARKE, J.P., B.Sc., Dip. Ed.  
Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)  
Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN, (Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development)  
Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Leader of the Opposition)  
Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P.  
Hon. R. D. JONES, J.P., B.A. (Hons.), M.A. (Ed.) (Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation)  
Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., M.B. B.S. (Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management)  
Mr. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C.  
Hon. M. A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of Transport and Works)  
Hon. R. L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)  
Hon. F. J. STUART, B.A., LL.M. (Prime Minister, Minister of National Security, the Public Service and Urban Development)  
Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, M.Sc., C. Eng. (Ministry of Health) (Leader of the House)

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

Mr. J. D. PAUL, B.Sc. (Chairman of Committees)  
Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE, Dip. Theology, B.A., M.Ed., Ed.D. (Minister of Environment and Drainage)

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, LL.B. (Hons.) (Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY, B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth)

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS, Dip., B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development)

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, B.A., M.Sc. (Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B.

Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC, MVO, B.A. (Hons.)

Mr. E. G. HINKSON, LL.B (Hons.) LEC, LL.M.

Dr. M. M. AGARD, J.P., B.Sc., M.Sc., D.D.S

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND, B.Sc., M.Sc., MBA (Dist)

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW, LL.B. (Hons.)

*Prayers were taken by Reverend Mark Harewood.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Good morning Honourable Members, this House is now in session.

#### MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I want to invite you to move the usual motion that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, May 12, 2016 be deferred.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its Meeting of Thursday, May 12, 2016, be deferred.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that, Sir. The question that the Minutes so mentioned be

deferred was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of this day's Sitting.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that.

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

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### ORDER No. 7

#### IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2016

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The purpose of this Bill is to make the fuller provision for the prevention of the smuggling of persons in accordance with our obligations to the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.

You may recall, Mr. Speaker, that a few weeks ago we did a Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Bill, now Act, 2016. This Bill should be read along with the changes made by that Act along with the Criminal Assets Recovery Fund Bill, which if all goes well, will be debated later today.

Smuggling of persons is not a major issue or an issue to my knowledge in Barbados. Indeed, in this part of the Caribbean I have not seen any statistics to indicate that we have a significant issue in terms of smuggling of persons. Smuggling is not to be confused with trafficking. Smuggling has that element of an agreement between the parties, that is the person providing the service of bringing the individual into the particular jurisdiction not in accordance with the laws of that jurisdiction, so normally the person being smuggled knows what is happening and would normally either themselves or their family agreed to the payment of some kind of fee involved with having them moved into that jurisdiction.

Trafficking of course, as you very well know, Sir, you have the element of coercion, the element of financial gain, and definitely the individual who is being trafficked does not give their consent to being trafficked, but smuggling is different. Smuggling is considered to be a crime against the state not so much the individual, and in

that regard that is why the seriousness of smuggling is looked at differently, and it is for that reason that we now moved it under the Immigration Act.

Sir, consistent with how seriously as a State we are addressing the issue of smuggling, you would notice that we have addressed significantly penalties to any individual caught smuggling another human being through our shores. There are significant penalties attached to such an individual who is caught and convicted under our laws. Consistent with that, we have also introducing the element of aggravation, that is where the circumstances are of such that the individual being smuggled would have been subjected to either, by way of example, violence or inhumane conditions, and therefore again we are attaching significant penalties to anyone caught not only smuggling but where there are aggravated circumstances involved.

Mr. Speaker, worldwide, it is estimated that there are between 600 000 to 800 000 individuals being smuggled yearly all across the world. This has become even more of an issue given what you are seeing in Europe on a daily basis in terms of individuals fleeing conflict in other parts of Europe, in Syria, et cetera, so it is a significant issue as I said in Europe. We believe that in fact that there are parts of the Caribbean where smuggling is also an issue in particular where individuals are being encouraged to leave their shores and be transited through some of our CARICOM neighbours where they hope that they can end up in the United States of America.

As I said, Sir, the intention of this Bill is to satisfy our requirements under the Convention. Although it was previously addressed in our laws in the 2011 Trafficking of Persons legislation, we have now made the distinction between smuggling and trafficking and made it clear that in fact that trafficking is an offence against the Immigration Act of Barbados and we brought it therefore under the Immigration Act.

Just by way of update because this is consistent not only with our obligations in terms of the overall trafficking of persons framework but consistent in terms of what we are doing as a country in terms sensitising Barbadians and anyone residing in Barbados whether permanently or otherwise to how seriously we treat to these issues, that is the issues of trafficking and smuggling of persons, we are finalising our National Plan of Action. We are again going about the business of sensitising Barbadians all over again to these issues, the humane treatment of our fellow men and women.

10.32 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, as I speak to you, we are trying to arrange a training session very early next month with certain parts of the hotel sector, we are going to look at taxi

drivers, et cetera. We are going to look at individuals who we believe might unwillingly or unwittingly be part of the process so that they can be able to identify where individuals may be subject to either trafficking or smuggling, so that we are going to continue the whole issue of training.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope also that we are going to be able to produce a film. We believe that by using media that persons can connect to it easier would be a good vehicle to sensitise Barbadians in particular, so that we want to develop a short film to use as a training tool. It would also, of course, give some of our young people the exposure in terms of being able to create and to participate in such a film but as I said the overall objective is to use that medium as a vehicle for training.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I just thought I would bring this Parliament up to date in terms of where we are. This is important for us to satisfy our requirements under the Convention. We have spent a significant bit of time discussing the whole issue of trafficking. As I said at the beginning, I do not believe that smuggling is a significant issue or that it is an issue in Barbados as we have not seen any cases of individuals either being identified or being prosecuted. My information does not suggest that we have identified any issues where we suspect that individuals may have been victims of smuggling. Mr. Speaker, that notwithstanding we need to send the correct signals not only to the international community but certainly to everyone here in Barbados that we will treat to the issue of smuggling of persons with the seriousness that it deserves.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill also speaks to the whole issue of confiscation of assets of anyone caught smuggling. You have heard me saying on several occasions that we need to take the benefits out of crime. This Bill again identifies the whole issue of the forfeiture of assets of anyone who is identified as being involved in smuggling.

Mr. Speaker, hand in hand with that, we do have a bit of an issue that we need to address as a country, that is that we end up seizing lots of boats or vehicles in particular and there is the whole issue in terms of how do we store, maintain and/or dispose of these vessels with alacrity. Just a few weeks ago I had yet another meeting with Colonel Quintyne of the Barbados Defense Force and with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. We have had a tradition as a country of keeping these vessels as "evidence" and then they are kept there for years. Of course, they then become of no use to us as a State if we want to dispose of those assets. Further, they are of no use to the original owner if by any chance that the court dictates that these assets should return to the original owner. I said that we need to have a regime in place that allows us to be able to dispose of these assets quickly. This

disposal can either be (a), that the State sells the assets or (b) that the assets are to be returned to the original owners. Sir, certainly there needs to be a system or policy that allows them to be out of the sun and being subjected to the weather and deteriorate quickly and/or what obtains presently at the Old Glendairy site where there is some concern in terms of whether or not these things there are not contributing to the mosquito problem. I am determined that, in fact we need to address that issue. Mr. Speaker, the more important point of this Bill is how serious that we would want to treat to the confiscation of assets of any individual involved in smuggling.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Bill is a very short Bill and I do not anticipate any opposition to what we are trying to do here this morning. I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of Government Business.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a very short intervention in this matter. I think the Honourable Attorney-General has done a good job in presenting to Barbados the fact that we are falling in line in getting other international requirements. Sir, the point the Honourable Attorney-General made is very instructive in that although we may not be presently in possession or do not have statistics that support the events of smuggling of persons in Barbados, we still need to prepare ourselves in an increasingly small world for such an eventuality. I certainly think that the reference to the increase in penalties with respect to these crimes is important.

Mr. Speaker, the facts are that as we look at the international arena, it is clear that countries like Barbados, indeed, the entire region are countries that depend so much on the movement of persons, albeit essentially for our tourism business must be eternally wary of the fact that some organisations that do not have our political interest, our way of life or our association at heart may seek to use the area -- and I speak now not only of Barbados but of the entire area -- as what is termed sometimes as soft targets for their acts. Sir, the matter of preparation of our States is absolutely important.

The Honourable Attorney-General also spoke to the fact that we need to identify areas in Barbados for the safekeeping of any kind of equipment which is confiscated because of the suspicion of being used in the commission of a crime. The Honourable Attorney-General spoke specifically to the question of motor vehicle and other

kinds of transport and to the urgency in terms of the ability to store these vehicles or these pieces of equipment during the ensuing trials, to keep them in a condition which does not cause the State to attract any liability when the final hearing is over.

Mr. Speaker, it also speaks to Barbados modernising its legislation and modernising its processes in order to remain and to keep in step with very important international requirements and there is a lot of debate in Barbados most times as we attempt to go through these measures. Mr. Speaker, without taking any particular side on this matter, I think that the people of Barbados have got to become accustomed to the fact that security at our borders is absolutely important and that it has to be maintained at the highest levels.

10.45 a.m.

For instance, we have had a lot of debate about the question of fingerprinting Barbadian citizens, and the point has been made in here on many occasions that we travel to the United States, Britain and Europe where we are often fingerprinted, searched and X-rayed to ensure that no-one is in breach of any of the requirements for entering the particular country, or indeed, to ensure that no-one is breaching any international travelling requirements. I recall very well that even at the time of the last Cricket World Cup tournament in the region in 2007, there was a lot of equipment and there was massive investment in the region in terms of border security; but to this day there is still resistance in some countries, including Barbados, to the use of some of this very important equipment. We have to come face-to-face with that reality sooner rather than later.

It is this kind of realisation that has to be part of the modern thinking in Barbados, Sir. It has to be part of our development programme in Barbados, and we have to make sure that our citizens are properly briefed about what objectives we are trying to achieve, and that they can work with us to achieve these objectives. Certainly, I think across the aisle in this Chamber we should be of one voice in this regard; urging our citizens in moving to a level of education and awareness so that they can truly join hand-in-hand with us in this very important step. Even as we consider our main business of tourism, we recognise the need for vigilance. We have no idea of knowing who our visitors are. The only way of identifying them is by an internationally accepted identification system which allows our border security to deal with these issues.

Sir, let me in passing also indicate that it is equally important in the area of health where, again, we have to be able to tag along at our borders with our visitors' records which speak to even their health conditions. Disease is a thing which we have to be always vigilant about, and indeed we have in place in Barbados all the international

port health arrangements that are required. Even as I speak, we are busy at the Ministry of Health looking at these arrangements and trying to tighten up wherever there may be loopholes. We had very clear examples two years ago of the threat of the Ebola outbreak in Central Africa, but it was an outbreak which eventually spread to the western world including the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom, along with Europe and Australia. Thankfully, Sir, the systems that we set up were able to so monitor and manage that crisis that up to this point, we have carefully avoided any incidence of the Ebola virus here in Barbados.

Other diseases, though maybe not as immediately threatening as Zika and dengue fever, are things which we need to keep a close eye on; and the ability to do this detection at our ports of entry is a very important part of our international compliance programme in terms of how we do things in Barbados. Sir, as the Attorney General said, it may not be a large Bill but certainly its reach is extremely far and it is extremely important. As I said, it is also part of our international compliance which is an essential part of the Barbados international programme. Sir, I certainly would like to associate myself with the passing of this Bill, and look forward to being able to not only pass the Bill here in the House of Assembly, but being able to put in place the required infrastructure and training of staff and personnel to make sure that this arrangement operates seamlessly in a Barbados of the future. Sir, with those few remarks, I want to associate myself with this Bill.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. D.O’N. INNISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to give support to this Bill before us. I perhaps have a slightly different perspective, or rather I may be able to strengthen the perspective of the Attorney General and the Honourable Leader of Government Business, in that it is a very significant matter before us. For me, this not only speaks to the Government’s continued commitment in terms of border security and enhancing the work of our Immigration Department, but it also steps into the realm of Barbados’ foreign policy. Let me start by saying that this Bill, which will amend the Immigration Act, CAP 190, to make provision for an offence of smuggling of persons in accordance with the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime and related matters, is perhaps one we can look at through the lens of what is happening around the world. Barbados and Barbadians must never feel that we are in any way, shape, form or fashion, immune to what is taking place around the world. Every day we turn on our television sets or go online, and we see the atrocities around the world. We see the sheer suffering of human beings. We recognise, for example, what is going on in Northern Africa and into the European Union, and sometimes we wonder what it has to do with Barbados.

Let us step back and realise and reflect upon the fact that as a Christian society, we want to ensure that every human being is treated with dignity. What is happening is that we see boatloads of innocent families and individuals risking their lives, going from a very insecure geographical space with great political turmoil and trying to venture into new societies and communities. The risks inherent in all of that must make us all in this peaceful Barbados do two things: reflect upon the fact that we perhaps have a lot to be grateful for, and secondly, realise that what is happening out there can have some direct or indirect impact upon us over here. If we start looking at the source market of some of these issues of smuggling, we may recognise that smuggling of human beings, unlike human trafficking, is where one is seeking to enter the geographical space of another territory without lawful admission, as opposed to trafficking which really connotes more the moving, maybe legally but, for illicit activities and so on.

We reflect upon why people would move. Why would these seafarers and well organised criminals seek to move people from one place to the next? In this particular case of Northern Africa and what is happening in Libya, Syria and such like, the human degradation, the fighting based on religious beliefs, various socio-economic conditions and sheer reckless political acts, are matters to which we cannot turn a blind eye in Barbados. Therefore, as part of the United Nations grouping, the questions may be asked, “What can Barbados do about such?” and “Why is such a matter of any great importance to this small island in the Eastern Caribbean?”

10.51 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, we made a commitment many years ago, almost 50 years ago, I believe when Barbados joined the United Nations system as an independent territory, we said we would friends of all and satellites of none. We have always pursued a foreign policy where we align to that particular perspective of the late Right Errol Walton Barrow and the Government and as such Barbados has a duty to continue to lend its voice wherever we can in the international for against the atrocities and the crimes committed against human beings and, therefore, as we reflect this particular Bill today, let us not disabuse our minds of its linkage with a Barbados 50 years later that is still saying to the world you must do like us and respect human beings. You must respect the laws of the land, you must ensure that our borders are secure and that those who come in, come in a lawful manner. Sir, directly related to that is our condemnation at the highest level to those who seek to make a living out of moving people deliberately from one jurisdiction to a next without being granted permission to either leave that particular jurisdiction or enter the one that they are entering into.

Mr. Speaker, as we wrap our minds around this Bill before us today, let us quietly reflect upon the human suffering that is taking place in that part of the world, and it resulting impact upon countries that hitherto two or three years ago, did not have to face the suffering, the impact upon their own economies and their own societies as you have a major influx of individuals from different cultures and different languages enter their communities. Sir, that is why as we look at what is happening in Turkey, as you look at what is happening in Greece and its resulting impact throughout the EU system and perhaps financial resources of the EU system that could have been used towards assisting in true developmental programme and developing those countries now have to be deployed towards assisting those who have been smuggled into their own borders. Therefore, that reduces the amount that is available for us down here in Barbados and in the wider Caribbean as well. Sir, these matters are not matters that we must say it is happening so far away from us and that it is of no concern to us.

Mr. Speaker, I keep saying all the time that it also must say to us that we cannot sit, rest on our laurels and say that it cannot happen here because some of the smuggled individuals into Europe, for example, it has now been revealed that they are part and parcel of the high security risk that exists in Europe. Sir, the number of those from ISIS and other fraction groups, who seek to hide under the cover of unrest and turmoil in their own place of origin, enter into Brussels, into France, into Germany and wherever, and seek over time to inject a high level of fear upon ordinary citizens in those countries.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot here in Barbados and say, oh, that is happening in Europe and that it can never happen here and, Sir, that is why as a Government, acting responsibly, we have to ensure that we tighten up on our border security wherever possible, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, this matter here speaks forcibly and specifically to the issue of smuggling but it cannot be divorced from the overarching issue of Barbados' quest to bring a modern Immigration Act into place to ensure that we continue to address the concerns of human suffering, that we address the issue of border security and that, wherever possible, we seek to protect the integrity, reputation of this jurisdiction as well as to deal forcibly with those who seek to contravene the law of Barbados particular in terms of smuggling individuals in our jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important because it sends a clear signal to the world and the United Nations apparatus of which we are part of, that Barbados is prepared to be part of an international system to bring laws into place to give support to what we have signed on to in the United Nations system, particularly in terms of transnational organized crime and such like, so that in the event that we have to deal with an unfortunate situation here, we already have laws that protect us.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados as an island has a whole set open coastlines. I do not think that any of us need to dwell a lot of what has been happening in and around our coastline. We often hear the stories of the vessels, those small powerful boats that come into our space from other territories, often times heavily laden with illicit drugs that do cause a lot of problems in our society, problems in terms of those who consume and us, those who buy and those who feel that they have to arm themselves with illegal firearms, shoot up around the place and those who feel they have to rob, loot and whatever. Sir, at the end of the day, when we reflect upon it, a lot of our problems in this society have their roots in that drug trade but today is not the conversation about drugs, per se, it is about the fact that we an open shoreline and that we have a duty to protect it.

Mr. Speaker, there are matters that lie within the domain of the Prime Minister as Minister of Defence and Security and the Attorney-General, the Chair of the National Security Counsel and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the police and the Defence Force, et cetera and I have great faith in those office holders and in those offices to protect the citizens of Barbados via the coastline. (6:14)

Mr. Speaker, we have three clearly identified ports of entry into Barbados, Port St. Charles, I believe has been designated as an official port of entry into Barbados and, therefore, we have customs and immigration offices there. We have the Grantley Adams International Airport and,

indeed, the Bridgetown Port as well and, as a Government, we have to ensure those ports are protected, that they are secured and that we have adequate staff both in terms of quantity and quality of staff to protect our borders and to deal with immigration matters therein. Sir, individuals will seek forever reason to come into Barbados or other decent societies like ours.

Mr. Speaker, it is one thing when an individual armed with a valid passport from their country of origin, comes into Barbados and seek to overstay their time, instead of the 28 days allowed or 6 months allowed, they feel this is where they ought to make their home and therefore, they go about their business. Sir, that is one issue, those are people who have lawfully entered Barbados. Their conduct since then or their length of stay since then is a separate issue and is not to be confused with those who seek to enter Barbados without the appropriate documentation and without the permission.

Mr. Speaker, I have certainly encountered individuals in my constituency and wider Barbados who came here and may not have arrived in the manner that one ought to arrive in Barbados and certainly not with the appropriate documentation, so I am not going to say that it does not exist in Barbados. It may not exist at the level that gives us any great amount of discomfort but as a responsible Government we have taken the position that we cannot wait until something happens then to say that we should have done something about it.

Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges that confront many societies as they address this issue of immigration, smuggling and trafficking et cetera is to bring the appropriate level of penalties to bear. You cannot say that smuggling of individuals into another territory is unlawful and then you give the perpetrators a slap on their risk, they must be some disincentive for people to want to engage in such. Sir, that is why today we are saying that under this amendment to be done here, Section 12(a) of Cap, 190, the Immigration Act, we are going to delete the closing words in Subsection 5 and substitute the words, the master of the vessel is guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction on indictment to a fine of \$200 000 or to imprisonment for a term of five years or to both.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who have responsibility for these vessels must be prepared to pay the price if they seek to be part and parcel of a structure or programmer that brings individuals into Barbados without permission or going through the legal routes therein.

Mr. Speaker, we have had instances in the past where vehicles have come into our shoreline and they have been found heavily laden with contrabands, drugs or whatever and the vessel owner or captains, as they are called ...

11.00 a.m.

oftentimes do not face the Court or maybe get a little slap on the wrist. We are doing a pushback and saying that you have a duty to know who is on your vessels, whether it is an aeroplane or boat that you are coming on, whether they are coming by air or by sea, you have a duty to know who is on board. In respect of an aircraft, perhaps it is a lot easier. The pilot is not going to walk through the aircraft and say I want to see the passport of each passenger on board. There are very sophisticated networks and computer systems that allow the immigration departments at both the sending and the receiving States as well as the airlines themselves to know who is who and all the checks and balances that you would have to go through at the various ports of entry and exit, not only in terms of security for the aircraft but also to ensure that you know exactly who is travelling and they have the requisite documentation to enter. Perhaps therefore it makes it a little easier for the aircraft side. It is not to say, Mr. Speaker, that you do not have a bit of smuggling taking place via that mode of transportation as well but I think in our context here, we are also reflecting upon those who enter through ocean going vessels as well and we are saying, look, the master of the vessel similar to the pilot on board the aircraft has a duty to know who he/she is bringing on board their vessel and if you do not and you are found to be in charge of a vessel that has smuggled individuals into our territorial waters, then there is a heavy penalty you would face for than when going forward. Mr. Speaker, we have also spoken deliberate to the offences re the smuggling of persons. We said that those who obtain directly or indirectly financial or other material benefit, engages in conduct preliminary to or takes part in the smuggling of persons by sea or air without the complying requirements to legal entry into Barbados.

We also speak about producing fraudulent travel of identity documents. Mr. Speaker, I wish to stop here for just two minutes to reflect on this because I do not think we really sometimes appreciate the value of the Barbados passport. I do not think we appreciate sometimes, at a broader level, the importance of having the right travel documents. I do not think, on the other hand as well, that Barbadians generally speaking appreciate the ... MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, sorry to interrupt you. Just give us a minute please.

Mr. Speaker vacated the Chair and the Deputy Speaker assumed the Chair.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker. As I was making the point, sometimes I do not think that we appreciate the immense high level of responsibility of the Immigration Department in terms of

border security and their attendant work in this wider society and economy. We have had in recent months this issue of proposal to fingerprint citizens at our points of entry and exit in Barbados and it is very unfortunate that what ought to have been appreciated as a national security matter was allowed to be delved into the realm of pure partisan politics, that, Madam Deputy Speaker, troubled me a bit. As I said last week when I spoke on the Resolution from the Leader of the Opposition on a related matter. We cannot take these things lightly. We sit here in Barbados, and I am seeing the lawyers on the Other Side, not necessarily in this Chamber, but some of their supporters, talk about taking the Government to Court. I know that there are a few lawyers in this country who would take any and everybody to Court even those with four legs as long as they can get their 15 minutes of fame and hope to pick up a few clients along the way that would pay their bills, but these are serious matters and I have heard a lot of noise, "unenlighten" noise about fingerprinting, about how it is unconstitutional, and you cannot do that, and how you are going to take peoples fingerprint, and who is going to collect the information and share it, et cetera, but when the Honourable Member for St. Joseph was leaving Massachusetts last week to get back here two hours before the No Confidence Motion was wrapping up, he had to be fingerprinted at Boston Logan Airport. Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: When the Honourable Member for St. Joseph was entering Miami Airport last week as well, he had to be fingerprinted at Miami Airport. You have to put your four fingers on your right hand on the thing to be fingerprinted and you also have to do the retinal scan so he would have taken off his glasses -- I know once they are off he cannot see anything anyhow so he does not know who is looking at him -- but he would have taken off his glasses and had the retinal scan done as well. Likewise, the Honourable Member for St. James Central when he visits the USA next week, he will be subject to that as well and having a diplomatic passport does not relieve you of that, you still have to do it. Americans entering the USA also have to do it. We go to the UK on official business and you have to be fingerprinted and it is not just the developed countries, by the way, in many of the islands around here and the region, you do a similar thing as well, but we have to face a new reality which is fingerprinting as the new norm and we must give our citizens the assurance. I think that is the only thing that was missing in our conversation about this, to give the citizens the assurance that the Government is not acting ultra vires and that we are not seeking to capture information on our citizens that then would be put to some nefarious use and whatnot, it is all about protecting our borders. What I found quite strange is when lawyers, in particular, and politicians who ought to know better, who do not raise an eyebrow when they enter Miami Airport to go to Dolphin Mall or Saw Grass Mall or Dadeland Mall to spend the valuable foreign exchange, whatever. They do not bat an eyelid, when they are told to

put their four fingers on the little screen there to be fingerprinted. Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: I am a citizen, I do not escape it. I am a citizen of one country and that is Barbados but I would tell you that -- I am glad you mentioned that point because there are a lot of myths out there -- Americans are also subject to fingerprinting in the United States of America. Do not tell me nonsense. My children were born up there and they have to be fingerprinted like everybody else. Again, the former Attorney General, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, is making the point that Americans are not fingerprinted but I would excuse him because I do not think he really knows or checks on these things, but seriously, Madam Deputy Speaker, the reality about it is that we certainly cannot take these matters lightly. Ensuring that those who come into our space, including citizens of Barbados are fingerprinted is an act that would be done in the best interest of this country and I think we must all get on board. There really is not harm, the information is not going to go to any nefarious purpose as the Honourable Member for St. James Central likes to point out occasionally but it must all be tied up into enhancing our security system ensuring that those, for example, who may attempt to smuggle people into Barbados realise that once we get the policy and equipment in place and extend it to visitors to Barbados as well, that is another mechanism in which we would be able to avoid the smuggling of humans into our shores as well. This issue fraudulent travel documents is also a matter not to be taken lightly because a lot of the smuggling you see around the place, as opposed let us say to human trafficking, involves the use of fraudulent documents. There are people who, I am told, can make a decent living off of providing these kinds of documents so when we go the route of the biometric passports and IDs or whatever they are called now, then people may want to say, Oh Lord, you want to store my information on some electronic database somewhere and some smart lawyer who is looking to earn a few dollars in fees is going to put on a suit and say we are going to sue the Government.

11.10 a.m.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is all part of the enhanced security to ensure we are able to mitigate against those who may seek to provide these fraudulent documents around here.

I had a constituent from West Terrace, who contacted me recently about getting a new passport. I was quite taken aback that you are getting a new passport, and you have had a passport for years, and now somebody from the Immigration is asking for your birth certificate. My immediate reaction was, what would have changed that should merit you having to get a birth certificate? This is about the third passport you have had, or you are getting

from Barbados, so Immigration must have those documents already in their data base. I do not see the need for you to get a birth certificate. I must confess I was a bit taken back. Then when I spoke to the Immigration Department who explained the amount of abuse and the amount of fraudulent acts that have been committed, where individuals are coming with fraudulent travel documents that they had to insist on a little push back, saying to you to bring me your original birth certificate or whatever. There may come a point in time when we are able to avoid a lot of that and make it a lot easier, but until then we have to work with the system, because at the end of the day while the average Parliamentarian and citizen of Barbados go about their business, do not engage in any activities and be upright law abiding citizens, they are always some in our midst or some who would seek to enter our midst, who may not have such high moral values and certainly do not seek to respect the law of the land and who seek to gain financially from such, including the smuggling of individuals. Madam Deputy Speaker, we therefore have to tidy up on a lot of these matters.

One of the issues in this amendment, as I said earlier, speaks forcefully to the matter of penalties. Section 29 (b) in the new Bill would say persons who are convicted under Section 29 (a) which speaks to the fraudulent travel documents, et cetera, is liable on conviction on indictment to a fine \$1 500 000 or to imprisonment of 15 years or to both. If you want to smuggle somebody into Barbados you better know that if it occurs and you are found guilty, my man it is \$1.5 million to look for or 15 years in jail or both. I think this is a significant enough penalty to serve as a deterrent to those who may consider engaging in such illegal acts, as smuggling individuals into Barbados.

It also says that a person who is convicted under this same section of the offence of smuggling of persons with aggravation is liable on conviction or indictment of a fine of \$2 million or to imprisonment for 25 years or both, the slight difference here is aggravation, because they are those who would be smuggled and may involve a bit of physical blows or some form of aggravation along the way. We are saying no. Madam Deputy Speaker that is why I say that this Bill is so significant and trying to link it to our foreign policy, to our national security issues, Immigration and respect for human beings.

Madam, no individual ought to be smuggled around the world. You ought to have the appropriate travel document, purchase your mode of transportation to move, and at the point of entry ought to be treated with dignity and respect as you seek to enter either temporary or perhaps on a more long-term basis. We want to send a very clear message as part of the United Nations systems and the conventions we signed onto that we are going to have zero tolerance for those who engage in smuggling individuals around the world.

The other point quickly, Madam Deputy Speaker, relates to forfeiture. The Attorney General spoke to this matter of those who have been convicted of the offence of the smuggling of persons, and the court is satisfied that any property of the person convicted was used or was intended to be used or was obtained in the course of the crime, or any benefits are gained from the proceeds of crime. This is a matter that troubles me. This one speaks to smuggling of persons and those who gain from such, and the need for the court to issue instructions that the assets gained should be forfeited. It must be an important part of the solution or the deterrent programme for such in this jurisdiction. When people do such things we must be bold enough as a country to say we are going to seize your assets. I know there is a lot of hue and cry, a lot of hullabaloo and talk these days about crime, who gained what and who owns what assets, et cetera. I am very concerned and moving beyond the point of this smuggling of persons and now to the broader issue in this society about individuals who are purported to be involved in some of these illicit activities, who gain assets that you cannot be very clear as to the source of them, or they go to court and they are given a little slap on the wrist, but the assets they have acquired through illicit activity remain there for their use, once they walk out of Whitepark Road having concluded the case. I am saying that if we are serious about reforms in society, getting Barbados back on track, saying to our young people that you must not gain from criminal activity and these kinds of nefarious activities, et cetera, then we have to go the full length of it and ensure that those who benefit from such activities, lose all of the assets that clearly have been identified as having been gained from such illicit activities. What is happening now is almost as though you get a little slap on the wrist and then you are told, well go back home to your mansion and your boat and enjoy your life. Give me a little \$500 and move on.

Madam Deputy Speaker, while this particular Bill speaks to the Immigration Act and an amendment to it in respect of the smuggling of persons, there is a broader message, I think, that is being sent that the tolerance level has to be lowered in this society in respect of many of the things we somethings begin to think ought to be the new norm in Barbados.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the other point, relates to general penalties, a person guilty of an offence on his act for which no other penalty is provided is liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$5 000 or to imprisonment of 12 months or both. This is good. The legislative draft has obviously sought to capture as much as it possibly can, because not every offence will be specified in the Bill at this point in time, but at least we have given the judicial officers the leeway to say, look, any other offence not specified in this particular Bill and for which you have been found guilty or liable on summary conviction, a trial

in the court system, et cetera, there is a fine of \$5 000 or imprisonment of 12 months or both.

This is very instructive. We are saying you can be prosecuted for the offence. You can have a trial and you can therefore be given a fair hearing, but once you have been given your fair hearing and have been found guilty, there must be a severe penalty in place.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in closing, the other point relating to this is the matter of extradition. I think we need to face reality that some of the people involved in smuggling are not necessarily citizens of our country and therefore we have to use the Extradition Act to ensure that they are returned lawfully to their place of origin to face the crime. Not only that, there are those who may be involved in smuggling elsewhere and decide to come to Barbados on an extended stay, out of the proceeds of their criminal activity and when they are caught in the jurisdiction of source, or when it is recognized in the jurisdiction of source who they are and their involvement, and Barbados is asked upon presentation of evidence to extradite the individual to whichever country we have that arrangement with, we know full well and the judicial officers know full well that the individual can be extradited under the Extradition Act of Barbados. So we are covering all bases, Madam Deputy Speaker.

This is to my mind a very profound piece of legislation we are dealing with today. It allows us to wrap our minds around the direction we are taking law and order in Barbados, our commitment to the United Nations and matters on transnational crime. It sends a message clearly to the world and those who are listening on, that we are not prepared to let our size prohibit us from getting up and being a voice of reason in a significant issue such as the smuggling of human beings around the world. It also sends a message to those who may contemplate engaging in such activities in this jurisdiction that Barbados will not be a territory that will in any way, shape or fashion facilitate such, and if you do such there are severe penalties that you will have to face.

With these few words, Madam Deputy Speaker, I stand fully behind and fully in support of this Bill before the Chamber.

I thank you.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: Madam Deputy Speaker, I thought the Opposition had signaled that we had no opposition to this Bill. It is not that we minded a discussion on it. I do not think anything in the Bill requires a debate. We do not object to it. The Honourable Attorney General

did say that there is intelligence, or perhaps the word he chose was his advice, there is a distinction, suggested we have had no issues in relation to human smuggling. I believe that information is largely correct, but I would like to remind Barbadians that only 10 years ago fishermen off the coast of St. Philip intercepted or happened upon a vessel that had left the coastal area of Senegal, I believe, headed for Europe, and because of the overcrowding on that very small vessel I think they were about 40 people, the absence of water, the fact that the vessel was simply not intended for such a long trip both in distance and time, the individuals who set sail from their homeland trying to get to Europe were, in fact, been smuggled. We all know how that has turned out. The vessel was found adrift after 4 months and there were 11 desiccated corpses of young men found in that boat, and for one of those moments in time Barbados became the centerpiece of the world press.

It is interesting that this particular Bill would really have been relevant at that time save and accept that the individuals who owned the vessel and so one were obviously not located in our jurisdiction, but other legislation coming before the House today would have allowed that particular vessel to have been confiscated. While we happily cannot point to instances of human smuggling where Barbados is the end destination, in fact we have felt its evil brush. However, it appears that this particular debate has now been flung wide open for discussion on another matter, and the Opposition will not resile from our position in relation to the approach of this administration in relation to finger printing of its citizens. I believe that all individuals should give Parliament the benefit of their personal knowledge, the benefit of their experience and the benefit of their research. The Honourable Member who just spoke and who said that Americans do get fingerprinted when they enter the United States really ought to be embarrassed for so saying, because he only did a cursory research, if he googled the United States Embassy website it would tell you quite clearly that the requirement of fingerprinted only relates to international visitors and does not apply to either naturalised or born American citizens.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that information is publicly known, but be that as it may, it now appears that even though the Immigration Department announced that the measure was going to be deferred for further consideration and action, it is clear to us now from the mouthings of two, the Minister of Health and the Minister of International Business that this administration, despite the very focal criticisms of the public of Barbados are once more hell bent, to use the Shakespearian term, "They are bloody bold and resolute" in terms of taking us down this road.

The Minister of the Environment was hell bent on taking us down a particular road too, and only in the last week came to this Parliament sheepishly hoping perhaps to

disavow any intention to have taken us in the direction of Cahill.

Madam Deputy Speaker, perhaps we are seeing the similar modality being employed here. It is wrong to subject Barbadian citizens to a requirement for fingerprinting when they are either leaving or entering our country. It is incomplete, total and complete opposition to the international treaties that we have signed. Now the Immigration Bill is here -- several speakers have spoken and they have all said, Oh we are carrying out our international obligations, we have an international obligation to do this and this Bill is in furtherance in that international obligation.

How is it that they ignore the other international obligations that our country signed onto, which guarantees Barbadian citizens the right of entry into their homes without hindrance or any precondition. That is another treaty that we signed onto.

*Asides.*

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: No, it is not called the Constitution. I am talking about an international treaty. If the Honourable Attorney General does not know the difference, well we will tell the Honourable Attorney General. The Honourable Attorney General

Obviously is not familiar with it, and we do not have the benefit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in this Chamber to advise him on what we have signed onto. We did not come prepared for that, but as we are here let us talk about it.

It remains fundamentally wrong and it is also illogical. It is inconsistent with international practice. No other country anywhere in the world subjects their citizens to being fingerprinted when they are entering. If the Government of Barbados wants to fingerprint international visitors, so be it. We have never raised any objection to fingerprinting international visitors. Our fundamental objection has always been that the Government for some bizarre reason wants to fingerprint Barbadian citizens.

There is no doubt, Madam Deputy Speaker, there are certain elements of our passport and ID arrangements that we probably have to improve with tighter security, but in our respectful submission and in the view of right-thinking members of Barbados, it would be wrong to subject Barbadians to that requirement.

Madam Deputy Speaker, imagine if one of your constituents came into Barbados and refused to give a fingerprint. What is the Immigration Officer going to do? Deport him or her back to where they came from? They are Barbadians so you cannot deport a Barbadian from

Barbados. Could, on the other hand, the Immigration Officer charge him with an offence because they refused to give a fingerprint? Equally objectionable and idiotic. What this Government seems to be doing is putting arrangements...

#### *Sequence 7*

*Tuesday, May 17, 2016*

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: on the other hand, the Immigration Officer charged him with an offence because they refused to give a fingerprint, equally objectionable and idiotic. What this Government seems to be doing is putting arrangements in place in an almost whimsical manner. One of the excuses was, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that this brings us into line with international practice. Well, you know, whatever the Government might think, the Opposition Members are not fools. We took the trouble to research the issue and to see what international practice you could find where your citizens are being subjected to this and we could not find any because none exists.

The difficulty this Administration has is that when once they fixed their minds on a particular notion, it is impossible for them to even consider that somebody else might have an idea. How many times have you heard in this Chamber Members on the Government side saying to the Opposition give us your ideas, give us your suggestions, tell us what you think, but somehow when we tell them what we think, they either do not understand or reject it as being the mumblings of a fool. Well, the Minister of the Environment has come to feel the wrath of the people of Barbados in respect of that which he and others on their side dismissed as mumblings of a fool.

There is ample precedent for fingerprinting visitors, and if the Government wishes to do that, they are entirely at liberty to do so, but we also have to look at the logistics of what they are proposing. On an occasion when there are two or three flights coming in at the Grantley Adams International Airport, carriers which hopefully if the Minister of Tourism has his way would be full, there is almost gridlock coming through the Immigration line. If the Attorney-General had his way they would probably get shoot when they land. There is total gridlock at Immigration.

Now, the reality is that we have to consider that there is a practical matter which we need to grapple with. Are we going to have sufficient Immigration Officers available so that the reasonable course of entering into Barbados to enjoy a holiday is facilitated? This is a practical matter. For somebody to come to Barbados having come across the Atlantic on an eight-hour flight and then to have to spend hours in an airport on something like this, we need to ask ourselves if this is where we want to

go. If this is where you want to go, then go ahead, but then we want to know what is the logic in fingerprinting people when they are leaving. Nobody fingerprints people when they are leaving the country. Nobody in the world does. For some bizarre reason the Government of Barbados feels that we should be a trailblazer in foolishness, but you know what, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is exactly what we have now become known for.

There were difficulties with the regulations being laid. My understanding is that we will have an opportunity to fully debate this issue when it comes but it is clear from the words that have been spoken this morning that this Democratic Labour Party Administration is hell-bent on imposing this on Barbadians. Now, let me say this. I happen to be a lawyer. Good, bad or indifference, it does not matter to me what the Honourable Members on that side think. All over the world lawyers volunteer their time to stand in the breach for the people when they consider that wrongs are being done. I believe that if it were possible for doctors and nurses to stand in the breach where they felt that there was a health crisis, doctors and nurses would do so. The police stand in the breach every day between the wrongdoers and the innocent. The Minister of Commerce's head may be too high in the commercial clouds to recognise that attorneys-at-law who when they are seeing administrative wrongdoings or missteps by a Government say, stop, you are breaking the law, are doing a noble thing. We on this side would very much like to be involved in them but the allegation would easily be made it is political, you are only doing it because of politics, so we use here as our courtroom, but I want to salute all those lawyers who whenever they see an administrative wrong being perpetrated in our country are bold enough to stand up and say no.

In Trinidad, Madam Deputy Speaker, a whole body of administrative law has been built up. It is an enviable body of jurisprudence. It is not built up because individuals who have money decided they were going to go and put people in court, that body of administrative law has been built up over the last 20 years because members of the Trinidadian Bar have been willing, when they saw the Trinidadian Administrations, of whichever political persuasion, taking decisions that were negatively affecting...

*Madam Deputy Speaker vacated the Chair and Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member, sorry to break your stride but please continue.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: I was saying that that body of jurisprudence has been built up in Trinidad and has been of great benefit to other Commonwealth Caribbean countries because members of the Trinidadian Bar when

they saw public authorities or the Trinidad Government committing what you might consider missteps they were brave enough to call the Government on it and bring actions in court. It has served the people of Trinidad and Tobago well. That particular initiative has served as a significant check on the excesses of a sometimes over-exuberant Administration, and I am honoured to be a part of a profession that feels that when it sees the Government of this country doing the wrong thing that they should consider it important enough to stand up and protect the interest of the people.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Commerce sees that it is done forgetting a fee, that is in his narrow perspective, but the stark reality is that when these things are challenged by lawyers it is done *pro bono publico*. It is Latin. It means for the public good. In the event that they are successful, the public would have been served and if the court sees fit the court would award the cost but that is a matter in the discretion.

Mr. Speaker, as I said I am hopeful that we would actually have an opportunity to debate this. We agree with this Bill, but the matters that are being raised in relation to immigration appear to us to be an early salvo from the Government to signal to the country that notwithstanding that the Chief Immigration Officer has deferred the implementation, they are still coming with it any way. The defeats are becoming too numerous to count and if the Government wants to add another one to the stack of solid waste and Cahill Energy, they are at liberty to do so.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to stand in association in relation to this particular Bill before the House which, of course, enjoys bipartisan support. It is really a result of a number of sustained efforts by the Government to provide a lasting and meaningful response to what has become a major international problem.

11.40 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly would like at the onset to congratulate the Office of the Attorney-General and the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel for responding very quickly to a matter that has certainly been on the radar of international authorities in relation to Barbados' compliance with international conventions.

Mr. Speaker, I happened to have been the Minister responsible for this particular matter when it was first engaging the attention of the United States of America'

authorities in terms of our existing law, in relation to whether or not our existing law was sufficiently aggressive in relation to this international matter. Of course, the issue in relation to the incidents of human trafficking in Barbados we know is extremely low but notwithstanding that I believe what the focus has been, certainly in terms of the international community, on the whole question of prevention and how we could arm our law enforcement agencies with the necessary statutory backing to deter the incidents of human trafficking which really is a global concern.

I certainly believe that the importance of this Bill before this Honourable House really is a question in relation to deterrent. Barbados and other small countries, particularly those dependent on tourism, have really got to be extremely vigilant in relation to issues of this kind. We know, for example, that Barbados is a source and destination country for the movement of persons, whether women, children and so on, who are likely to be subjected to trafficking. We have seen the issues in relation to the incidents of increased prostitution which in terms of the Barbadian experience perhaps does not get the same kind of attention as it should get, but I believe that where the modern practice has gone in relation to how these issues are handled has forced many countries to take this matter even more seriously.

Mr. Speaker, even before, of course, these issues were on the radar, Barbados, of course, has had on the statute books for quite a while the Sexual Offences Act, the Offences Against the Person Act and also of course the prohibition against slavery. Sir, these laws do prohibit trafficking offences and other related offences in relation to trafficking but I believe that what we have always been met with is the whole question particularly in relation to the international reports that Barbados is required to file. Sir, we have always been met with the question of how has your prosecution been able to meet up in relation to the enforcement of the provisions under the legislation, and the ability to be able to have your law enforcement agencies trained well enough to be able to visually spot potential human trafficking issues has been an issue that Barbados has actually paid quite a lot of attention to.

Sir, I know that through the Office of the Attorney-General and working with agencies of the United States of America there has been quite a bit of training of our law enforcement agencies in relation to the whole question of detection, particularly at our borders. Mr. Speaker, this particular Bill, of course, places quite a bit of attention on the whole question of trafficking by sea, but there are issues, of course, that even after we have enacted this particular legislation, we are going to have to grapple with. Sir, I think those issues, by and large, relate to the question of prosecution.

Mr. Speaker, while the issue, of course, is not as huge as we have seen in other major countries that are certainly suffering from this issue of human trafficking, I think Barbados is moving in the right direction by ensuring that we are vigilant, though, of course, there have been not as much incidences of the issue, but we are focussed on prevention. Of course, I think Barbados was placed on the tier two watch list in relation to compliance to international best practice or international convention.

Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns, of course, that we have had made to Barbados, particularly at that time is that we have not before now had on our statute books an offence prohibiting the trafficking of human persons. Therefore I am happy to note that certainly once we have gone passed this hurdle, we would have met another of the requirements in relation to the international convention. Such issues, of course, that we have had to address... Sir, when I had the responsibility for children, the issue was raised that I think in Barbados we have to face the reality about what is happening in our communities, about what is happening or perhaps may have been happening in the past that we would not have paid quite a bit of attention to. Mr. Speaker, we do have to address the whole question of commercial sexual activity in Barbados, we need to address this is a very proactive way.

Mr. Speaker, of course, some persons believe that there must be provisions for adults to be involved in whatever adult activity that they would want to be involved, but that comes at a very heavy price, by and large. Therefore, where the international community has gone with this is to ensure that innocent victims in particular... Sir, that is why I believe that this particular matter is being brought within the context of an immigration issue because this is an amendment to the Immigration Act. This signals, of course, the position from a policy perspective of the Government that the issue of the trafficking in human persons really is caught up within the question of an immigration matter because by and large, certainly the movement of persons who are moving against their will, we have had certainly many reports not necessarily in relation to Barbados but we have had many international reports of children being moved from one country to another against their will, ending up, of course, being portrayed as tourists or visitors and then, of course, being forced into a life of sexual activity in countries that certainly do not have the necessary arrangements and vigilance mechanisms that protect children. These children are being brought to countries and are being used in illicit sexual behaviours and by extension are involved in illicit drug and other related activities.

Mr. Speaker, particularly because of our commitments internationally in relation to the Convention of the Rights of the Child and of course this Government has an enviable record of ensuring that we update our

legislation from time to time to address the issue of child protection. I believe only recently we have heard from the Minister with responsibility for children that there are efforts to ensure that there are improvements to the arrangements governing the Child Care Board Act and also, of course, arrangements in relation to preventing the abuse of children but the net, Mr. Speaker, can be cast extremely wide and therefore we as a country are standing on firm ground, particularly when in the Parliament we can have a bipartisan approach to an issue that both sides have articulated in the past to be something that we have to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to.

11.57 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I also believe - that is why I mentioned the whole issue of prostitution - that this particular Bill not only acts as a significant deterrent to the occurrence or the likely occurrence of human trafficking and related issues. We have to understand that there are related crimes; crimes that are related to human trafficking. Therefore, if we are able to plug the gap in preventing human trafficking, then we are able to prevent other crimes linked to human trafficking, whether it has to do with the whole question of sex tourism which is becoming a big issue across borders, transactional sex, or other related issues. Mr. Speaker, these issues are driven not only by those international gurus. The violators are not only persons who are the small players. We have had certainly international reports pointing to international trafficking originating in families; organised but small family arrangements and family-run organisations. These family-run organisations are often the perpetrators of human trafficking, but, Mr. Speaker, we also have some very sophisticated transactional, organised crime syndicates. We have to be extremely vigilant, certainly from the perspective of our legal framework, that Barbados is seen as a very difficult country through which to run these international syndicates. We have to obviously start from the position of strengthening our laws; and having strengthened our laws, Mr. Speaker, we have to then move towards ensuring that we have vigilance at our ports of entry and, of course, that our crime prevention officers are sufficiently trained to detect this particular scourge.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to go back to the point I made that this goes even deeper than just the ports of entry. Yes, of course, you can have systems that are sufficiently attuned to detect particular human trafficking offences, but I daresay, Mr. Speaker, that the focus would also have to be within the internal arrangements of the country, and that we do not have situations where in Barbados there is a possibility of using vulnerabilities to traffic in persons even internally. The focus internationally has been the movement of persons against their will across borders, but we also have to be vigilant that we do not have persons in Barbados who are either abusing adults because of

vulnerabilities or creating situations where children are being used in transactional sexual activity because of issues such as poverty, vulnerability, ignorance and social exclusion. These are all issues that could impact even within the domestic sphere of a country, and much of that takes place notwithstanding a country being extremely successful in preventing human trafficking in relation to its ports of entry, Mr. Speaker.

I therefore believe that is an issue that will have to occupy our attention, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we are talking about smuggling, but human trafficking, as I said, is really where it starts. It is the precursor to the whole question of smuggling of persons, and human trafficking has several components about which we have to be vigilant. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think this is really a step in the right direction. It certainly underscores Barbados' ability to be able to respond very quickly to its international obligations, and I think that this certainly is an indication that Government is working and we are determined to ensure that we put in place the necessary safeguards to ensure that we become compliant, particularly in areas that could hurt us internationally.

Already in the Debate we would have heard the issue that this is important in relation to our foreign policy. I do agree with that. I also believe that in the wider scheme of things, the matter of human trafficking in terms of how it is managed internationally will at some point have to be looked at within the context of the role of the United Nations in relation to how the Convention itself is managed internationally; particularly as the Convention requires compliance that by itself would need to have countries enact legislation of a particular manner. I still believe that perhaps there is scope for there to be a more specialised body within the United Nations charged with the responsibility of ensuring international compliance. That, of course, prevents the temptation of individual countries, maybe larger countries, to then use their might to enforce compliance of smaller countries. I tend to feel that the preferred arrangement would be for the United Nations to look within itself and come up with more effective systems to ensure international compliance in relation to a matter that, by and large, has been globally seen as an issue that each country must buy into. Where there are loopholes in the law and in relation to the arrangements that can secure a successful prosecution, each country should then be required to do everything possible to ensure that those loopholes are secured.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue that remains a major international bother, and which we in Barbados would have to be also vigilant about, is the whole question of the trafficking in body parts and so on. This has impacted many countries and is very scary in terms of what the international crime syndicates are capable of doing. The sale in organs that are secured illegally is really a major

headache for international law enforcement agencies. We in Barbados must not believe that we are immune from these particular matters. Therefore, we are going to have to demonstrate the same kind of tenacity as I am seeing in terms of our approach to this particular legislation, by being forceful and sending a very strong signal - particularly in relation to the penalty provisions and the provisions in relation to extradition - that we are locking ourselves into an international system that will help all of us to deter the happenings of these potential crimes in our jurisdictions. Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree that this Bill is an important Bill. Certainly, it creates an opportunity for the Parliament to do what I think the Parliament and parliaments all over the world have to do. Parliament is not only a place to differ and to have vociferous disagreement, but by and large we are called to use these Chambers to educate Barbadians on important bits of legislation. That is a feature of this Debate that I am rather pleased with, because I heard not only the Attorney General but I heard the Minister responsible for Commerce and, of course, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph with some very incisive and productive contributions on a matter which I think Barbadians need to be further educated about.

11.59 a.m.

I know that the Task Force, which has been established has spent quite a lot of time sensitizing Barbadians. Of course, I have heard the various promotional public education advertisements that are going out in relation to trafficking and so on. Sir, this effort cannot only be successful in relation to enacting legislation. We have to spend the time educating Barbadians on what this issue about because they by and large are going to be required assist and work with the law enforcement agencies when they are strange things happening in our communities so that they can provide the information upon which the police can act and on which the immigration authorities can act to be able to ensure that we can bring prosecution to the law court and obviously to deter the occurrence of human trafficking which could impact negatively on our international image. Sir, by and large, Barbados continues to enjoy and excellent international image. Sir, within the United Nations it has an excellent reputation in relation to its foreign policy arrangements, its ability to move rapidly to conform with international practice and so on, and that is why when we have issues that are likely to endanger our ability to function internationally, we respond very quickly and certainly put these at the top of our agenda.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I simply wanted to echo and to underscore some of the important consideration which this Bill has brought to the fore in Barbados and to again signal that I believe it is a good and proactive step that will help to deter the occurrence of smuggling and human trafficking that could impact on Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise also to speak on this Bill and to say from the outset that I support it and to make the point that any country that 166 square miles and surrounded by water I find it rather strange that anyone would object to using finger printing as a source of identification.

Mr. Speaker, I have said earlier in another debate that I strongly support the concept of finger printing. When one considered what is occurring in the world, I cannot see how any reasonable person that subjects himself or herself to the fingerprinting elsewhere in the world, can object to it when it comes to the security of one's country.

Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that when you have open bays and open coastlines, et cetera that one has to be very careful that one does not allow itself to be abused by people and daily and nightly we hear and we see about the wonderful work that the Coast Guard and the wonderful work that the Police is doing where we know for a fact that people try to get into Barbados on a daily basis and the easiest way to distinguish whether this is occurring or not is through the concept of fingerprinting. We also know that there are many people and that there are races in the world that when you look at people, you cannot identify them because all of them look alike, so if you have fingerprinting then it is clear that you can easily identify them by their fingerprints, so why would anybody who is interested in country Barbados object to fingerprinting unless they know why they want to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I honestly believe that if we are to secure our borders that the best way we can do it, and if we are to ensure that what we are debating here today, that we have a solution to it, the easiest way to do it is through that suggestion.

Mr. Speaker, I represent a constituency that has water on three sides and I know the problem. I remember in the 90s when the Honourable David Simmons was Attorney-General, he sought to close the police station at Crab Hill and I told him that we do not have a crime problem in St. Lucy but we have a coastline where we have water on three sides and I did not think it was the sensible to close Crab Hill Police Station because it is not the people of St. Lucy but you have to worry about those persons who are involved in activities that would not be in the best interest of Barbados or the people of St. Lucy and he listened and he dealt with that particular problem.

Mr. Speaker, I would say here today that we have to stop playing politics with everything in this country. We

have to stop being selfish with everything in this country and we have to understand that we have to look after the interest of Barbados. Sir, everything in this country now is politics and country Barbados is not important anymore. Sir, people can give you one decision two years ago and then come back when they see politics and play another line. Sir, we have to appreciate that country Barbados is 50 years of Independence and if we are 50 years as an independent nation, then we have to understand that we have to respect it and no 'two-fews' or privilege class people can come and decide they have something that other people do not have. Sir, all of us have been subjected to 50 years of free secondary education and Barbadians have to know when they are being used, misused and abuse. Sir, the playing on words cannot be accepted. Sir, the same way you play with words, you would play on things like these two.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that we have to ensure that we operate in the best interest of country Barbados and that we have appreciate that we are 50 years as an independent nation and we have to decide.

Mr. Speaker, do you know the most hurtful thing that I have heard in this country. I have been here now over 20 something year and every time I hear what another country is doing. Sir, we cannot have 50 years of Independence and we have to depend on other people. Sir, we cannot followers, we have to be starters and take the lead. I object to the comment that we have to be followers. We must take the lead and let other people follow us too, so do not come in here and tell me that we cannot be starters and that nobody will follow us. I object to that, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I am totally supportive of this Bill. I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. R. A JONES: Mr. Speaker, I thank you. Just a few words or thoughts on this amendments to the Immigration Act, which deals specifically with the smuggling of people. We live in extremely difficult times. The world is going through some changes that, to some extent are mind boggling. Sir, at the end of the Second World War, which we though was a most difficult period because there was the loss of human life and human displacement was something else, as we would say in the vernacular. Sir, we have come into the 21st Century with so much upheaval.

2.08 p.m.

Human displacement was, as we would say in the vernacular, something else, but we have come into the 21st century with so much upheaval, so much displacement of

people, so much difficulties, there are so many horrors that we thought would have disappeared at the end of that second World War, the end of the Korean War, the end of the Vietnamese War, we thought that we had come to point in human evolution, at least in the thoughts of man, that we would not have seen the level of difficulties, the level of carnage that we are still seeing in the 21st century and we know that where people are distressed or extremely distressed that one gets a heighten level of human or people smuggling, we are not even going to talk about human trafficking which is another side of which I might consider the same coin.

Human smuggling is a transaction, it is an economic thing really, but it is place in the realm of what I call human exploitation. It is using money as a means of catering to persons who find themselves in circumstances that are not by any stretch of the imagination wholesome. There was a time before as well when we had, particularly black people, who ended up in slavery, human trafficking of the degree and extent not previously nor after experienced by any other race on the face of the earth. That too was considered an economic reality and activity and just after 1807 when the Slave Trade, I believe, was abolished in the British Parliament one saw some levels, not of human smuggling but even more enhanced human trafficking. We have always had, to some extent, human depravity at some level, in some way the preying of the weak, the innocent, the vulnerable, those who seek to march from their own domestic environment to find succour, strength and help in another location and this is where human smuggling has become an even greater reality.

The research has shown that, and I believe that it is not complete research, the Honourable Minister with responsibility for Home Affairs and the Chief Legal Officer of the Government of the State spoke to figures of 700 000 to 800 000 persons being moved on an annualized basis through smuggling but there are other figures which speak to some 30 million citizens being smuggled over time. As I said, both figures may not be necessarily accurate, because where you are involved in an illegal activity, you are not necessarily going to get 100 per cent proof in the movement or smuggling of people.

Across the North American continent, particularly between United States and Mexico, it is argued that there is a substantial amount of human smuggling and in Central and Eastern Europe, it is estimated that about 4 billion Euros a year is involved in human smuggling, that is the transaction. If one had to calculate that, I believe on Euro is worth about \$2.70 or there about so you can roughly be speaking of possibly BDS\$10 billion. In other words, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Barbados, if you want to break it down to that level, or just slightly above the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Barbados, is involved in this

particular activity in Central and Eastern Europe and parts of Western Europe. Persons moving across the Mediterranean Sea into Italy, and places like that, a substantial level of human smuggling. Persons who are desperate to survive. We have this capacity, as human beings, of trying to survive and doing whatever we consider necessary for survival but there is an exploitative element in the whole nature of people trying to survive and criminal elements and that is the danger of what we are talking about, the presence of criminal elements. They are not do-gooders, they are not persons who will say, I want to move you safely from location A to location B without money, or any of this. This involves big money. Persons paying the last of their bank account or their worth in whatever currency they have to be smuggled, it is a transaction. Persons who willingly want to move but because of the presence of criminal elements in a lot of this smuggling the abandonment of those persons who seek to find a better place to live for themselves and their families, for the young ones. I am sure that they are pictures that one could find of persons being smuggled or the perception of being confronted by the law, who abandoned in containers, if you are moving with a ship in the holes of ships in containerized or in containers or if they are moving in these 18-wheelers, being abandoned in conditions where you know survival will not be positive. You open the back of the container truck and there are persons in there dead for two, three and four days, the stent awful. Those persons did not pay the money to be abandoned but because of the criminal elements involved and they wanted to escape to do it again, you will find that they are abandoned.

As I said, we have not truly learnt to treat humanity, the most precious living, I was about to say beings, but I would have to say that animals are beings too, but the most precious of God's creations, if you want to put it within that context, we have not yet learnt how to live together or how to treat each other. We look for advantage in desperation, we look for advantage in economic circumstances, we look to further our "own-ness" regardless of the circumstances, we look to persuade the innocent, the vulnerable, the marginalised by pretty words and phrases tangled up together, dressed in white, pink or gold and we say, like the pied piper of Hamelin, let us march, let us walk with these persons -

12.18 p.m.

And we say like the pipe piper of Hamelin, let us march, let us walk with these persons or whatever else - I am going to stop at persons - along the miry way. All of that is exploiting the vulnerable and human condition. I mean these are difficult times.

I do not want to sound as a zealot in this instance but if we have souls, and I know we do, and if we say that we are not only flesh but we are also spiritual, it means that we

have to take different positions, different postures, where human beings are involved. Sir, that is why as I listen to the news coming out of CNN or MSNBC, or if I am persuaded to shift to Fox News sometimes -- I am not a fox by any imagination -- and hear the country that once used to be the open door to the world's citizens, bring your lame, your hungry, your poor, your dispossessed and those who are harassed, saying today we will shut the door in your faces, I say to myself where is the world going. Yes, the indigenous were there long before but I understand the history, but a country really of immigrants, people who were harassed in the United Kingdom who found themselves on the eastern seaboard the day which is still commemorated but now the children and the great, great, great, great grandchildren of those saying bolt the doors, build walls, shut people out... We are hearing that noise as well in Western Europe. I understand human deluge but the uncertainty, the war in Iraq, Somalia and Syria and the displacement of people, people who want to survive to their call to another place, you will find that again doors are being shut. People are drowning in oceans and little babies are washing up on shores, that is because the human condition is in a desperate phase now, and Barbadians have to understand this.

We cannot simply sit by because of our own thirst for power, our own thirst for self-satisfaction, our own thirst to be number 1, numeral uno, and our own hungry desires and not play an interest to the world. We are very fortunate in Barbados because we use the phrases, it cannot happen here, it does not happen here, it will not happen here. We have fooled ourselves over time that these things cannot happen and rather than be proactive, we prefer to be reactive in the circumstances.

Sometimes we explore strategies when we want to be proactive to find that sometimes these strategies might not be the best strategies but that is also a human condition. You strive to get the best but you do not get it, but that is a human condition, so when I hear the Honourable Member for St. Joseph speak to -- what is it he spoke to because he was a bit confusing to me -- trying to protect our borders and trying to ensure that the persons coming into Barbados are our citizens generally that you are going to hear the kind of talk that you have heard from him. We are open to suggestions and we are always open to sometimes overreaching, but all of these are human conditions. Only those who believe that they might not be human might not necessarily have those kinds of circumstances surrounding them.

I commend, of course, the words and the work of the Government in relation to this issue of smuggling. I think by and large Barbadians are caring people. You have seen it manifested over time when there were natural and other manmade disasters either at home or across the Caribbean or across the world. We respond even with our widow's

mite, this is what we do. We might not have necessarily the wherewithal to respond to everything that is happening with the displacement of persons in Syria, Iraq, Somalia and other parts of the world, but we can in our own way through our voices and through our presence in the international fora speak to these issues, try to appeal to the better or the best parts of humanity where doors can be temporary open until you find an abatement of the hostility or other dangers for those persons to find hope, at least find some chance of living.

There are persons who have opened their doors to migrants, some smuggled and some moving naturally across borders, but we too have to do our part. As I said, we are a small country with limited resources but the voice in the international fora would be an important step to take so that the poor, the defenceless, the vulnerable and those who have been displaced would know that there is a voice somewhere speaking on their behalf, that there is a voice urging those who can afford it, those who have massive land space for resiting of mobile citizenry of the world, to find a stable place to live.

We do not want to be nomadic. Most citizens of the world do not want to be nomadic. They want to be settled, they want to build a home, they want to build a family, they want to work, they want to love, they want to demonstrate their care regardless of whatever religion they have, they want to have children, they want to procreate, morning noon and night they want to do things that would give them that feeling that they are part of humanity, and therefore let us as world citizens abhor smuggling. There is a name that the Americans use for persons smuggling across the border, coyotes, they are called, persons who exploit the weaknesses of others, the vulnerability of others, as a means of getting money, of making money.

Unless we speak out strongly against those things human trafficking will continue, human smuggling will continue and crime will be at its highest level ever in the world, so let us as citizens of Barbados pay attention to these things. Do not let us only be caught up with our own selves, let us not only be caught up with our own need for power or let us not be caught up with our own desire to be number 1 but let us pay attention to the world as a whole. Let us pay attention to human beings wherever they are and in the circumstances that they find themselves.

Mr. Speaker, this Amendment to the Immigration Act, which deals with smuggling, is but a small gesture on our part looking after our own selves, but we also have to look across the globe and speak out against human injustices as they are, and therefore the support for this Amendment.

I thank you, Sir.

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

### SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for lunch until 2.00 p.m. today.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that, Sir.

*The question that the Sitting do now suspend for lunch until 2.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.*

12.30 p.m.

### Tuesday, May 17, 2016 RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Good afternoon, Honourable Members, this Sitting is resumed. When the Suspension was taken we were on Government Business, Order No. 17, with that we shall resumed. The Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: I rise also to associate myself with the matter which is engaging the attention of this Honourable House. Sir, perhaps I should begin by saying that though that not necessarily contained within the four corners of the Bill the Honourable House has spent some time, as you are well-aware, on the matter of the issue or proposal of fingerprinting Barbadians. Mr. Speaker, one of the things I would want to draw to the attention of the Government is that my learned friend, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, was quite right when he was pointing the Honourable House in the direction of international law. Sir, at Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is said that a citizen has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country at any time. Therefore, Sir, what I think the Government is not grasping is that the idea of fingerprinting a Barbadian before he or she leaves Barbados would, on its face, run afoul of that which is now accepted at Article 13 of the Declaration on Human Rights.

Mr. Speaker, more substantively, I want to say that I share the view as espoused by the Honourable Member for St. James South, that this debates gives us an opportunity to look a little bit at the foreign policy of the country. We have, Sir, to remember that it is often said that we are friends of all and satellites of none. I think what is often forgotten, Sir, is that the full quotation of the Right Excellent gentleman who made that statement would take you to the point where he also reflected on the fact that we practice a diplomacy not of power between nations and

among nations, but rather a diplomacy of peaceful coexistence with other nations.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at what is happening today, and I heard it in this Honourable House during the course of this debate, we have located a lot of the facts surrounding the smuggling of persons and the reasons for the smuggling of persons with the broad global environment. I think, Sir, we are in danger of taking our eye off the ball to some extent in that regard because the truth of the matter is that the smuggling of persons is not just an international phenomena, but it is really something that is happening very close to home; it is very much a hemispheric reality and it is also a very much regional reality. Sir, insofar as it impacts on this region, then when it does happen, it has been also linked to substantial economic challenges.

Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, let us be frank, the smuggling of persons within the Caribbean and also within CARICOM has been linked to the phenomena of failed societies. Sir, I think that is where we have, as a country, to be prepared to place our emphasis from a foreign policy perspective. Much of this debate I agree with, I agree with many of the things that have been said when we are speaking about the legislation as it seeks to protect the Barbadian society and Barbadian economy from the scourge of being associated with the smuggling of persons. Sir, we must also remember that though, in the world of Kofi Annan, we are a micro State but historically we have been punching above our weight class. Sir, I think that we must also remember that we have that capacity to continue to punch above our weight class and to be movers and shapers in forging a regional way of life, regional perspective, regional values and by extension, Sir, hemispheric and international perspectives and values which reflect those things that we hold dear.

Mr. Speaker, it is in that regard that I feel our foreign policy should be robustly intervening on matters which touch on this issue of the smuggling of persons. Mr. Speaker, let me be a little bit more specific, we have to be mindful of the fact that one of the failed societies to which I am referring is our CARICOM sister State, Haiti. Haiti has been plagued with the phenomena of not only very difficult economic circumstances, but born out of those economic circumstances, very difficult social circumstances. Quite frankly, Sir, unfortunately, and we saw it, I believe, as recently as 2010 when a massive earthquake devastated Haiti and repeatedly in hurricanes Haiti has been the victim of serious disasters, Haiti is one of those societies in our midst which is struggling and which has been unfortunately afflicted by this phenomena which we call the smuggling of persons, by and large, people trying to eke out a better existence. Mr. Speaker, let us be frank, very often nobody wants to leave hearth and home and just pick up and go, but you do that in order to

try to find a way of surviving, for want of a better way of putting it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I raised the matter of Haiti in the context of our foreign policy because we have to be mindful of the fact that as recently as 2013, the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic made a ruling which would have seen the deportation of thousands of undocumented Haitians and several thousands of persons who would be citizens of the Dominican Republic by birth but are of Haitian descent. Mr. Speaker, the concern that I have is that Haiti being a Member State of CARICOM, that ruling obviously impacts substantially on those things we represent not only as a sovereign nation Barbados, but as part of the Caribbean Community. The ruling also must be of significance to us because of the issue of proximity, not only to Barbados but to the rest of the States of this region.

Mr. Speaker, it is also true to say that as recently as June last year, a General in the Dominican Army by the name of Paulino, who seems to carry as well some responsibility for matters of immigration, was reported in sections of the Press as being intent on advancing the process of deportation, pursuant to the ruling of the Constitutional Court on the Dominican Republic given in 2013. Mr. Speaker, it would be a useful point for us in this debate to have the benefit of the Honourable House being brought up to speed on where CARICOM is exactly on this matter. Sir, I because that if we are going to be talking about the smuggling of persons and so on, we ought not only to do so within the context of where Barbados sees itself and how Barbados would use this legislation to protect the Barbadian economy and society from the scourge of smuggling of persons.

2.19 p.m.

Sir, we must also be movers and shakers within the region and hold the rest of the region to similar standards that we ourselves are prepared to advance and proclaim. I am particularly concerned about the Dominican Republic and its constitutional court's ruling on Haiti, and in fact the plight of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic and who would claim to be Dominican citizens by virtue of the fact that they were born there and have been there through parentage, and can trace their ancestry back to 1940 and 1950 and so on. Once they are just simply picked up and deported, they are then rendered stateless persons, Sir. They cannot legitimately claim to be Haitian any longer, and they certainly would no longer be treated as though they are citizens of the Dominican Republic. That in itself is something that this region must wrestle with, and be mindful of the fact that not only is Haiti within CARICOM but the Dominican Republic is part of CariForum, which is CARICOM plus the Dominican Republic, and is an integral part of the region's institutional arrangements.

Sir, I go further. My reading of history takes me back as far as 1937 when another general by the name of Rafael Trujillo, who was at the time President of the Dominican Republic, authorised what really can only be described as an act of ethnic cleansing; a campaign that took place along the Dominican Republic's border with Haiti, where he sought to expunge or eliminate all dark-skinned Haitians, Sir. The difficulty between the Haitians and the Dominican Republic go back as far as that and, perhaps, even further back. As I said, Sir, we are dealing with two entities which are part of the CARICOM and CariForum arrangements, and this country is still to be seen as one of the leading member states within CARICOM. It is an issue about which we cannot afford to remain silent, though perhaps it is an issue about which it is difficult for us to speak, but in terms of forging values across this region, providing leadership and, quite frankly, trying to find solutions to these problems, then Barbados' voice must be heard, Mr. Speaker.

Sir, the issue of the smuggling of persons in that context also disturbs me when I look at what is happening in Venezuela. If we are going to be true to ourselves, we have to recognise that in good times, Caracas was there for CARICOM, Sir; in good days. When we were part of the Cabinet on this side, Honourable Members for St. Thomas, St. Joseph and St. George South would all remember the invitations that Venezuela extended to Barbados to be part of the Petro-Caribe movement offering low-cost financing for a lot of economic initiatives to the rest of the Eastern Caribbean, Mr. Speaker. Now, dark days have fallen on Venezuela, and they are in no position any longer to have that kind of substantial role to play within the region. However, especially as we have heard recent reports about the substantial decay of social conditions in Venezuela, and about the movement of persons between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela - again born out of what is rapidly becoming a failure of the society that we know as Venezuela - we have to, in my view, be able to see as part of this country's foreign policy a way forward in which we would be able to collaborate to identify as CARICOM countries areas where we can offer concrete assistance to Caracas; whether that assistance is offered in the areas of security and the economy, public sector reform or areas of development.

We are exceptionally good in those areas; in fact we have been hemispherically recognised in areas of developmental importance, including education and health. Sir, these are things which I honestly believe Barbados must now be spearheading. Initiatives must be forged between the CARICOM countries. I would want to think that it could be led by Barbados, but we must certainly be engaged in serious dialogue if we are going to be of assistance in trying to promote a happier ending to the difficulties being experienced, not only in Haiti but also in Caracas. I speak in those specific terms, Sir, because I

listened intently to the Members of the Government Bench when they were speaking, and I sensed, especially from the Honourable Minister of Education, that there is a willingness to recognise that Barbados has a larger role to play in trying to shape some of the values which impact upon, and which quite frankly cause, the phenomenon of smuggling of people within this region, and by extension, within this hemisphere, Sir. We can be a lot more assertive and proactive, in my judgement.

As I said to you, Mr. Speaker, Venezuela is a very classic case in point where collaboration between them and us is something that is essentially needed now that their society and their public sector, from all reports coming out of the Press, are in a serious state of sharp and sudden decay. These are areas in which we have tremendous experience and expertise, and I would want to think that those are areas where, between the Foreign Ministry of Barbados and those of the rest of CARICOM, we can forge partnerships to work with Caracas with a view to assisting her, as indeed she assisted us in our more lean and difficult times.

Mr. Speaker, if you go back to 1937 under Trujillo and what was called the Parsley Massacre, I am sure the Right Honourable Prime Minister would recall it was so called because of the fact that the word “perejil” is the Spanish word for parsley, and it was a word that allegedly the Haitians could not easily pronounce. Therefore, in addition to identifying the people who were supposed to be expelled and expunged by virtue of their colour, they were identified by virtue of their inability to pronounce that word. That is how the historians have recorded it. I can only tell you what I have read. The fact of the matter is that that process began years of subsequent difficulty between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. As I said, in more recent times we have now the constitutional court making a ruling that would render several people of Dominican Republic birth but Haitian descent stateless, and we simply have to stand for something.

Sir, I remember in the Debate in this House on the Economic Partnership Agreement, I asked the Prime Minister a question, and to his credit, he did respond. I do not think he was Chairman of CARICOM at the time but he was Prime Minister with lead responsibility for the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, as he still is, and I asked him to indicate where Barbados stood, and more importantly, where did CARICOM stand on that matter. That was in 2014, Sir, and to the best of my knowledge, we have not had an update in recent times. We are now in 2016; halfway through virtually. It is something which seems to be continuing apace in the Dominican Republic, and as I said, it has serious consequences for us because we in Barbados, Sir, are part of fundamental regional institutions which are expected to have their voices heard on these matters of regional governance. It would be a

useful thing to work out exactly where CARICOM stands on this matter; how much pressure is CARICOM prepared to bring to bear on the Dominican Republic in order to get that country to understand that it will not and cannot be acceptable, at least in my view, for the Dominican Republic to sit at the table of CariForum as a partner with us, to be having observer status within CARICOM and seeking to become a member of CARICOM and be a deeper and more integrated partner with us, while at the same time subjecting black-skinned Haitians, especially, to the level of treatment that has been meted out to them within the Dominican Republic.

2.25 p.m.

To get the Dominican Republic to understand that it will not be acceptable, at least in my view, for the Dominican Republic to sit at the table of CARIFORUM as a partner with us to be having observer status within CARICOM and seeking to become a member of CARICOM and be a deeper more integrated partner with us while at the same time subjecting especially black skin Haitians to the level of treatment that they have been meting out to them within the Dominican Republic. Sir, we have to stand for something. The line has to be drawn in the sand. These are issues where small societies that are pulling together to create a powerful regional bloc... Sir, when I say powerful, I do not mean in terms of a nuclear and atomic weapons and so on but powerful in the sense of the influence that we have globally and powerful in the sense of the values that we hold and promote in the corridors of power at the United Nations, powerful in the sense that we set an example across Latin America and the Caribbean as to what democracy and democratic practice and tradition should stand for and abide by.

Mr. Speaker, in that regard, it is necessary for the voice of CARICOM to be heard and, as have said, it is a golden opportunity for Barbados to state its claim and to say that this is where Barbados stands and this is what Barbados stands for.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would urge that this debate not pass and we do not have the intervention of my learned friend, the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South in his capacity not only as Prime Minister of the land but as he holds lead responsibility for the implementation.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, let us also be mindful, therefore, of the role that can be played diplomatically in terms of Barbados' advancement of its interest. Sir, as have said, I wholeheartedly those sentiments that have been expressed before with respect to how this Bill becomes exceptionally important in terms of protecting our economy and society but we must see ourselves as now being positioned to go a step further with respect to making sure that which we are now calling the smuggling of persons is not only brought to

heel but that persons of all walks of life in this region are treated with a basis level of respect and dignity.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. The Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Hon. F. STUART: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just thought I would rise to add a voice of support to the Bill before the House, a Bill designed to ensure that Barbados fulfills its international obligation under treaty commitments which the country has assumed on an issue that is of current importance and significance, the issue of human smuggling.

Mr. Speaker, in one form or another, we have had to deal with the issue of the movement of people from one part of the world to the other in their sometimes tortured search for some kind of oasis in their lives, some kind of comfort from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune in the countries from they have originated and in some cases, it has manifested as raw slavery. Of course, in the days of raw slavery it was not that the slaves were in search of any oasis, they were tugged from an oasis and brought to function in very hellish conditions here in the Caribbean and in the southern part of the United States of America. Sir, most recently, we have had the phenomenon of human trafficking where individuals have been duped or coerced into moving from part of the world to the other, moving from one country to the other, representations made to them that they were leaving in one capacity only to find that when they got to the country of destination they were being required to perform in far less wholesome capacities than had been represented to them.

Mr. Speaker, we have dealt with human trafficking in this House in a debate not too long ago, the new face of slavery as I call it because in 1807, when the slave trade was brought to an end and then in August 1834, when the Emancipation Act took effect or perhaps, late 1836, when the apprenticeship period came to an end, we thought that slavery was an issue which was behind us and that we could get on with our lives but these battles are never fought and won once and for all. They are battles that have to be continually fought and won over and over again because every generation it seems is equidistant from perhaps human decency. We are teaching the same thing over and over again even as the civilization of which we are a part continues to evolve.

Mr. Speaker, human smuggling as was pointed out by the Attorney-General is to be differentiated from human trafficking in that there is a high degree of complicity between the person being smuggled and the person doing the smuggling, whereas in trafficking, there is less complicity and, of course, as have said there is either some

coercion, some dragooning or some plain hoodwinking and duping people into moving from one place to the other but whatever form it takes, it poses challenges for the receiving State and one of the reason Barbados has to address this issue is that we are in a position where we would be an attractive receiving State for persons who are into smuggling as indeed we would be for persons who are being trafficked and we have to make it very clear that we will not leave our footprints on that unworthy and highly disreputable path of participating either as perpetrators or it as beneficiaries of this unwholesome practice.

Mr. Speaker, I think it was the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central who make the point that the desire in the first place to move from one country to another is always in search of a better life, in search of better human conditions, and we can think of all those trouble spots across the world from which people would be glad to separate themselves and to live in a more settled and a more serene and a more commodious environment. Sir, over time the numbers begin to grow and not too long ago, in the 1990s the Balkans was a place from which everybody to separate...

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him/herself because of the atrocities that were taking place there. The International Criminal Court is still dealing with cases coming out of the Balkan crisis, nowadays Syria, Libya, The Congo, and there are many countries from which people want to separate themselves in order to get some peace in their lives and to realise their God-given talents and to actualise their human potential. The smuggling of people in that kind of context has to do then with people in a weakened position being at the mercy of persons who can make the appropriate promise to them at a particular pitch and to get them to participate in these smuggling schemes. This legislation, of course, imposes heavy penalties for persons involved in this kind of practice and I have no doubt that our border officials will be on the lookout for cases of this kind. We have had a few cases that smacked of trafficking of some kind. They did not materialise as such, but they smacked of it and I am certain that it is not going to be difficult if cases of smuggling present themselves for those cases to be identified as such and, of course, to be dealt with appropriately by the law. Barbados is pleased to identify itself with all those countries across the world setting their face against human trafficking and against human smuggling.

As I said, one of the unfortunate things about smuggling is that there is a high degree of complicity between the person facilitating the smuggling and the person who is the beneficiary or the intended beneficiary of the smuggling itself but the law, as I understand it, makes each side equally culpable and the full weight of the law should be brought down on people caught participating in

this hideous practice. That is not another way of saying, of course, that we are not sympathetic to those people who cannot find the little oasis in their lives. We watch all the movements across Europe today and we virtually, in a manner of speaking, we condole with those countries that have to receive these large numbers of people migrating from centres of conflict to more peaceful and ordered societies. Fortunately for us here in the Caribbean, we have not had to deal with those challenges but we must not assume that because we have not had to deal with them up to now that we are effectively screen off from exposure to the risk of having to deal with them.

In that context, of course, the Honourable Member for St. James Central raised the issue of Haiti and yes, I can hear the voice of the Prime Minister of The Bahamas now in my ears and in the ears of all of us making the point that if the Haitian issue is not properly resolved The Bahamas will continue to have to deal with the issue of Haitian boat people moving from Haiti and coming to The Bahamas so he had a vested interest in ensuring that the issue be resolved. We have tried to deal with it and I believe I made this point to the Honourable House already. One of the interesting things that I found in those discussions is that for a good part of those discussions CARICOM was more eager to move ahead on this issue than the Haitians were anxious to have us move ahead and it has to do with the fact that there is a very complex historical relationship between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, a relationship which still affects everyday connections between the two countries and the Haitians were the first to tell us that we should not oversimplify what was happening although they were hurting as a result of what was happening, that it could not be oversimplified, and that there were a number of complexed historical issues which had to be resolved. In spite of Haitian caution, CARICOM Heads continued to take a very strong position on what was happening in the Dominican Republic as a result of the decision of the Constitutional Court, but again we had to face the reality that while the Dominican Republic was not a member of CARICOM, although it has expressed an interest in a closer relationship with CARICOM, we have had to collaborate with the Dominican Republic as a CARIFORUM member.

In Brussels last June in the EU/CARIFORUM summit, that was the issue we put squarely on the table and CARICOM actually impugn the moral authority of the Dominican Republic to participate in those discussions having regard to what was going on in that Country, vis-à-vis, Haiti. Some very strong positions were taken but the Europeans made it very clear that all they could do was to listen because while they understood what CARICOM was saying and while they wished that the situation could be remedied and resolved to the satisfaction of both CARICOM and the Dominican Republic that because of EU/CARIFORUM commitments they had to be more

concerned with the EU/CARIFORUM relationship than any differences taking place between CARICOM and the Dominican Republic. They said that they would continue to monitor the situation and if it threatened to spin out of control that we might have to revisit it but as things stood then, they had to accept the reality that they were binding agreements between CARIFORUM and the Dominican Republic of which the European United (EU) had to take cognisance and therefore could not be distracted by any, what I would call, local issues between CARICOM and the Dominican Republic.

We continued therefore to engage with Haiti, of course, President Martelly is no longer in office. I think there is a new president, we have not really met formally as yet to see in what direction he wants to but I know that by the time President Martelly's term was coming to an end, he had begun to see the wisdom of the very strong position that CARICOM was taking but all along, Haiti was administering certain cautions to CARICOM not to push too hard because of the complex relationship between the Dominican Republic and CARICOM therefore we could not race ahead of Haiti.

2.35 p.m.

You are leading something if somebody is following you. Haiti was very cautious, very circumspect, in its approach to that matter.

I think that the Dominican Republic had given some commitments to pass a certain law that would have dealt with some of the issues of which CARICOM was complaining. The law was passed but then the issues with which it purported to deal affected so small a number of Haitians that they may as well not have passed it, so the problem remains a very large one, and we continue to work our way through the very difficult challenges posed by that problem.

As I said, we have to sit now with the new President of Haiti to see where his head is and how best we can move forward, but the Dominican Republic is under no illusion that CARICOM deprecates what has been going on there in terms of the decision of the Constitutional Court and the conduct of public officials carrying out their functions pursuant to the decision of the Constitutional Court in a way that sometimes reduces Haitians to subhuman conditions and, of course, subhuman treatment.

I do not have any illusion in these matters. I know that - and I heard the Honourable Member for St. James Central on this, he is quite right - it still matters in some of the those countries what is the colour of your skin, and what is the colour of your skin determines how they would relate to you. I know we tend to be a little starry eye, we talk about Europeans and we talk about the southern part of

the United States and other parts of the United States and sometimes we tend to ignore the fact that in some of those Central American and South American countries those issues are alive and well also, let us be very clear on that. In fact, sometimes more alive than in the countries of our traditional concern, so I do not have any illusions about that. If the truth is to be told I do not know that the Dominican Republic comes to equity with clean hands on that issue at all but I think that we have to explore and exploit all the possibilities for a peaceful resolution of these issues, and upon that course of action CARICOM is embarked.

As more information comes to hand I stand ready to share the information with the House. As I said, Haiti has a new Head of Government and he has not yet sat down with CARICOM so we do not know where his head is and what the position is.

The issue of fingerprinting has been raised in this debate. I had not anticipated that it would get to fingerprinting because the debate is really about human smuggling but I just want to say that since this issue was raised, the Immigration Department and the Ministry of Defence and Security put the whole fingerprinting issue on hold. I am aware that a case has actually been filed in court which means that the matter is sub judice. I am also aware too that there have been allegations about the actual laying of the Order in this House and whether time limits have been observed and so on. Whatever is discovered to have gone wrong in relation to this issue will be corrected.

The Government is not strong-headed or wrong-headed on this issue at all. We understand what is going on in the world security wise. When I said a few words on this issue sometimes ago, I believe it was during the Estimates, I made the point that there were certain material concerns which the Immigration Department and the Ministry of Defence and Security had about forged documents, forged travel documents, the abuse of Barbadian passports and that kind of thing, and horrible dictu, horrible to relate, this did not all relate to foreigners. In many respects people of Barbadian birth and decent and everything else were involved, so drawing a hard line of distinction between the two, while it is attractive we better face the reality that some strange things have been happening around here involving our own people as well. Now, that is not another way of saying that we should make some kind of inductive leap from a few instances and try to criminalise the whole society, I am not saying that at all. I am saying that it was in that spirit that I believe the Immigration Department and the Ministry of Defence and Security, the Office of the Attorney-General and all the agencies involved confronted this issue. I am certainly not evangelical about it, I am certainly not so obsessed with it that I would turn a blind eye to the constitutional niceties that have to be observed or to the fundamental rights and freedoms of Barbadians.

As I said I do not want to get too much into it because I am aware that it is sub judice but I am also aware that a comprehensive review of everything that has been done has been undertaken and whatever has to be made right will be made right and made right in such a way that the fundamental rights and freedoms of Barbadians will be respected and all of the issues of law, both the substantive issues of law and the adjective issues of law, substantive and procedural issues, will be dealt with and the whole situation purified. If we have to reverse ourselves on certain issues we will do that but the matter is under review and I do not want to anticipate what those doing the review would have to say.

I just wanted to say that the idea that the Government is obsessively and compulsively setting out to fingerprint Barbadians leaving or coming back home or so on is not the mind-set of the Prime Minister of Barbados and it is certainly not the mind-set of any of the officials around the Prime Minister of Barbados. I think that some issues have been raised and if those issues turn out to be issues of merit we are prepared to make wrong things right, and I say no more than that at this stage.

The Honourable Member for St. James Central also raised the issue of Venezuela, a very troubled country at this time. Some very unfortunate experiences are being had by the people of Venezuela as the country feels the full effects of fallen oil prices.

2.55 p.m.

I believe that Venezuela is about the fifth largest oil producers in the world and like most oil producing countries seems as though nobody every anticipated or foresaw that being oil rich could result in the country still being poor as a result of the collapse of oil prices. In any event, of course, there were challenges in Venezuela even before oil prices fell, and we just have to wish our neighbour well. As the Honourable Member for St. James Central has quite wisely said, any respect in which we can be of any assistance to Venezuela, we have to stand ready to do so.

When I addressed the Inter-American Press Association here some time ago when it was confidently believed that because of what was happening in Venezuela, I was going to stand up and identify with the critics and enemies of Venezuela, I made it very, very clear where the relationship between Barbados and Venezuela stood and as I have said in respect of other people and other things on the Floor of this Honourable House, I do not desert friends when their circumstances change and Venezuela is a friend of ours. I am not a fair-weather friend, I know how old a relationship has existed between Barbados and Venezuela. There is a tendency to mistake a moment in time for eternity. I know this too will pass in Venezuela but there

was a time when relations between Barbados and Venezuela were quite normal. I mean, they are quite normal now as well, it is just that the country is going through a very difficult period.

Mr. Speaker, I hear a lot about PetroCaribe', it has been discussed with me by Venezuelan officials, a whole delegation flew to Barbados and met with me at Ilaro Court trying to persuade me that now is the time for Barbados to join PetroCaribe. I have studied PetroCaribe very closely and I made it very clear to those who were trying to canvass my support that Barbados was not, at this time, ready for that.

Mr. Speaker, when I hear the discussion on PetroCaribe, I get the impression sometimes that there is a widespread belief in this country that the idea of Venezuela doing oil deals with CARICOM is some new idea that was hatched by Hugo Chavez, the Marxist Leninist revolutionary who took over Venezuela and therefore we have to be very careful because of the origins of PetroCaribe. It is not that at all, that is why the moment the Honourable Member for St. James Central raised the point I asked for this book of Errol Barrow's speeches, because if we do not understand the history of these things we can go wrong. Now, in a Press conference on the Caribbean Basin Initiative, on 22nd April, 1982, Errol Barrow was discussing the Caribbean Food Plan which, of course, had been floated sometime before that by the then distinguished Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the late Doctor Eric Williams. In the course of giving an explanation on that issue, Mr. Barrow says as follows, at page 129 of the book, "Speeches of Errol Barrow", edited by Yussuff Hanniff.

The late Right Excellency Errol Walton Barrow said: "Now, where did Venezuela come in on [all of] this? The Venezuelans, round about 1974, made an offer that they would sell crude oil to the territories at a price of \$6.00 per barrel. The price is now \$32 per barrel, a barrel is roughly 43 to 44 gallons. The price in 1972 was round about \$1.80 per barrel, and all the countries were being affected by the OPEC decisions. The Venezuelans, being members of OPEC, could not break the agreement; so what the Venezuelans said they would do was to give us credit; in other words, we would pay them \$6.00 a barrel and, let us say the price was \$12 per barrel just for the sake of argument, they would sell us at \$6.00 per barrel and the other \$6.00 we could use locally for economic development, and it would be a book entry which we would owe the Venezuelan Government - theoretically they would owe the Venezuelans this money, but I doubt that the Venezuelan Government would ever want to collect [the] that money. There again, an initiative coming from within the Caribbean. You will ask me now what happened to the plan. It is a very sad story. Some Foreign Ministers got together in New York. I have to speak the truth on this

even though I may offend certain people. These Foreign Ministers, having heard about the plan from some of their leaders, like Mr. Burnham (Forbes Burnham of Guyana, myself, Dr. Williams, and the President of Venezuela, decided that they would summon their own meeting and then invited Marish and Parish, Sam Cow and [the] Duppy, everybody. All the OAS (Organisation of American States) people, I believe the Argentinians - they didn't [even] invite the Falkland Islanders - the Chileans, the 'Salvadoreans', the Ecuadoreans, everybody, because they wanted to get the international spotlight. (They) held a meeting at the time of the (United Nations) General Assembly in New York, without any authority whatsoever from Dr. Williams, [from] the President of Venezuela, or anybody else. At that meeting, they spoke about the Caribbean Basin Plan without anybody telling them to do so. (They) called in the American Press, and decided that they were going have the first meeting in Caracas, Venezuela. Our understanding between the President of Venezuela, myself, and Dr. Williams and Mr. Burnham, I believe Mr. Manley (Michael Manley, Prime Minister of Jamaica) was that the first meeting was to be held in Port of Spain, since it was Dr. Williams' idea; and that Dr. Williams would send out the invitations, and that Dr. Williams would be chairman of the meeting. When Dr. Williams heard about this meeting which was to be held in Caracas, all hell broke loose, and he said he would have nothing more to do with it. The President of Venezuela sent and called me and asked me to go and speak to Dr. Williams and tell Dr. Williams that he knew nothing about the meeting which was held in New York; that he had given no one the authority to convene a meeting in Caracas and it was still his understanding that Dr. Williams was to send out the invitations; and that the meeting was to be held in Port-of-Spain under the chairmanship of Dr. Williams. I went to Port-of-Spain, and I went to see Dr. Williams by myself. I explained in great detail to Dr. Williams what had happened; how the meeting had been held in New York; who had convened the meeting; their motives for convening the meeting. They meant well but they wanted to get a little of the limelight, a little of the credit for the Caribbean Basin Plan."

Mr. Speaker, on and on Mr. Barrow went, but that is the real history of the relationship between Venezuela and CARICOM countries in relation to oil. Mr. Speaker, the interview is here for everybody's consumption. That plan was scarpered. Had that plan been taken up there would have been no scope now for any PetroCaribe because that plan would have been the plan in place and CARICOM countries would have been getting oil out of Venezuela at highly concessional rates and without incurring any debt, really, because as Mr. Barrow said, what was being booked as a debt was only intended to be a book entry, but thus passes the glory of the world and it is now what it is.

3.16 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this has been a very useful exchange in the House on this matter related to human smuggling. As I have had to describe human trafficking, it is a crime unredeemed by even one extenuating circumstance. We have to make sure that the borders of our country are properly protected and that the people who eventually end up in Barbados are the people we want in Barbados. We have been seeing people coming from far and wide to take up residence here, and I have to place on record my profound gratitude to our border security officials and our police for acting swiftly on these matters to remove even the appearance of a threat to Barbados' national security by having these strange elements end up here in this country. However, these are battles that have to be fought every day. They are not won once for all, as I said. They resurface in other guises, and we just have to continue to be the vigilant nation that we have always been. I want to say thanks to the Attorney General and the Office of the Attorney General for making sure that this legislation has reached the House, and I just signal -- as it is only proper that I should -- my unqualified support for this Bill. I am obliged to you.

MR. SPEAKER: I am obliged. Yes, Honourable Attorney General.

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After the welcome presentation by the Member for St. Michael South, there is really not a lot that I can add to this Debate. However, I would like, particularly for the benefit of my friend from St. James Central, to just remind him that at the CARICOM level, certainly at the consulate level which is at the Council of Ministers Responsible for National Security, that we are still very engaged in the overall crime and security framework, and the issue of trafficking and smuggling of persons throughout the region is an issue that we have front and centre. Indeed even though Barbados is not considered to be a source country for persons either being smuggled out or being trafficked from, or a destination country for persons who are being smuggled, there is always the possibility that our shores can be used for persons transiting Barbados. The same may not obtain depending on which part of the region you are, so that is why it is important for us all from a regional perspective to have a good understanding regarding what to look for when it comes to the whole issue of smuggling of persons, and to address these issues holistically.

I say continuously that it is no use for Barbados to be doing well in an area and our neighbours performing weakly because, given the porous natures of our shores, it stands to reason that more than likely we will be faced with the same challenges. What we are seeing in Venezuela, as our Prime Minister, the Member for St. Michael South, correctly pointed out, is of concern to us. It is also of concern to us because, as lawmakers, I am sure all of us understand our responsibility to ensure that, where

possible, we utilise our offices to protect the more vulnerable in our societies. Regarding the issue of the trafficking and smuggling of persons, it is usually the poor, the disadvantaged and in particular our young females and young boys who are the victims, and we must use our best offices to ensure that we can protect these vulnerable individuals. I am sure we agree on both sides, and that is why there is not a lot of contention on this Bill.

The Member for Christ Church West Central raised the issue of training. We have done a tremendous amount of work on training. It is a continuous issue. As I speak to you, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Customs Organisation and the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) have what is commonly called the Aircop project. Aircop is linking 24 countries in Latin America, Africa and the Caribbean together on one electronic platform, so that we can in real time have a clear vision in terms of individuals who are travelling through our spaces, in particular those using our shores for illegal activities. The issue of smuggling is one such activity on which we are doing training. Training is something very central to our focus, and indeed, training is the vehicle that we have stressed in the law enforcement arena. If we can identify the crime before it is committed, that is certainly much better than addressing the crime after the fact; so the training of immigration officers, prosecutors, magistrates and judges has been done in the past and will be done in the future, because we need to get that right.

My final comment, Mr. Speaker, and I want to just repeat it here. I have said in the past that with the changing security environment not only in Barbados but in CARICOM and in the world, it stands to reason that at some point in time the things that we take for granted will change. When I was growing up, my door was always open. It was never locked until four or five o'clock in the morning whenever the last person came home. As times have changed, we have had to change by locking our doors, and as if that was not bad enough, we have actually installed alarm systems. The same thing is required in terms of our national security. As times have changed, we have to change the way we operate. Sir, a bomb that explodes in London or Cairo, even if it kills two persons, will not have the same impact or effect in terms of if the same ever obtained in Barbados; and God forbid that we ever have such an eventuality. Even with our limited resources, we therefore have to work harder to ensure that our security apparatus is maintained to ensure that our shores remain as safe as possible for persons not only visiting Barbados but for persons transiting Barbados, and for all Barbadians. With those words, I want to thank all Honourable Members who contributed to this Debate today and move that this Bill be read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

*On the motion of Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE, seconded by Rt. Hon. F.J. STUART, the House resolved itself into Committee. Mr. J.D. PAUL in the Chair.*

3.14 p.m.

#### COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is now in Committee.

*On the motion of Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE, seconded by Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, Mr. Chairman reported progress to Mr. SPEAKER and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

On the separate motion of Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE, seconded by Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Immigration (Amendment) Act, 2016.

#### ORDER NO. 19 – SAVINGS BOND (VALIDATION) BILL, 2016

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not expect to detain the House too long on this particular matter except to refer to a couple of things. First, we know that the debate of this particular matter must be to encourage members of the House to tie this matter to the previously laid Saving Bonds Regulations (Amendment) 2016, which was laid in this Chamber on February 2, 2016, and that relates directly to changes which were required to be made to the Savings Bond Act of 1980. Mr. Speaker, you would recall that a Savings Bond Act was passed in this The Honourable the House of Assembly in 1980 and became effective in 1981, where bonds were issued by the Central Bank of Barbados with the concurrence and approval of Minister and the Ministry of Finance for the raising of funds to contribute to the financing of Government's operations as Savings Bond, as is the case for all Government paper issued, resources are paid into the Consolidated Fund of Barbados and placed at the disposal, once Parliament approve, for the Government of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, up until late 2014, basically, no substantial changes were made to that Savings Bond Act. In fact, no changes were made to the regulations either of any particular significance that would have altered the tenure of the Savings Bonds which have been issued over time in various series by the Central Bank of Barbados. Of course, that is not the only instrument they use. You have

bonds and different types of Government paper instruments, Treasury Bills, Treasury Notes and bonds of various types have been issued from time to time but the Savings Bonds were the ones that normally were targeted towards members of the wider general public, what you would call ordinary citizens like yourself and myself and members of the House and those outside of this Chamber to contribute not just to assisting Government in financing its day to day operations for the social and economic development of the country but equally as well to encourage ordinary Barbadians citizens and organisations to save their resources at a relatively good rate of return in terms of the interest attached to the coupon for those bonds. Sir, this has worked since 1980 relatively well. I think we could say in that regard that Government has been able to do a number of things, too many to list here in this the Honourable the House of Assembly today but we know of all the work we have done infrastructurally, all of the work we have done in our economic sectors and all of the work we have done in our social sector and Barbadians, by extension, having invested in the bonds would have been able to advance themselves socially and financially by ensuring that they were encouraged to save resources, people would say for a rainy day but really for their own personal and family development and for those organisations which would have bought bonds for the organisations' development in the work that they would have done and a number of social organisations which would have participated, church base organisations, credit unions and so forth and so on, who would have invested in bonds over some substantial period of time. Mr. Speaker, as one would expect, in the course of the development of Barbados' economy and in the course of the development of our financial sectors, things have become more sophistication. There are more instrument available to members of the public both in terms of what Government offers in Government paper but also what private people offer. We have seen the emergence of Registered Retirements Savings Plans, we have seen the emergence of various types of annuities offered by insurance companies and we have seen the mutual fund operation burgeoned basically before our very eyes in the development of Barbados' sector, so with the diversification of the financial instrument available to members of the general public, the diversity which is good because it spreads risk across a number of different instruments and across a number of different organisations and across a number of different purposes, with the diversification of that, it means that the level of competition between the various organisations, entities and instruments became a lot more intense and is the wont for any institution which is offering instruments for savings and investment in a highly competitiveness and diversified financial sector, it is necessary that they relook instrument from time to time because you cannot take for granted that you develop an instrument in 1980 and that in the year 2010, 2012 and 2015, that it would remain as attractive as it was when it

first introduced. Sir, for however good it would have been when it was introduced at that time and for whatever good it would have done for persons who would have participate and bought bonds, and many of us in here and outside of here have invested in bonds from time to time, all the things that we have been able to do, develop our house or send our children to school, build properties, buy land, all of those nice, exciting things that we would have been able to do with whatever

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disposable income that we have left over after we have done all of our expenses and so forth, we still expect that in the context of that diversified financial sector and the competition which it offers, that the attractiveness of instruments, within reason, of course, should be such that would cause you to pay attention and the Central Bank of Barbados like any other financial institution which is charged with the responsibility of raising money and to encouraging investments have to look at the instruments which they have and we have encouraged them, certainly from the level of the Ministry of Finance to relook some of those instruments to see what can be done to make them more attractive, not make them ridiculously attractive to the extent where you cannot honour the financial commitment that you have undertaken once you take people's money but to make them attractive enough that people would feel not only that they are worth the effort to invest in but that they are a safe and productive investment.

To the extent that is true, when one looks at the savings bonds, for example, in the early days, based on what I have read, saving bonds coupons in terms of the interest rates could have gone as high as 10 per cent some 9 per cent, extremely attractive. Of course, in those days you were dealing with relatively smaller amounts of resources. Today, of course, we could speak about tens of millions of dollars in investments so therefore the cost of carrying a 10 per cent instrument by way of interest on the coupon would not have broken the bank, as you would say, or raise any alarm because they were not as many people investing and the denominations were not as large in terms of the amounts of money that people were investing, however, we have seen gradually, over time, as competition has entered the market, diversity has entered the market as I have said, those rates have come down. Certainly, up to 2013/2014 those rates were anywhere between 5.25 or 5.5 per cent to 6 per cent on interest. It was not as attractive as the 8, 9 or 10 per cent that you may have been offered previously but it was still a reasonably attractive rating, of course, as people would suggest and history would point out and demonstrate a very, very safe and reliable form of investment.

We have noticed that since around the middle part of this century 2005/2006 that the aggressive appetite for

investing in and retaining savings bonds ween to some considerable extent and in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and with others, of course, the Central Bank of Barbados undertook a study to find out the dynamics of the market. Of course, the economic recession and the challenges that we have had would have had an impact but they also wanted to examine to see what was the appetite, what was the feeling about Barbadians toward savings bonds. Who knew about savings bonds? How popular were the issue of savings bonds? The results of those market investigations were quite interesting. I cannot go through all of them here but some of the highlights were quite interesting. One of them was that the age cohort, quite interestingly enough, of persons who invested heavily in saving bonds and repeated tended to be persons 50 years and over. It tended to be an older generation Barbadian who was investing in the savings bonds and, of course, by the time you get to that stage you are moving towards your retirement age and people were putting moneys in bonds and stuff like that and repeating, as bond holders, I assume, with the objective of securitizing income for themselves going forward as they move toward their retirement and beyond and also for enjoying, not just for daily sustenance but enjoying their retirement and being able to do other things recreational that would add certainly to their own continued development and the quality of their lives in Barbados so that was one of the interesting things. It tended more to be persons over 50 years old, not that other people did not invest but we found that the younger professionals, lawyers, doctors, teachers and so forth, tended not to be the heaviest investors in savings bonds. That was a fairly revealing thing because in the context of what we know from our national savings profile, that persons in those categories, what we would call the middle and lower middle income persons who had resources available at their disposal who were still working and still moving up in terms of the mobility along the career path, tended not to be the persons who were investing and one would have thought that naturally, those are the persons who would have been attracted to the savings bonds given the relatively attractive rates of the savings bonds.

One of the other things that we have noticed from our market investigations was that the bonds were not very well known about and this might very well have been impacting upon who was investing in the bonds. You find that a certain category of persons were more familiar with savings bonds and were more active in the investment market outside of the regular insurance policy or maybe registered retirement savings policy that we have had come up in recent years and which have proved very attractive for Barbadians. The general knowledge in the society about savings bonds was very low. What they are? How they can be used? What level of investment you can put? Many people seemed to have thought that in order to buy a savings bonds you had to have \$50 000 or \$20 000 or whatever the case may be and that you could not purchase

bonds in smaller denominations even though when the savings bonds were issued and the notice was put into the newspapers, all of that information is there but, of course, it tended to be hidden somewhere in a newspaper, as per request requirement of the law, that it be advertised but the average citizen, we found, was not acutely aware of the bonds, their features and the way in which they could contribute to personal, financial development. That I thought was a very interesting finding because what it suggests to us and suggested certainly to the Central Bank of Barbados was that perhaps over time, we kind of took for granted that people knew about savings bonds, were queued into what they were about and how they could contribute and were necessarily interested in that particular form of investment.

Another thing that came out of the study that was also interesting in relation to the bonds was the whole issue of access. I think these things are tied in, Mr. Speaker, when you really think about it. Firstly, age cohort, over 50 years tended to be the more largely the repeat investors. Secondly, the more younger, professional types tended not to be the people who were going after the bonds. Thirdly, that the level of information available to persons about the bonds and how they could contribute to their own personal financial development, that too seemed to have weened or was lacking in the society and then the whole issue of access. Okay, I am interested in doing a bond, how do I go about getting access to it?

3.33 p.m.

We found that knowledge of how to operate within the marketplace in relation to bonds, and I believe it is the case with Treasury Bills as well but to a lesser extent, was basically the exclusive preserve of a certain number of persons who tended to be the same persons who bought bonds whenever they came out, so no new people were coming into the system because people did not know how to access it. Some people would sit down and say you know I probably should invest in this bond series that was issued but how do I go about it, how do I go to a bank, do I get there first, if I get there, am I going to get in, is a financial institution going to buy up all of the them like the credit unions are going to buy a large chunk and by the time the sale is closed or they say the series has been fully subscribed, I cannot get a little bit of it. These are the things that came out of that examination of the market and which we felt should have been addressed, and therefore the Central Bank, I think, quite wisely decided that it would have to relaunch those savings bonds and put in place an appropriate marketing and public relations strategy about the bonds, what they entailed, what the structure is, how they can be accessed and target it particularly to certain segments within the marketplace that we know have disposable income for investment purposes.

Of course, once you look within your whole question of national savings, you notice that large amounts of savings remain in commercial banks receiving not very much interest for it. Even before we lowered the interest rates on deposits we would have seen that a lot of disposable income was being saved by Barbadians. The banks because of a diminution of the appetite for credit generally as we pass through the recession were unable to dispose of all that money. Of course, under the Financial Institutions Act and the Central Bank Regulations and Acts of the various pieces of financial legislation, when once those resources cannot be utilised they have to be turned over to the Treasury of the Central Bank and they just lie there in the bank unproductively because the money obviously cannot be converted into US and exported out of the country, the Exchange Control Act prevents that or permits us to be in a position to control that type of thing happening, so one has to ask oneself why would you have those large caps of savings situate in the bank and not being used, so we thought that it would have been useful to relaunch and relaunch savings bonds under a new system in terms of making it a lot more attractive and certainly more accessible to ordinary Barbadians. The Central Bank was able to do that by taking a decision in May 2015 to relaunch the bonds starting with the public relations campaign and then the first official re-issue of a series on the June 01, 2015.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, from the analysis of the market we felt that there were certain things that needed to be done. One of those things as we laid with the regulations laid earlier this year was to adjust the denominations in which the bonds could be issued. Previously, it was asked and required that bonds be issued up to \$50 000 per person, in other words, you could not go beyond \$50 000 an issue, and we took the decision to amend the regulations to allow for the bonds to be issued not exceeding \$100 000 per issue value to one person, so that took it from \$50 000 to \$100 000 and then for two persons, if they were a married couple or whatever the case may be jointly that they could go from \$100 000 to \$200 000, so that took it up and made it a lot more efficient in terms of how they would be issued.

We also amended the regulations to ensure that bonds not exceeding \$100 000 per value to be issued for benevolent organisations which would have subscribed to that, so we also allowed that increase in the denomination of the single total issue for benevolent organisations to be issued.

We also took the decision to denominate on face value as per issue from as low as \$50 per issue, so you go from \$50 being the lowest and you can work your way up as you go on without having to issue, and that was one of the most critical changes, a certificate for each one, so if you got bonds for \$50 or for \$100 or \$150 or \$200 each time under the previous Act you would have had to issue a

different certificate for each one, so what they did is to allow you to get the denominations, bring them into cumulative value and then issue you with a certificate that denominated each one on a single certificate, so it saves us and the Central Bank and it saved the public as well having to go through that.

We also made the change to ensure that if you bought bonds and for whatever reason you wanted to encash some of it, not all, say you bought \$10 000 but something came up financially and you needed to get \$5 000 of the \$10 000, that you could get the \$5 000 and have a new certificate issued for the new value of the amount of savings that you would have had in the bond, so you would get a re-issued certificate at \$5 000. Before, that was not necessary, so the re-issued certificate would show you the value of the remaining amount that you had in the particular bond itself. In fact, the regulations, are very clear now in relation to that adjustment.

Another adjustment is that if a person dies and willed those bonds to you, you may hold those bonds in addition to other bonds, so if somebody gives you some bonds, dies and put in the Will to your estate, you will get these bonds as part of what they would have given you in their Will. It did not affect the value of how much you as an individual could get because obviously if somebody passes away and leaves some bonds for you it would have been hard for the bank to then say to you, oh you already have your limit because the person died and left for you so you cannot get what would be your personal limit, and that made absolute sense in terms of addressing the thing, so it was re-issued.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, beyond our wildest dreams and certainly beyond the dreams of the Central Bank the bonds were just snapped up like hot cakes. In fact, that is one of the reasons why we were actually delayed in bringing the legislation because by the time we issued the first couple series of them, they were subscribed so quickly and so fully, and Barbadians were calling and basically complaining how it is that you issued this \$10 million and \$20 million and within weeks they were snapped up, so to kind of satisfy that initial massive appetite for the bonds we had to re-issue additional series.

I can report that as of May there were four series issued in 2015 and one for 2016 so far, for an accumulative amount of BDS\$90 million

3.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, there was \$80 million in 2015 and \$10 million in 2016 for so far. For 2015, I can say that is the largest amount, cumulatively, of any set of Savings Bonds issued in any single calendar year since bonds were being issued in Barbados from 1981. Sir, that is a remarkable

achievement for Barbados, particularly in an economy that has had its challenges, but it goes to show how good marketing, good instrument design and effective public relations can bring people in to assisting their own country in developing these Instruments as attractive lending and savings Instruments for Barbadians.

I can also say that up until May this year \$88.1 million of the \$90 million has already been consumed or subscribed, so that there is only a very little amount left, if any at all. I believe that by this time they probably are gone because there is usually a lag between when people request at the commercial bank and when they are officially issued by the Central Bank of Barbados, so it is possible that they may all be gone, and we are grateful for this.

We are mindful also though that Savings Bonds carry a fairly attractive interest rate, as they well should. When we are designing our debt strategy, particularly for the borrowing of issuance of Government Paper or the borrowing of debt on the international market or on the domestic market, one of the things that the Debt Unit of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs is very mindful of is the maturity profile of Barbados' debts. In other words, we want to ensure that when we issue debt Instruments along certain time series, whether it is for three years, five years, seven years, ten-years, twelve years, fifteen years or even twenty-five years, even though that is on the further push out in terms of a maturity, that we do not have what we call bunching in the system, that is, that you have a whole set of maturities coming due in a particular year or a particular set of years that would put fiscal strain on the Government to be able to meet those commitments.

Mr. Speaker, so that even though the response to the Savings Bonds has been so good, attractive and everybody is so excited, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs still has to be mindful how they are issued, so that if it is a 10-year Bond, we looked to see that in 10-years' time what is your profile for retirement of debt, both foreign and domestic, how many maturities you have in that point in time, what peaks do you have, and you try to stay clear of those peaks. Sir, so that if the appetite is there but the maturity profile does not necessarily match the retirement of the maturity in terms of what you may take up, you have to be very careful with it, so that even though there was a big appetite in 2015, we felt that in the circumstances for 2015 what we issued were sufficient.

Mr. Speaker, people felt that since it was being subscribed to so wonderfully that we should have issues 50 million more. We probably could have, at the time because it was so hot you would have gotten the savings, you would have gotten the appetite, but you still had to look at the profile. We matched that, we looked at 2016 and we see what gaps are there in 2016, how much we could

accommodate in 2016 and then we make a decision as to how much more we would issue for 2016, whether we take a pause in 2017, if you do not have any peaks or if it is flat and it looks as though it is manageable for future Governments to deal with when that time comes, then we will issue accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, this is how we design and deal with debt in that particular way. We do it both for domestic and foreign debt as well because it is absolutely critical. We know, for example, that in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 we have two peaks because there are two Bonds that we have to retire at that time. All now we are planning on how we are going to deal with those particular bonds. We know that if we go to do any debt, particularly foreign, that we know to avoid 2020-2021, 2021-2022 because 2020-2021, 2021-2022 we have two big peaks, I believe US\$200 million in bonds that you have to deal with, so that unless you have a strategy for dealing with that you do not go packing on other things there and when 2020-2021, 2021-2022 comes then you are up a creek or that you default.

Mr. Speaker, that is one of the good things, I must say, about what has happened since we have come to office, in the sense that there now a functioning Debt Unit that deals with a debt strategy for the country and that looks at these things every day and proffers advice to central Government, to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, to the departments in Government and working with the Central Bank of Barbados to say this is where you are at, these are the difficulties you may encounter, these are the opportunities you may have, this interest rate is a good rate, this interest rate is not a good rate, this is not what the market is taking, even though you may have investment grades you cannot accept that because you set a bad precedent. Sir, all of these things are now being done by a Debt Unit and it has had able assistance from the Commonwealth, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These agencies have assisted us in expanding our Debt Unit. We need to expand it because it does not have enough officers in it but I think that for the four or five officers there they are doing a yeoman service for Barbados in producing a debt strategy for the country and we hope that later this year that entire Debt Strategy, the entire disbursed debt of the Government as seen in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure as sent by the Accountant-General but certainly the debt strategy will be posted on the website of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, it will be made available through the Government Information Service so that people can see what debt we have incurred, what debts we have to service, what debts we are proposing to incur going forward. We will put those in so that everybody can have a good profile of everything that we are doing in relation to our own debt strategy going forward.

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, we think that now in the modern financial world where countries are concerned this is something that has become routine now and we have to get with the programme. I believe they are developing a specific website as well that the general public would have access to, but of course Members of this House would also have that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, this is what has happened with the Savings Bonds, so that as we issued the bonds, as they are caught up, as everybody got into the excitement, of course, we had to come back and lay that amendment to the regulations and also bring this particular Bill here to validate the actions of us receiving those resources and making those adjustments for the bonds going forward.

Mr. Speaker, as I said there continues to be a very strong appetite for them, we will continue to look and see where we can continue to issue them. I think that, generally, my own strong belief is that we need to look at some of the other Instruments as well. We need to look at the Treasury Bill market, the Treasury Notes, we need to look at some of the other bonds that we issue. We generally need to see how we can make more sophisticated and diversify those Instruments that are available. They say that Government Instruments are the safest instruments, that is true, I think, and still continues to be true. I know that there a number of States and sovereigns across the world that have run into difficulties from time to time. That happens in markets, Barbados has an impeccable record in relation to servicing its debts and long may that continue so that we can ensure that we honour our commitments.

3.58 p.m.

I think that for however much we would like, we have to look at specific areas of our country's development, such as issues pertaining to investment in economic sectors, issues pertaining to tourism and so forth, and issues pertaining to investment in infrastructure because infrastructure is a major part of the development of our society that is extremely costly to do. Normal taxes that we collect, front fees that we collect from people, and levies may not necessarily now be enough to be able to do the major infrastructural developments that we have to do, which can run into the billions of dollars, when you really look at it, for road construction, water, sanitation, you name it, across a number of sectors. We may need to look, for example, at creating special bonds like infrastructural bonds which people have created in other countries to draw resources out of the public and which we could invest in those areas at relatively good costs, knowing that it would be Barbadians supporting other Barbadians in terms of the development of our country. These are things which we can tease out and explore going forward in relation to this, but to the extent that we have, I think, successfully relaunched the bonds in Barbados, the targeting is much better, we are

getting to a wider target market, the interest is there, the demand is high, and the resources have come in and allowed us to do a number of things in the society, particularly in terms of financing our deficit as it relates to our social and economic programmes. Mr. Speaker, to the extent that all of that has been achieved by the relaunch of these bonds, I have absolutely no difficulty in commending this Savings Bonds (Validation) Bill to the House of Assembly and to Members of the House for consideration. With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I rise to speak in this Debate. Let me say from the outset that we will not oppose the Validation. The Government clearly, through the statutory instrument which was signed only on January 17 this year, sought to validate some actions which they took six months before the end of last year, so we are talking about a year ago. The statutory instrument, in fairness to the Minister, did come in January 2016, and the substance of the statutory instrument effectively seeks to make it easier for people to transact with savings bonds; and I think that is what the Minister just tried to point out, especially as it relates to the certificates and the management of the certificates. Rather than them being limited to a particular bond, you can deal with them cumulatively. Then, of course, they raised the limit which could be invested by individuals and jointly. There is no objection in principle to the Government treating to the savings bonds in these ways. I think, however, that we cannot divorce the Debate from what is happening with respect to the rest of Government's paper, and to the need for Government's paper.

Indeed, Sir, one of the reasons why Government has been forced to move back to the savings bonds and to treat to the other instruments - be they Treasury Bills which are short-term by their very nature, Treasury Notes which are a little longer term, and Debentures which are long-term - is because Government has been continuously running a deficit which, in our view, is unsustainable, and we have made that point from Day 1 in relation to this matter. We have said that while Government has sought to deal with the revenue issue, indeed there is still a huge deficit, and one of the things that bothers us -- if I may reflect from what we indicated two or three months ago -- is that the 6.3 per cent deficit which this Honourable House approved as being the deficit for the fiscal year ending March 31 appears, according to the Central Bank Report issued last Tuesday, to now be at the level of 7.4 per cent. We would just like clarity from the Minister of Finance on it, because that 6.3 per cent deficit was predicated, I believe, on receiving \$70 million or \$75 million from the sale of the Barbados National Terminal Company Limited (BNTCL). I will get technical for a second, Sir, because I think that

the recording in this year's Estimates was wrong and I indicated that. Not only had the sale not been completed, and therefore what came before the House could not be approved because it did not reflect the reality of Government's revenue at the time, but similarly it was not a dividend. If you go back to the Estimates, it is recorded as a dividend but in truth and in fact what Government is trying to do is to sell an asset, and therefore the revenue from the sale of the asset should be recorded under Other Financing and cannot be so recorded as a dividend. As you know, a dividend is what is paid to shareholders pursuant to a profit having been obtained on an annual basis. This is a one-off sale of an asset and therefore cannot be treated to as part of the recurring expenditure. Put that aside, Sir, because the bigger point is that the \$70 million or \$75 million did not come into the Government's coffers before March 31, last year, and therefore, we know for sure that the deficit should have at least risen by about 0.8 of a per cent. We would like the Minister to also be able to give us the out-turn figures, because we are now in the middle of May, and the out-turn figures, according to him, is information which he sees daily. We therefore believe that the actual out-turn figures for February and March should now be available to the Minister, and we are asking for them, because the projections which this Honourable House was asked to approve were based on some...

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just a minute. I am concerned about the Rule with respect to relevance, and I am wondering how a Bill which seeks to validate certain actions which would have been taken in relation to savings bonds would make the deficit and all Government paper and so on relevant to this Debate. As usual, though, I do not like to stop Members as they speak and I would give you a bit of latitude, but I think that you are going a bit far in terms of relevance. I think you are stretching it a bit, but you may continue.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Let me make myself clearer. The only reason Government needs to issue savings bonds in this instance is in fact to finance its deficit. This Government is not issuing infrastructure bonds to build a specific infrastructural project, and indeed, Sir, if I may quote the Estimates, the Savings Bonds legislation and the various other pieces of legislation that allow Government to issue Government paper, as well as the Central Bank Report for 2015, as well as the Central Bank Report issued last week for the first quarter, the only reason you need savings bonds is to finance a deficit. Therefore, to even contemplate having to validate the issuance of savings bonds, you cannot have that discussion without discussing what the deficit is. Furthermore, the Government's continued failure to reduce the deficit means that we are now asking Barbadians to invest money in savings bonds. What are the consequences of it? The consequences, Sir, is that that money is not being made available to the private sector, who are the ones who need to be able to finance

enterprises and businesses in order for this economy to grow. The fact that Government is having to suck so much oxygen out of the domestic economy from the savings of ordinary Barbadians is to the detriment of the private sector.

4.03 p.m.

Therefore, Sir, I continue to insist that the relevance comes therein. Sir, perhaps, it may be opportune for me to go to the statement from the last IMF Report which was not released in 2015 because Annex 4 of that IMF Report from 2015, what was made abundantly clear in their matrix that assess risk, the risk assessment matrix, the main threat of all identified by the IMF was fiscal financing pressures and the likelihood of the realization of the threat was stated to be high and that the domestic financial sector has little appetite for additional Government paper and the Government has been relying on financing from the Central Bank of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, let me pause there for one second. If the Government was being successful in attracting institutional purchases such as commercial bank and non-financial institutions like insurance companies et cetera in the purchase of debentures and Treasury Notes in particular which are longer term instrument, the individual household in Barbados would not necessarily have been given this opportunity but even if given, let us put it back to scale. The Minister indicated that all was issued last year was \$80 million and \$10 million was available this year. He has indicated that 8.1 of that 10 would have gone and hence the \$88.1 million of the \$90 million but believe you me Sir, one of the reasons why they have not hitherto been that generous access to savings bonds is because institutional investors for the most part were financing the deficit of the Government of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, what has happened and it started happening with greater frequency since 2013, is that the institutional investors became more and more interested in short term financing, 90 day notes. Sir, I make this a document of the House in this debate again because this is the Central Bank of Barbados' Quarterly Report issued last Tuesday for March 2016, Table 5, and it is as clear as anything here. Indeed, Sir, I did not have the graphs today but I have the tables.

Mr. Speaker, in the year 2008, when this Government became the Government of the day, there was not a single cent purchased by the Central Bank of Barbados in Government paper. It was zero and between 2008 and 2016, the Central Bank of Barbados now possess from zero to \$1128.3 billion, almost \$1.2 billion and what is of concern to us is that in spite of the multiple warnings of the danger of Central Bank of Barbados financing of the deficit and the pressure that it puts on the exchange rate

peg, the Central Bank of Barbados as, in fact, increased from the end of December to the end of March in three months, its financing of the deficit, its printing of money by another \$57 million or \$58 million in the first three months of this year.

Mr. Speaker, this is perhaps the most serious of all debates that we will have in this House of Assembly because the implications are the most dire. Sir, they are dire because, as have said, of the pressure that it effectively put on the exchange rate. Sir, let us think about it, if you print money, local currency that is not earned in foreign exchange, it is not backed by any foreign exchange earnings in any way, you are increasing the spend in the economy but we all know that when Barbadians spend that 60 cents or 70 cents in each dollar goes outside to purchase goods or services that are not delivered or manufactured locally, that are not of local origins, let me put it that way. Sir, when that happens, it means that we have to find the foreign currency to be able to pay for those goods and services that are being utilized by Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, if the Government was able to constrain the deficit, there would be no need for us to be raising the level of financing whether it is Treasury Bills, Treasury Notes, Savings Bonds or any of these things, there would be no need whatsoever for it but reality is that we have just ended this fiscal year that ended at the end of March with a deficit that is higher than what the Minister projected that he would have. Sir, that must mean that Government fiscal consolidation is not working at the pace at which it expected it to work. Indeed, Sir, if we go back, when the Minister delivered the Budget in August 2013, do you know that the deficit is virtually the same as it was when it closed out at the end of March. Sir, when the Minister spoke in August 2013, he was trying to avoid a 9% deficit and according to the Central Bank of Barbados, the deficit at the end of March is 7.4 per cent. Sir, these are not our figures. What is our concern is that between August 2013 and today, you have had over 30 months and, Sir, what has happened? Sir, 3 000 workers have gone home, countless institutions have been starved of resources and significant amount of suffering has taken place in the country and the country now asks itself as well as the individuals who have borne the brunt of that suffering, are we any closer to safety than we were when we started this adjustment process in August 2013?

Mr. Speaker, as we take these savings bonds and finance other Government instruments, is the Central Bank of Barbados bringing down its printing of money? No. it is not. Is the deficit coming down? No. it is not. Indeed, Sir, this same very House approved a deficit for March 2017 next year of 7.8 per cent and all of these are in the international financial institutions basis. Sir, where the public may get confused, is that the Government now has three different measurements for the same deficit. Well,

today, I have compared apple with apples and an on the IFI basis, which is the one that we have been using consistently, or which is the one the Minister used in August 2013, we are at 7.4 per cent at the end of March and we are expected to go up by the end of March next year.

Mr. Speaker, these are not our figures. Sir, that means that the Government has to find financing and it has to pray that the almost \$1 billion in amortization that the people holding the Government debt that is to be redeemed this year, that they would roll it over so that the Government is not faced with having to find new debt to replace debt that they have to pay out.

Mr. Speaker, how should I put it? The same IMF risk assessment matrix after telling us that the likelihood of realisation of a threat is high, not medium or not low. It is high and of the two high things, it is the highest of the two.

*Sequence 27*

*Tuesday, May 17, 2016*

4.12 p.m.

Hon. M. A. MOTTLEY: ... medium not low, high and of the two high things it is the higher of the two. It then says: what is the impact if the threat is realized. This is not my words, Sir. It says that the fiscal financing pressures and the monetization of the deficit are likely to continue raising the risk of a liquidity crisis for the sovereign and/or risk to the exchange rate peg, in other words, the dollar. There will also see a strangling out of any private sector led growth recovery over time. Those are the words of the international entity, Sir, and when you go and see why Moodys has downgraded us again, it comes back down to the printing of money by the Central Bank of Barbados, the level of the deficit and the level of debt. A document came out on the weekend that had Barbados as number 16 in the world among the 20 most highly indebted countries, there are 200 countries in the world and we are not accustomed keeping this type of company. It therefore causes me, Sir, to be very precise in what I ask, respectfully so, of the Minister of Finance according to the laws of this country now.

Mr. Speaker, we are a law-making body and we must adhere to the laws of Barbados. While it has never been the habit for the Minister of Finance to have to answer these questions our perilous circumstances now require the Opposition to ask the Minister of Finance, formerly, to adhere and the speak to us in terms of Sections 47, 48 and 49 of the Central Bank Act. I am going to take my time and go through it so that we understand why this is critical because Barbadians are also asking the question: does the loss of investment grade apply to our local bonds and

therefore, can we given comfort from the Government that we have nothing to worry about? That is a normal question that anybody who is not schooled in finance would ask because they hear everybody talking about what are the consequences for the raising of bonds, the interest rates that we must pay and the people who are qualified to buy our bonds now because of the loss of investment grade.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to read it for the House because we are a law-making body. Under Section 47, the Central Bank shall be consulted by the Minister on the total amount of credit to be extend by the Bank to the Government during the Government's financial year. In his wrap up, I would like the Minister to tell us, what the Central Bank has communicated to him as the total amount of credit to be extended by the Central Bank to the Government of Barbados in this fiscal year 2016/2017. This would allow us to comply with Section 47(A) of the Central Bank Act. Similarly, Sir, the Minister has complained about the volume of transfers and subsidies to the statutory corporations, other agencies and companies owned by the Government. Section 47(B) reads as follows: "That he, the Minister, the bank shall be consulted by the Government, its institutions and agencies and statutory boards at any time when either domestic or foreign credit operations are contemplated and in the event that in the opinion of the bank such operations individually or collectively appear to be of a magnitude inappropriate to prevailing economic conditions. The bank shall report to the Minister drawing attention to the situation and recommending measure to remedy the situation." We would like to know of the Minister, whether the Central Bank of Barbados given the prevailing conditions and given the difficulties in meeting Governments obligations has, in fact, consulted with the Government and made any recommendations in relation to Section 47. These are not trick questions, Sir, these are genuine questions pursuant to the law that governs the operations.

Of greater concern, Sir, is Section 48 of the Central Bank Act which is the one that we have raised before in the past and it was ignore and we raise it in good faith today again because the overdraft limit, the Ways and Means Account is limited to 10 per cent of the projected revenue of Government. I have been in this Honourable House long enough and indeed, in the early 1990s when I was in the Other Place, the then government of the day brought legislation to increase that overdraft limit from 10 per cent to 17½ per cent and the Barbados Labour Party Government, when the Honourable Member for St. Peter, was Minister of Finance, brought it back down to 10 per cent. Since 2009, this Government has lived almost every month, for 84 months, at the limit of the overdraft amount, but what it started to do in 2011 was to change its relationship in respect of the number of securities that it could purchase. Our economic advisor has written

extensively on this for the last few years and has pointed out that our legislation ...

*Asides.*

Hon. M. A. MOTTLEY: Dr. Mascoll and perhaps, Sir, rather than raise his eyes to the sky the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West would do well to listen because then I would not have to be asking these questions today. It is true that he is now like Saul, become Paul on the road to Demascus now talking about the need for disposable income, a concept that he cursed the very same economic advisor and others on This Side for the last few years but we are now hearing that he is a recent convert and we look forward to that discussion and the policies that he will enunciate thereto too. The point is this, Mr. Speaker, in Jamaica there is legislation that governs how the Central Bank can purchase securities to help finance governments operations. In Barbados, there is a lacuna, there is no legislative framework but what there must be, however, is a compliance with the Central Bank Act and the Central Bank Act makes it clear at Section 48, Sir, that wherever the total amount of credit being extended by the Central Bank of Barbados to the Government or any of its agencies by advances under Section 45 of the law of this Act, that wherever that happens and it threatens either, 1) to exceed the amount that the Minister is now to tell us as set as the limit for 2016/2017, because we have never known what that limit is in previous years and we are asking up front this year what is that limit, or 2) wherever those amounts advanced as credit threatens to endanger monetary stability which is the judgment of all independent entities locally and internationally. It is the view of the Opposition that the Central Bank of Barbados holding \$1.12 billion in Government paper is threatening our monetary stability. It is the view of independent economists in Barbados, some well-known to the Government and some not so well-known.

4.22 p.m.

It is the view of independent economists in Barbados, some well-known to the Government and some not so well-known and it is the view of the international financial institutions starting with the credit rating agencies, both of them, hence the downgrades and, of course, the International Monetary Fund, which I just read from the document, the 2015 Article IV Report, that the Honourable Minister of Finance is yet to share with the public of Barbados for the first time ever.

What is amazing is that the International Monetary Fund is in the country now consulting for this year's Article IV Report, and the majority of Barbadians still have not seen...

*Asides.*

Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I do not need to speak in here to speak to them because we have consultations with them just as you do, so do not try to fool the public, but then perhaps I cannot expect better from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who has proposed as recent as yesterday that all Government Ministers keep their salary 10 per cent down but that the Honourable Minister of Finance must tax every public sector and private sector worker a tax of 10 per cent to cut their wages, that is what is all over facebook and all over the newspapers, go and read it. A Minister of Government at that not John Doe, but I will not deal with that in here, that is what we hear now from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that every Barbadian worker is to have their wages taxed by 10 per cent to make it equal with the Ministers. It is a pop kite.

Sir, the point I am making is that it is the judgement of entities domestically and internationally that our monetary stability is endangered by the volume of credit being extended to the Government of Barbados by the Central Bank through the purchase of Government Paper. Sir, we have not even gone into the NIS or the other agencies holding Papers, let us stick today to the Central Bank's holding of Paper.

Mr. Speaker, virtually \$555 million of that \$1.128 billion is Treasury Bills, in other words, the Central Bank is rolling over every 90 days or less, and \$573.5 million is Government Debentures. Now, this is not money being taken up by the commercial banks or the insurance companies. When I speak therefore of \$80 million or \$90 million in Savings Bonds, it does not even represent 10 per cent of what the Central Bank is taking up in Government Paper to keep this Government's Budget afloat and that is why we say to the Government, we know it is difficult times but we are not satisfied that the Government can play fast and loose with some of its fiscal decisions that it is doing so, starting with the 10 per cent in the salaries, starting with the money that we can find better ways of investing in celebrations than having to spend another \$10 million there. There are a whole host of things that there has to be priority on public expenditure given this kind of dire situation.

We want formally to know from the Honourable Minister of Finance (1) what is the limit, the total amount of credit being extended by the Central Bank to the Government as required by law at the beginning of this fiscal year, and (2) if we accept that the volume of credit being extended is likely to endanger monetary stability, then Section 48 sets in train that the Central Bank shall submit a report to the Minister analysing the causes of the situation.

I know that there is a lot of discussions because some of his Cabinet colleagues feel that the Central Bank Governor has more say than any of them in Cabinet, that

may or may not be so, but this is not an informal process now, this is a very, very formal process. The formality of the process requires - and if the Members of Cabinet are not aware of it they need to ask the Honourable Minister of Finance not only to comply with it but to share it with them on the principles of collective responsibility - that once you determine that the level of credit being extended to the Government is either more than was intended for the year or is capable of endangering monetary stability, then the bank has a responsibility to submit a formal report to the Honourable Minister of Finance analysing the situation and setting out clear recommendations as to what should happen to remedy it.

Sir, the reason I am saying all of this is because the Governor of the Central Bank has been heard to be throwing his hands up in the air now and expressing frustration that the Government is not moving anywhere near as swiftly as it ought to be moving with the situation. If there is a division between what the Governor of the Central Bank submits to the Minister and what the Minister believes ought to be the position, look at what the law passed in 1972 says. You see why I separated this Democratic Labour Party from the last Democratic Labour Party led by Errol Barrow when this law was passed.

This law at Section 49 now says that if after consultation with the Central Bank the Minister believes that the policies being pursued by the Central Bank are not adequate or conducive to the achievement, the purposes, of the Bank set out in its legislation, the Minister of Finance has the power to issue a written order to the Bank determining the policy to be adopted by the Central Bank of Barbados and the Bank thereon has no discretion but must execute that policy so long as the order remains in operation. Mr. Speaker, so formal a process is it, do you know that the Minister has to make sure that the policy is published in the Official Gazette of Barbados. Now anything that is so formal has to be adhered to.

Part and parcel of our problem with this Government has been the extent to which they have treated recklessly or in a cavalier manner with obligations imposed by them by the law. Once you lay it in the Official Gazette, check the next step under Section 49 (3), it must be laid in this Parliament after the Minister has informed the Bank of the difference in policy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I invite all Barbadians interested in the stability of this country to read Sections 47, 48 and 49 of the Central Bank Act because it is critical to our monetary stability, it is critical to our protection of our dollar and it is critical to getting the Central Bank to reverse the wrong-headed policy of printing money to the detriment of our stability. Sir, to break it down, it is critical to all Barbadian households and enterprises that depend on the stability of prices and the value of what their wages can

purchase for them in this economy and the stability that is necessary for them to pan out their lives today, next year and in the next few years.

The dismissiveness and the contempt that is held for these formal measures contemplated by the drafters of the legislation upon the establishment of a Central Bank ought not to be ignored by a Government that has been in this precarious position for in excess of three/four years.

4.35 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this country to require of this Parliament a mature debate with respect to the monetary stability of the country, and the very unfortunate circumstance that has seen the Central Bank of Barbados moving from zero Government Paper in 2008 to \$1.128 billion in Government Paper by the end of March 2016. It is a technical area but it is not beyond our capacity to explain it to the average Barbadian, particularly if it becomes a subject that we need to debate.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a case of highhandedness, but it is a case of us on this side saying if there is a division between the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados and the Minister, then we need to know what it is and how best to resolve it. If there is no division but we continue to see the Central Bank of Barbados holding of Government Paper at the time when the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs brought the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals in August, 2013. Do you know, Sir, that the Central Bank of Barbados was only holding \$490 million in Government Paper and that today the Central Bank of Barbados is holding 150 per cent more, in spite of us putting a programme in place to stabilise not just the Government's fiscal circumstances, but also the Government's monetary position and the Government reserves?

Mr. Speaker, I will end on this point. How can we in 2016 end up with a deficit that is virtually the same as when the minister started in August 2013, in spite of the fact that 3 000 workers have gone home, and in spite of many other people suffering in the 2½ years? How can we end up with foreign reserves that are less than there were in 2016, indeed, almost \$200 million less than they were in 2013 when the Minister started? How can we end up today, 32 months later, with Government Paper being held by the Central Bank of Barbados moving from \$490 million in 2013 to \$1.128 billion, Sir, almost \$650 million more on top of the \$490 million of August, 2013?

Sir, I raise these things in the interest of the people of this country who may not be schooled in why fiscal and monetary stability is so absolutely necessary for their own safety and stability as individuals. Sir, I ask this Honourable House to rise to a mature debate, if not today

let us set aside another date so that the Minister can tell us what is the level of credit that has been formally set out pursuant to Section 47 and whether the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados has advised him, like everybody else domestically and internationally, that our monetary stability is endangered by the volume of credit being extended from the Central Bank of Barbados to the Government of Barbados. sir, if so, what are the recommendations formally submitted by the Governor, and if those recommendations do not equate with the Minister's concurrence, what is the alternative that the Minister has instructed the Central Bank of Barbados, and when do we expect it to be published in the Official Gazette and laid in this Parliament? Sir, these are a few questions that will help us to understand better what is happening but more importantly will allow us to comply with the Laws of Barbados as set out by a 1972 Democratic Labour Party Government when they passed the Central Bank Act of Barbados to establish the Central Bank of Barbados. I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I too rise to support this Bill and to make the point that I do not intend to delay this Honourable House for any long period of time. Sir, the truth is that the 1972 Central Bank Act was done when we were operating on a cash basis and if in 1972 it was 10 per cent, the Ways and Means Account cannot now be 10 per cent. What we have to appreciate is that what we need to do is to recognise that we are no longer on the cash basis but that we are now on the accrual basis.

Sir, if the Leader of the Opposition is asking for us to change the rate, well, I will support it, but you cannot tell me that you have now gone to the accrual basis and that you want to hold us at the same limit because it cannot, you cannot keep me hemmed-in when you have expanded the amount of expenditure that I can accrue. Mr. Speaker, what that means is that what must now happens is that we must now look at the amount of money and the facilitation, because if you have expanded it the amount of money that you can incur as expenditure, you cannot keep me at the same rate.

Mr. Speaker, what I am saying to this Honourable House this evening is that when the Barbados Labour Party prior to 2008 changed the accrual system of accounting, what was needed was for them also to change the rate of the Ways and Means Account. Mr. Speaker, our problem is not that we are doing anything wrong but that again they did a botched job when they moved from the cash basis to the accrual basis without recognising the problem that was occurring. They also did not recognised that we were now in new territories operating on a different basis and that we

cannot continue to operate under a 1972 law when we are actually dealing in 2008 and now in 2016.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy that the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out that what was passed in 1972 for the Central Bank, that we are now expected to be guided by in 2016. I thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, like my colleague the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, I do not intend to be as long, certainly as the Leader of the Opposition has been, but I think there are one or two things that I must observe. First of all, yet again we have been treated to the same speech that we have gotten from the past four or five speeches from the Leader of the Opposition; each time, of course, getting worse and worse; deteriorating as we go on; frilled, of course, with all of the alarmist tactics; the short innuendos against the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados, they have now been extended to the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs who is breaching the law, who is breaking the law; all of these implicit suggestions that have been made in relation to both myself in the execution of my duties as Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and also the Governor.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. Unless the Honourable Member is now about to tell us that he has, in fact, breached the law, I have not accused him of breaching the law, I have asked him to give us the information to determine whether the law has been complied with and I am being very specific in relation to Sections 46, 47 and 48 of the Act. I have not accused him of it, but I am willing to find out whether the Honourable Member has.

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order is found, the Honourable Member said it was an implication. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, I do not mind the splitting of hairs in here, I know very well and those who are alert enough, who have listened to the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, not just in the Honourable House or outside of the Honourable House but particularly in here are well-aware of this tactic which, of course, takes us back to the days of Machiavellian politics, not saying it outright but issuing these implicit comments about illegality of persons who are acting in Government, there is a particular Act in place, the Central Bank of Barbados Act, Section this, that and the next, and I want to know if the Minister has complied with the law.

4.55 p.m.

This tactic, of course, takes us back to the days of Machiavellian politics; not saying it outright but issuing these implicit comments about illegality of persons who are acting in Government. These comments imply that there is a particular Act in place, the Central Bank Act, Section this and Section that, and "I want to know if the Minister has complied with the law"; the implication being, from the speech that follows the questions, that in fact the Minister and/or the Governor of the Central Bank have not complied with the relevant Sections of the law. I am not responding to that, Mr. Speaker, because the law is clear. If the monetary and financial system of Barbados were under threat, the Act says what is to happen. The least we could garner from what the Leader of the Opposition has done is to demonstrate her reading skills, because we all know what is in there and we can read it ourselves, but she wanted to put those skills on display.

If the monetary system of Barbados was under this impending threat of collapse -- I do not know what the collapse is -- then the law says what the Central Bank Governor ought to do. It also says what the Minister ought to do, and I can say to Barbadians today - because I have made a resolve that I am not going to let these comments just go unanswered -- that the Governor of the Central Bank has not written to me. I meet with the Governor of the Central Bank in an economic team, as part of a team of persons that I invite to a meeting at least once a month but, if necessary, more often, and we sit down and go through all aspects of the Barbados economy. I trust in the judgement, the integrity and the knowledge of the current Governor of the Central Bank. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East does not have to do so. That is your choice. You all have never supported the Governor of the Central Bank, and you will never support him. He does not expect your support or want it, and he is right not to expect or want it, but so far as he is the appointed Governor of the Central Bank, he enjoys the confidence of this Government and he enjoys my confidence in Barbados. I do not have to defend the Governor of the Central Bank. He can defend himself, but the Economics he has read and forgotten, half of you all out there do not know yet. The person who is supposed to be your chief advisor on this and that I am not getting involved in that, because I find that we like to denigrate these things into personal attacks, Mr. Speaker. So long as you cannot conquer somebody with your ideas, they believe they must attack the person in their professional capacity to try to give the impression that they are not executing their duties as per the requirement either by law or by convention. I am not in that. I am not getting involved in that. If and when the time comes, and the people of Barbados believe you are to take the Government, appoint the Governor you want. That is my position on that matter.

My second point: We meet often, we discuss these issues, and as far as I know - my ears are still working and I can still read, thank God -- there has been no report either from the Governor or anybody else in Barbados that the monetary system in Barbados is under any threat of collapse because of any money being printed, sent or lent to the Government by the Central Bank of Barbados. That is the first point I want to make. I am not part of this alarmist thing. This whole thing about the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is that when the IMF sues them, they quote the IMF. When the IMF does not sue them, they do not know the IMF. When the IMF was warning and when the Honourable Member for St. Philip West was in here warning about the amount of debt that the Barbados Labour Party was putting on the backs of Barbadians, and that was being put off-Budget to create deep structural deficits in Barbados, and using cash accounting to hide the true deficit in Barbados, reporting 1.0 and 2.0 per cent and so forth when all of the major expenditures were being done off-book - when the IMF was writing and reporting it - you could not hear a fellow.

*Asides.*

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: You did not hear anybody abridging the Central Bank Act. You did not hear anything about that. We heard the now supposed genius economic advisor to the Leader of the Opposition, or to the Barbados Labour Party, who said in and outside of this Parliament that Barbados was growing and looking pretty but it was like a pear tree; the leaves green, green, green but the roots, the structure and the truck rotten, rotten, rotten. We did not hear all of this. All of a sudden, we are getting all of this talk about the IMF. They said, "Oh, we chased the IMF off the corridors of Bay Street, never to return around here. Nobody wants to hear them." All of a sudden now, the IMF is gospel for the Leader of the Opposition and the Barbados Labour Party. All of a sudden.

Mr. Speaker, would you believe that in our Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) region, including Dominica and St. Lucia in the OECS Monetary Union -- there may be another one but I have to research that -- I am not reflecting negatively on them because it is a sovereign decision, but like many other countries they have done Article IV Consultations and not published the report? You are not bound under any law to publish an Article IV Consultation Report. You are bound under the Articles of the International Monetary Fund to have one, but there are countries in our region which have not published the report, and some have not done so because they have contended with the staff of the IMF on some of the things the IMF has put in there. They simply do not agree with some of the inflammatory things that they put in these reports, some of which frankly are not true, and they have not issued them to be published. When people get up in here and make it seem as though Barbados is the only country in the world

that has withheld publishing of an Article IV Report, I do not understand.

We supposedly withheld reporting of the International Monetary Fund Report and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East has a copy, so anybody can go and get a copy of it. You have a copy, and if you have a copy, anybody else could get one, unless you have better skills at getting things leaked to you than anybody else in Barbados; which I would assume to be the truth, based on what we have heard. What is the big thing? The IMF Board meets, they write a report, and we write what is called a “buff” statement; the authority’s views. Some of those views are carried in the IMF Report but quite a bit of them are not. It goes to the Executive Board, the Board meets on the two views, and the Board issues a statement. The statement of the IMF Executive Board on Barbados’ Article IV Consultation Report last year was issued, as it will be issued this year, and that is that.

Let us go now to this whole talk about the deficit, because we have had this speech over and over and over again. I keep saying it, but the Honourable Member feels that if she comes here and says it in the language she wants, then that is it. Mr. Speaker, I will repeat it: The Honourable Member says that we now use three methods of determining the deficit, but the Honourable Member is using for her purposes the IFI’s basis, which is the cash basis, of determining what the deficit is.

4.51 p.m.

It is the Party of the Honourable Member in Government... In fact, the process started when the Honourable Member was Attorney-General and had to advise the Government on the legal steps towards changing from cash accounting to accrual.

*Asides.*

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: Your Government, when you were in office change the entire system of accounting in Barbados from cash to accrual under pressure from the same IMF and other financial institutions, called members of the House of Assembly in the Committee Room and in the Senate and give them lessons on what is the difference between cash and accrual accounting, changed all of the laws in Barbados including the principal financial rule, the Financial Accounting and Audit Act was changed to the Financial Management and Audit Act, that had in 30 mistakes that had to be corrected in the Senate when they brought it, changed the entire accounting system of Barbados and now that we have come to Government and using the system they put in place, we are being accused of shifting the basis on which the deficit is measured. Sir, you cannot win with these people.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable cannot mislead this House and ought not to mislead this House. The allegation against the Member is not that there is a system for accrual or there is a system under the IFI’s basis. The allegation is that he uses one, one day and the other the next day and the third the next day. We are simply saying that having started telling the public a deficit based on the IFI’s, then he has to be consistent in measuring the deficit according to that basis. Therefore, he cannot seek to mislead the public by using the three different measurements without alerting the public to it. Nobody is quarrel with him for having three measurements. They are quarreling with him for using them one day, one day, one day as he sees fit.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thanks for the elucidation.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if this were not so serious a subject, it would be laughable. Sir, I do not want to get too technical on this. We came to office and found that the Ministry of Finance and the Treasury were doing a dual system of accounting, half accrual and half cash. They were accruing expenditure and for those who do not know what that means in the accrual system, from the time an invoice is entered into the Smart Stream system on expenditure and accepted, it is accrued and automatically registered in your deficit. You do not have to pay, as long it is accepted in Smart Stream as an invoice, a recognised payment to be paid, it is automatically recorded as expenditure. Sir, do you know what I found when I came in 2010, I discovered they were accruing expenditure but they were not accruing revenue, so we were registering payments even before they were paid in our deficit but when we assess people for revenue, we were only counting it when the cash was delivered. Sir, I said to the staff of the Ministry of Finance after two years, that I could not deal with the system. We are either doing cash accounting or we are doing accrual accounting but we cannot do both because it is hurting this country in relation to our reporting of the deficit because you incur expenditure much faster than people pay you money. Sir, that was creating a big differential in the deficit.

Mr. Speaker, you would recall that last year when I delivered the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, I said that the process for full accrual accog had by and large been completed because I gave them the instructions to start the process of accruing revenue category by category and I said in the Estimates, and you get my speech, that as of 2015, we will be reporting the deficit on an accrual basis. Sir, that is just simply a fact.

*Asides.*

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: you want to shift to something else but I am going to knock down point you have made one by one. Sir, we know that there is IFI’s basis, we do

know that there is the Accountant-General's basis, because the Accountant-General has a different basis all together where he takes the entire deficit, all the depreciation of the assets, all of that is in the Accountant-General's basis. If you look at the Accountant-General's the deficit would be 12 per cent or whatever it is. Sir, we do not hide anything. The Estimates' document continues to show cash, accrual and Accountant-General's basis.

Mr. Speaker, we say that the deficit is reported on an accrued basis.

*Asides.*

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: I have just said as of 2015. Sir, you can never win with this Leader of the Opposition.

*Asides.*

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: I do not mean the elections. We will win those so do not worry, the time is coming. Sir, I am making the point that shifting from position to position to position. Sir, now they have gotten back now to trying to scare Barbadians by saying that the Central Bank of Barbados is printing all this money. Sir, the average Barbadian feels that the Central Bank of Barbados has a big printing press out there and that it is just printing money. They say this is undermining the stability of the Barbados dollar, the foreign reserves are worse today than they were in 2013, which is not true because in 2013, what moved us to come to Parliament with those additional measures is when the foreign reserves dipped below \$900 million and went down to \$830 somebody million so it is not true to say that we have less foreign reserves today but, Sir, not just the stock of the foreign reserves, it is also the flow of the movement of them, the underlying day-to-day transaction. Sir, that is why I have said that we get a transaction report every day, and I believe the Prime Minister gets it as well. Sir, we get a transaction report every day and we can see trends, because you deal with things on trends, you do not go on a daily basis because if you go on a daily basis, you probably would get a heart attack because you might get up one morning and see \$5 million or \$10 million flow out and you say, Oh Dear, everything gone bad but the next three day you see \$20 million flow in, so you legislation look at the trend to see that on a weekly basis or on a monthly basis, what it is. Are you losing, or are you gaining?

Mr. Speaker, I can say today that the underlying pattern of transactions for foreign reserves has been restored because of the measures that we took in 2013 which were bitterly opposed by the Opposition and other people in Barbados and I will get to that point, Mr. Speaker, sir.

Mr. Speaker, you know there is a certain degree of political hypocrisy of the Barbados Labour Party that makes me shudder to think that they want to occupy the corridors of office. You know that in here, we hear that we should bring the deficit down. First, you hear that you have a deficit problem, so reduce your deficit. Then you hear that we want you to spend more, give this department more money and give that that department more money and that we should give the hospital more money because you have cut the hospital's money, give the Transport Board more money and buy more truck, give the Barbados Water Authority more money, we need to spend this and we need spend that. Sir, you cannot please them. Sir, they went on tour on BIMEX and they say we should give the manufacturers more money, we want more money for small business, we want more money for this, we want more money that. Do not let students pay for university education in terms of tuition fees, do not do this and do not do that. Sir, all of that, yet they say to bring the deficit down. Sir, you cannot pleased them.

*Asides.*

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: Do not mind the Leader of the Opposition. The Honourable Member delivers a speech and runs through the door. The Honourable Member cannot face the retort.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am addressing you, because I do not care whether they are here or not here. I am speaking to you and I am speaking through the broadcast to the public of Barbados. I am not speaking to them, so I do not care whether they are here or not here. Sir, you cannot pleased these people. They say to reduce the deficit and when you bring measures to reduce the deficit, they say not to bring those that they will kill Barbadians.

5.01 p.m. Reduce spending but then spend more on everything else and then you come in here and distort the figures. I heard it last week, heard it again this week, and you are hearing it all the time now. Oh the Government has budgeted \$10 million for independence celebrations when they know that is not true. They know that the Estimates said \$7 million and of the \$7 million, I think \$2 million is the salaries of the public servants who have been brought over and are already being paid in terms of the emoluments because they have been brought from their respective positions in various ministries from the Permanent Secretaries Special Assignments who is the PS in the Prime Minister's Office who has been assigned there so it is not new money for somebody now to run off on the call-in programmes and say oh they bring in a whole set of public servants to pay them new money to run the independence secretariat. It is the same people who would have been paid for doing jobs back at their offices in their substantive positions. You sneaked that in, \$10 million so that is now to resignate. Do not tell me about calm down, I am not

calming down because I think that somebody has to call a spade a spade in here and the problem is that members of the Opposition, particularly the male ones, I am not talking about the female one, but the members of the Opposition have no intestinal fortitude. They know things are wrong, they know they leader does things wrong but they do not have the -- I am not going to say the testicular fortitude, that is unparliamentary -- the intestinal courage to stand up to her and say to her you are doing business wrong. You are pulling Barbados down, you are trying to cause confusion and we do not agree. Do not tell me about calm down, do not come down stairs telling me and do not send me any WhatsApp messages, I do not want to hear. I have drawn the line where you all are concerned with that. If you all do not want to stand up in this country for anything well we will all fall for something. If come October you all do not show your colours ... that is why I told the Honourable Member for Christ Church West not to invest any currency in them because at least the Honourable Member for Christ Church West had enough courage to say what she knows is the truth.

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Exactly. This is really about the political morality of what is going on in Barbados but we have a Leader of the Opposition on the loose trying to destroy Barbados just to get her hands on Government Headquarters. You have people who sit down in here quiet like sheep, big men sitting down like sheep, complaining every time they can see somebody to complain to but nobody wants to stand up and call a spade a spade, but I will call a spade a spade. It is reckless and it is politically indifferent to come in here and try to suggest that we are, in some way, trying to imperil Barbados.

The deficit in Barbados reached 11.6 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and we reduced it in one year to below 6 per cent, yet they came in here and said that the deficit did not get reduce. We came to this House with Estimates and we indicated and pointed out everywhere that an increase in the deficit might have been caused or would be caused is because of our capital works programme both in terms of central government and the capital works programme of our statutory entities where the Barbados Water Authority, Sam Lord's Castle and Amalgamated Labs were concerned. All of these are projects that are financed by foreign exchange flowing into Barbados, not by any cent being published by a Central Bank in Barbados. Those are all foreign financed projects and I would add, financed at extremely good commercial rates. The CCC loan from the Canadian Government for the Barbados Water Authority, what is it David about 2 per cent?

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Less than 2 percent. The CAFF loan for the roads which we have to put in again is less than 2 per cent and 2½ per cent for the EXIM Bank for Sam Lord's Castle, another \$80 million that we put into the Estimates. It could be more depending on how the work goes. How do you do all of this capital works, create jobs, create economic activity and expand economic growth unless you put it in the Estimates and report it in your deficit? How else are you going to do it? Do we sit down and say I want the deficit to be 1 per cent and do nothing?

This is the kind of thing that we have to come in here and contend with, Mr. Speaker, because the Leader of the Opposition goes to these little meetings with these so-called economic advisors, does not understand what is coming out of their mouths, scribble it down on an i-Pad, rush in here and repeat it and try to give the public the impression that she is some guru on the economy and she understands monetary policy and what is going to happen when you print money and this, that and the next and third. She asked questions and when you are providing the answers she run and gone. I do not operate at that level. That may impress the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East because the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East is impressed by argumentus minimus. Anything in the minimum of an argument impresses her but it does not impress me and it does not impress anybody who understands anything about anything in Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. James Central is just playing a game. He is a political leader in waiting but not W-A, W-E, and as soon as the Leader of the Opposition finished speaking rush down there with some papers, here Kerrie, have a read on these here, and gone through the door. He does not have an opportunity to speak so I do not know how he is going to respond to anything that has to be said but I will wait later.

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thursday at the march? The last time the Honourable Member went to a march they played snakes in the grass, dirty and slimy but anyway.

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Anyway, I am not troubling him today. His day will come, he still has some purposes yet. Mr. Speaker, I hear people questioning the Leader of the Opposition's understanding of the law and I wonder, because I am not a lawyer. I have to relate to law every day because in the as Minister of Finance, there are a lot of laws, but I am not a lawyer so I try to get people to explain to me what is going on, but the Leader of the Opposition came here today and in a spectacular misunderstanding of corporate law in Barbados and financial law in Barbados sought to argue that if a government company sells and asset which it owns that government company cannot send

the money to the Government who is the shareholder of the company as a dividend, it is financing. You sell an asset and it is financing so it cannot be recording as revenue and I smiled to myself. I said what a spectacular misunderstanding of corporate law and finance law. If I own a company, I am the sole shareholder of a company and the assets are sold, not the company that I own, the assets which the company I own have, those assets or the proceeds from the sale of those assets are retained as capital gains in the retail earnings of the company and must be declared as part of the income of the company ...

5.11 p.m.

which constitutes, after the liabilities have been taken out, as the profit of the company. When once they are so declared, that company, of which I am a shareholder, is free to declare a dividend to be paid to me in whatever form it comes.

Your own Leader of the Opposition when she was speaking... You were not listening. You were not playing attention, I write it down here and I laughed to myself. I now have to write on the back of here LEC. I do not go down that road because that is not of any interest to me but bring the LEC because I am beginning to worry about the Honourable Leader of the Opposition's understanding of the law. The least you could do is read a little bit and if you do not understand... Now, I noticed that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, smart fellow that he is, is not in his seat because I know he understands a little bit about some of these things. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition has an economic advisor. Who is the legal advisor to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition?

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: John King. Johnny Ma Boy is the legal advisor to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Well, I tell you.

Can you really take the Leader of the Opposition seriously that does not even take the area of practice that she is supposed to be in seriously by reading the law and trying to understand and come in here posing questions to me out of the Central Bank Act about statutory corporations should not borrow money when everybody in Government knows that. Every Minister on this side knows that because when those statutory entities engaged debt on behalf of the operations of the company the Central Bank is consulted because the Ministry of Finance sends the file to the Central Bank for comment on each one of them. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition was advisor to a particular company in Barbados which sought to get the Government to borrow money at an interest rate that we felt was too high and we sent the file to the Central Bank and the Central Bank sent back their comments agreeing with our

position, so we do not send and borrow money unless the Central Bank expresses an opinion. We ask their opinion. We do not necessarily have to agree with it in every instance but we execute our legal responsibility by asking, and that was not no pro bono work, we had to pay for it.

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I know that even though he might had had some hard-headed students he might had to beat to get them to learn, he would not take the Leader of the Opposition as a student under his wings because he knows that is an exercise in total futility. She just does not intend to understand any part of the law at all.

We send these things all the time to the Central Bank of Barbados, and that is why we set up a Debt Unit. I made reference to it. Some of us do not like some of things that they send back and say and we have questions and we asked further questions because we understand that economic planning, financial planning, economic interventions is not just an exercise of numbers. You have to look at the total picture and see what you are doing. Whether it is work at the Bridgetown Port or whether it is work with the Barbados Water Authority in the mains laying programme, we have to look at all of these things and we have to make conscious decisions as the elected representatives of the people of Barbados what it is that we believe ought to be done for the improvement of the Barbadian society, so we do not ignore the role of the Governor of the Central Bank or anybody at the Central Bank. We do not ignore the role and performance of the Debt Unit. I cannot tell you that we agree with them every time they send an opinion. The only place that there is unanimity of opinion is in a cemetery as the Honourable Prime Minister always say. The cemetery is the only place I know that everybody agrees.

We all have differences of opinion but we take the technical advice with the high level of seriousness it deserves. I am not an expert in finance, I am not an economist and therefore I have to stand briefed by the technical people who advise me on a day-to-day basis. I consult with my colleagues. We argue on these points. We find a way to find common ground on these points and when we issue something, we issue it understanding the implications of what we are doing. We are not invested with imperial or holy knowledge. Everything that we recommend and every policy we put in place is not going to be a resounding success, that is for Jesus, that is not for us. We are men fallible in our own ways. We do not claim perfection and excellence we but we try and where we know and see that any mistake or error has been made we are able to examine it, re-examine it and adjust it, that is what Government is about.

Government is also a continuum, so we had to inherit all of the stuff that they left undone and frankly given what we found done we would have preferred a lot more was undone that is the truth because we have had to contend with all types of things.

What is the next point? Let me see if there is any more points that we have to deal with: The Central Bank deficit. Now, everybody knows that the Central Bank's first quarter report comes out anywhere between April and May. This year it was delayed not because of any malfeasance of the Central Bank but because the section of staff of the Central Bank that deals with the report including the head person who delivers the report, the Governor, had a number of engagements and therefore the report was delayed by a few weeks, that is not unheard of. There are countries that do not have legislative time-frames for delivering reports and sometimes they do not always hit it on the week or in the exact month in which the report is to be done. The report was two or three weeks delayed based on what we normally do because at this time of the year you have the International Monetary Fund spring meetings and of course they had this meeting on the international business sector, I believe, in Japan, in some far off place anyway, but the report came.

The financial year ends March 31. The returns from the Treasury are still coming in. The Barbados Revenue Authority is still keying in tax information, so you expect the Central Bank is given a projection of what the deficit is likely to be. I know from the information I have seen subsequent to the Central Bank publishing and reporting that deficit on a cash basis of 7.4 per cent that the deficit is going to be lower than that because the information I have is more up-to-date than when they published, and I can tell you that if I deliver the Budget two months from now that information is going to be more complete in terms of the returns.

We are talking about May. This is only the beginning of the third week of May. The financial year ends March 31. I know of no other time in Barbados in which financial information has been complete and ready in such a short space of time, it has never happen. Even when we used to deliver Budgets in April all you hear from the Honourable Minister of Finance when he delivered the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, was preliminary information from the Accountant General or provisional information, which means that the information is being keyed in and you should read that information understanding that it would be updated later.

5.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the Central Bank of Barbados has to report, so that it does that to make a fair projection.

Now, we said that we would bring in the money from the Barbados National Oil Terminal Company Limited. We decided that we are going to book it in 2016, rather than in 2015, but even booking it in 2016 which we could not put in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure because they were not completed, but even for 2015 our accrued deficit is expected to be 4.7 per cent of Gross Domestic Product which is lower than the 5.9 per cent which we had for the previous fiscal year, so you cannot say that the deficit is not going down, so I do not understand what is the point that the Leader of the Opposition is continually making and giving.

Mr. Speaker, as I wrap this up I am going to tell you this, the long and short of it, Sir, is that all you are hearing from the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition generally, would you believe that they have not given us any specifics, they want the deficit to be reduced but they are not telling us how they can reduce it. They want the deficit to be brought down, they want to stop the Central Bank of Barbados from printing money. Let us just assume, God forbid, that were the Barbados Labour Party were to form the Government tomorrow and the Leader of the Opposition were to say to the Central Bank of Barbados to stop buying Government Paper, do not buy another note. If it is that the Honourable Member is saying that the Central Bank of Barbados is buying \$300 million or \$400 million a year in Government Paper, tell us how are you and where are you going to find \$400 million a year to finance your deficit, because you are not taking any money from the Central Bank of Barbados. Sir, the commercial banks as we are told by the Leader of the Opposition are not buying Government Paper, the Central Bank of Barbados and the National Insurance Scheme have been filling the gap, so let us cut out those two of them.

Mr. Speaker, it means then that you have to reduce your deficit, so that if the deficit is \$400 million, tell us what you are going to cut to get it down, because you are not going to raise \$400 million in revenue overnight, so tell us what you are going to cut to bring it to a balanced budget; tell us which jobs you are going to cut, because you are saying not to cut jobs; if you do not want the \$400 million then tell us, do not just march and give the people the impression that you have some secret thing in your pocket that you could spring and help the situation, tell us which Government departments you are going to cut; tell us which Ministry you are going to cut; tell us which jobs you are going to cut; tell us which services you are going to cut, because you have to cut \$400 million in expenditure to balance the budget, so tell me where you are going to cut it. If you are not going to cut it, then you have to raise revenue, so tell us which taxes you are going to raise.

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: That is what you should tell us. Tell us where you are going to earn foreign exchange from. They said they are going to earn foreign exchange. You know their position, Mr. Speaker, was far than earning foreign exchange they felt we should go into the Central Bank of Barbados, ignored the Central Bank of Barbados Act, take up the foreign exchange in the Central Bank of Barbados, and give it to Barbadians to go spend, because they idea of fixing this economy is giving people a lot of money to spend, which the Leader of the Opposition stood up in here and said that \$0.70 of every dollar goes back out in foreign exchange so we should give people money to spend in Bridgetown so that \$0.70 of every dollar will go back out in foreign exchange and we will solve the problem in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, it is the biggest set of rubbish that has been proffered by any political party this part of Christendom. The Honourable Member for St. James Central does not believe in it, he is a tax suspendable anyway and does not believe in it.

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, with the kiss of Judas Iscariot, only to identify her to the people who need to take her down, that will come in October. I am afraid he cannot wait until October, I am encouraging the Members of the Opposition, those men, if you still have it in you, act now, do not let your Party be destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, you would know that each political party in the world has a symbol, some have symbols, some have colours, some have flags. Sir, all of a sudden the Barbados Labour Party colours that were known as red, they have even thrown away the red and everything now is dress in white. There was once a fete called the 'glow fete', come in white, we are going to have a party tonight. Well, that is what we have been reduced to.

Mr. Speaker, this is what the Barbados Labour Party has been reduced to and they want to take Barbados down with it, they are going on a march. Sir, just when the economy of Barbados is beginning to show signs of growth and recovery they are calling on the private sector to tell workers to stop working, to stop being productive, to get on the road and to march up and down in the interest not of themselves but in the interest of the Barbados Labour Party Leader who wants to secure her leadership in the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, I say no to that, thanks to the people of Barbados for supporting the Savings Bonds when they thought that they would not be subscribed and supported. Sir, \$90 million has been subscribed and supported in the space of six months and we have to thank the people of Barbados for expressing confidence in the Barbados economy. Mr. Speaker, with those words, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. D.O'N INNIS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

*On the motion of Hon. C. P. SINKLER, seconded by Hon. D.O'N. INNIS, the House resolved itself into Committee on the Bill. Mr. J. D. PAUL, Chairman of Committees in the Chair.*

## COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee.

*Clauses 1 and 2, inclusive, were called and passed.*

On the separate motion of Hon. C. P. SINKLER, seconded by Hon. D.O'N. INNIS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

5.38 p.m.

On the separate motion of Hon. C.P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Savings Bonds (Validation) Act, 2016.

## SUSPENSION

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.45 p.m. today.

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that, Sir.

*The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 5.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.*

## RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this Sitting is resumed. When the Suspension was taken, we were on Government business and with that we shall continue.

## ORDER NO. 18 – CRIMINAL ASSETS RECOVERY FUND BILL, 2016

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

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, thank you. A few weeks ago, in this Chamber we passed into law the Trafficking in Persons Prevention Act, 2016, which was then referred to the Other Place. Pursuant to that Act, it

means that once enshrined in our law, the Transnational Organised Crime Prevention and Control Act, 2011, will be repealed and under that Act, the Transnational Organised Crime Prevention and Control Act, there is provision for a criminal assets recovery fund and because that Act will no longer be the law of the land, we need to find some methodology that the Fund that was established under that Act continues and thus this Bill before us seek to ensure the continuation of the Criminal Assets Recovery Fund upon the repeal of the Transnational Organised Crime Prevention and Control Act, 2011.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill, however goes a bit further than the previous legislation in that the Bill, although the genesis of it may have been the Transnational Organised Crime Prevention and Control Act and, therefore, the matters that we have discussed pursuant thereto, for example, money laundering, trafficking in persons, et cetera that we have discussed, seeks to ensure that where an Act allows for the confiscation of assets that in fact, those assets would be passed into this Criminal Assets Recovery Funds and those funds would then be used to ensure that those agencies that are involved in our criminal strategies that the funds would be available for the use of those agencies. Where the Act, as set out, in Clause 6 of the Bill, where those Acts provide for a regime that requires any monies to see to their continued administration that monies from the Criminal Assets Recovery Fund would be made available.

Mr. Speaker, in short what we are advocating here is a regime that sees that assets that are confiscated are then used by those agencies that are involved in the fight against crime and in so doing, hopefully, they would be able to reap from the success of their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, this is a regime that I am aware that several jurisdiction have in fact adopted and adopted with some success. We are hopeful that the agencies would be so successful in terms of their confiscation of assets that there would be no need for them to come to the Consolidated Fund for assistance but recognising that there may be times when they will be a shortfall, we have made allowances for that fact and so that they would still be able to come to the Consolidated Fund where there is a shortfall.

Mr. Speaker, you have heard me say and I continue to say that we must take the profit out of crime where opportunities allow us. In fact, earlier today, in one of my presentation I made the very comment that I am a very strong supporter and proponent of ensuring that assets and the proceeds of crime are confiscated, that there are regimes in place to see us successfully confiscate these assets. It is to my knowledge that in several jurisdiction that the relevant agencies, whether it be the police, customs or which ever agency have been doing a good job in terms of ensuring that assets are confiscated and are then used by

the said agencies. I use the illustration of sometimes going down to the Coast Guard Station and seeing boats that have been seized. They remain there for years, the engines are then no good, the bodies are no good and it is my hope that we will move to a regime that would see the quick disposition of these criminal cases and see where applicable that these assets can be seized and utilize by us to ensure our greater security.

Mr. Speaker, that is it really. With those few words, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. F. STUART: I beg to second that.

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

Mr. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I will try to be as brief as the Honourable Attorney-General. There is no objection whatsoever from this side in relation to this Bill but there are a few matters that I think Parliament should take account of. Sir, it is certainly now a well-established practice that in the larger countries of the world where a tremendous resources are required for them to wage a battle against the criminal elements, those countries very readily cease assets of the perpetrators of the crime which are attributable to that criminal activity. Sir, they then use those assets quite effectively in helping to fight further crimes. I am sure that from time to time you would see in the Press large seizures of cash, sometimes ships, yachts, planes, all kinds of luxury goods as well and it is only right that those ill-gotten gains be converted into readily available cash so as help States in defraying the tremendous financial burden that they take on in terms of fighting crime. It is not an unknown concept. We often talk about the polluter pays, it makes sense that he who pollutes should pay, so how far different then could it be for us to establish a similar precept in relation to criminal activity such that the person involved in the criminal activity and benefitting from it should also be obligated to in effect pay the State for having to police against that kind of criminal activity. Sir, there is no doubt at all about the principle.

Mr. Speaker, as have said, there are a few things that we would wish to put before this Chamber. Perhaps, the first one is that but it might have well been an oversight but this Bill is for the purposes of dealing with resources which are garnered from proceeds of crime legislation and also, Mr. Speaker, any resources that are seized by the State under the money laundering and finance of the Anti-terrorism Act, the Trafficking in Person Prevent Act. Sir, in our view to limit the ambit of this Bill to just resources captured from this limited scope would be to fail to seize and opportunity that is available to us.

In Barbados, Mr. Speaker, we have financial crimes and those financial crimes have a serious and far reaching

effect on investors in companies, I am not using this as an opportunity to talk about any major companies that are now under consideration but the fact is that the Financial Crimes Unit of the Royal Barbados Police Force is often looking into elements of financial crime. Mr. Speaker, I really cannot see why we do not take the opportunity to widen the ambit. It is easy to see that there are negative effects in relation to fighting the drug trade. Mr. Speaker I can tell you that under the Proceeds of Crime Act, for example, that Act only deals with the seizure of assets in two limited instances, firstly in relation to the drug trade and secondly in relation to, I cannot say the terrorist trade, but in relation to acts of terrorism.

The point we are making, Sir, is that there are other criminal activity which could well lead to the opportunity to seize assets which can then be used to compensate the individuals who have suffered from the loss. Mr. Speaker, for example, if a CEO embezzled large sums of money from a company it will affect the shareholders, creditors and all kind of other people. Those individuals will then have to go through the civil procedure to try to recover but we know that is very difficult. This Bill, for example, Mr. Speaker, says that the proceeds which are seized by the Crown can be used for the payment of restitution, compensation or costs. It therefore strikes me that while it is obvious that you can use it for those purposes, I think we can widen the ambit significantly wider than that.

I would also like, Sir, to suggest that one of the things we do not have in Barbados is a Criminal Compensation Board and some Members of the Chamber who practice personal injury law might recollect that particular agency exists in the UK and it serves to compensate individuals where they suffer injury as a result of criminal activity. Mr. Speaker, I can immediately think of individuals who have suffered injury as a result of criminal activity associated with the drug trade, for example. Why should an individual who has been severely wounded, whether it is through gun shot, chop up, whatever it is, why should an individual who has suffered some wrongful act which logic would tell us they should receive compensation for? Why should they not have the benefit of the opportunity to come to the Attorney-General from this fund and say, I was an innocent bystander? There was a particular criminal activity and I got shot as a result of it and I am unable to recover compensation through the civil courts and I am asking you to order compensation through this mechanism. An individual whose car is stolen and then that car is used in pursuit of some drug thing or another and written off or something like that, the individual out to be able to come and say to the Attorney-General, I have suffered loss and I would want to receive the benefit of some restitution.

It is not easily apparent to me what is intended, the Bill just says the payment of restitution, compensation or

costs but then it goes on, awarded under and therefore that tells you that whatever restitution you may think that you are entitled to it must be awarded under these pieces of legislation. When I look at the Proceeds of Crime Act, I do not see any provision in this Act, for example, which allows the Court to award an injured victim anything, any restitution or compensation of any kind so I believe that there is an opportunity that this Parliament should not be hesitant in seeking.

I am also concerned too that there is a likely conflict between this Bill and the role of the Public Trustee under the Proceeds of Crime Act. I do not know if the Attorney-General's staff has advised him on it but I have looked at the legislation and in the Proceeds of Crime Act, for example, an individual who wants to get back his property, if he is found to be not guilty, or if on appeal the conviction is squashed, that individual applies, not to the Attorney-General, but to the Public Trustee. On one hand, you have a fund that we are about to set up which says that the assets that are seized are realized and vested in a fund, administered by the Attorney-General but in an instance where the individual wants back and is entitled to get back his particular assets under the provisions of the Proceeds of Crime Act, he does not go to the person in whom the assets were vested but he goes to the Public Trustee and under the Proceeds of Crime Act the Public Trustee is obligated to take care of the re-vesting. We think that will create an awkward situation. One Act gives the obligation to the Public Trustee to restore while this Act establishes the fund as being administered by the Attorney-General.

One of the practical difficulties that we fear and I do not think it can be repeated too often, in this Bill, Sir, the Attorney-General is the custodian of the fund. If the fund is insufficient to make payments required, Parliament has to vote money. When the fund gets back in money, it refunds Parliament but the question arises: when exactly will the fund get money? Under the Proceeds of Crime Act it does not strike me that the authorities can seize and convert into cash an individual's property until the appellate process is continued. I believe that in speaking about a piece of legislation which we debated here earlier, the Attorney-General talked about the fact that sometimes we, as evidence, would seize boats and they are put in Dodds or someplace or another but by the time the case comes on for trial, many years have passed and the boat ...

*Asides.*

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: No, the issue is not the evidence, the issue is your ability to restore the individual whose boat might have been seized wrongly. The Attorney-General conceded this morning that by the time the case is finished five or six years later the boat, car or whatever it is has been parked up in District A and exposed to the elements and is then virtually useless. The fact is that we

have a couple of difficulties, 1) if we have to wait on the assumption that we have to wait until the completion of the case and there are several appeals that it might go through, our challenge, Sir, would be preserving physical assets. I do not want to suggest that the legislation only contemplates movables because you can also seize land, houses and so on but to the extent that your right to seize is only concretised when the appellant process is at an end, we have a difficulty because in our system as it exist, the appellant process is at an end we have a difficulty because in our system as it exists the appellate process in a criminal matter may go on for ten years and in some instances longer, so the point we wish to make is that the scope of this legislation should be widened because there is an undue burden being placed on the Supreme Court of this country by the volume of criminal cases being brought before it, so we find ourselves, Mr. Speaker, in a catch-22 situation. You cannot effectively forfeit assets until the judicial process is complete, and the judicial process cannot be completed because of the undue burden placed by the large number of cases that you have so you are in an inescapable cycle.

We believe that in the special circumstances that we face... I believe I read in the newspapers only recently, in the last week or two, that there is a matter in the Assizes where when the individual was assaulted he was 10 years old and he is now 21 years old and that matter is only now coming on for trial. Now, that might be a peculiar case I admit but the fact is that I would love to see us empowering the use of these assets, the use of the resources, which are forfeited not just for the limited purposes contemplated here but for the purposes of further strengthening our judiciary and our judicial apparatus. I can think of no better use for the money.

In a situation where we can see a criminal case, especially capital cases, being dealt with in a very quick period of time, then it allows the Attorney-General to effectively seize assets, but it is wrong for people's assets to be imperilled of forfeiture for an extended period of time not knowing what the outcome of a case would be but it is equally wrong for the State to be at the mercy of a long drawn out judicial cycle which may well make the opportunity to seize and forfeit assets a thing writ in water.

Mr. Speaker, this is before the Chamber and we do not object to it but we believe that it would be very appropriate for the Attorney-General to go back to his staff and seek a further brief and try to find a way to use resources which are forfeited from individuals convicted of criminal activity to compensate and to pay restitution to individuals who might have been injured or suffered some loss. We would also like to see the fund being used to strengthen our judiciary and ensure that we have sufficient judicial capacity to see cases through the system

effectively. We would also like to see adequate provision being made for the preservation of the assets.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have a difficulty with the fund behind administered by the Attorney-General but I do feel that there should be a consultative mechanism that is established that is transparent especially if the issue of compensation and restitution has to come into play. In England, as I say, it is a Criminal Appeals Board, it is not a single individual that decides how much money John Brown gets or how much money Patsy gets because that becomes very subjective, and as the old lawyers would say it is like equity, as long or short as the Chancellor's foot. We would like to see that a committee be statutorily established, if the learned Attorney-General is willing to at least take some interest in these suggestions, so that when it comes to matters of restitution and compensation, there is a transparent process, everybody knows what the rules are and everybody is able to follow those rules without thinking that the Attorney-General, this is somebody from St. Philip so he is going to get money and the fellow from Crab Hill St. Lucy might not or somebody from St. Joseph might feel that they cannot get any. We think that this is a good foundation but that we have an opportunity to do more, and the Opposition while supporting this would just like to draw the Attorney-General's attention to those few issues.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Honourable Member for St. Joseph for his comments and to let him know that in fact that we spent a considerable amount of time deciding what we wanted to have in terms of our policy direction here. For example, even up to this morning I had a meeting with two consultants and one of the things we were discussing was the whole issue of a Criminal Compensation Board. I happen to know that it is one of the things the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is adamant about, that as a country that he would like to see us go in that direction, and we are looking to see how best we could implement such a policy.

Let me give you an illustration. The illustration given to me this morning was something like if you have a traffic offender and the usual fine is \$100 that one might consider changing the fine to \$110 and the difference between the \$100 and the \$110 then goes towards the fine, in other words, ensure that there is a system that moneys are made available by persons convicted of criminal offences and stuff, so there are different methodologies that are in use. Given the infancy of our discussions I did not believe that as Attorney-General that we were in a position

that we could bring a concrete proposal to Parliament at this point in time.

The Honourable Member should know that in fact that any assets seized under this Bill would be seized by an order of a court. It is not a case where the Attorney-General or the Royal Barbados Police Force is going to take up anyone's assets, it is going to be seized by order of the court and the court will look to make a determination as to whether or not in the circumstances it is a fit and proper order to be made because at the end of the day it may be better if the Government is in a position to dispose of a physical asset than to allow it to stay in the sun in the illustration that I gave et cetera. As I said, we are using the experience of other jurisdictions because at the end of the day if a chap has an asset worth \$800 000 and three years later it is there, it has deteriorated, et cetera, it is probably going to worth about \$50 000 but if the court does order restitution or compensation, the court would actually order what is the value of the asset at the time it was disposed of and the fund would have to find the means to have it done.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I said I want to thank the Honourable Member for his comments and to let him know that in fact that we looked to what is obtained in other jurisdictions. We not only look within the region but we have had discussions with our international partners in terms of the various regimes and at this point in time this is the regime that we would wish to implement in Barbados. I accept that in an ideal situation, particularly the issue of criminal compensation for persons who are injured, we will get there but now is not the time. We discussed the issue of the public trustee but again the obligations would be pursuant to an order of the court, so it will not be a case where the Attorney-General or his office would say we are not going to do that because the guy is from St. Philip, et cetera, there will be a process which will be adhered to and stuff.

Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied that it is transparent. I always anticipated that the one issue that would have been raised is the fact that the fund is administered by the Attorney-General.

6.21 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, when the drafters brought it to me, I raise it with them, we played around with different things but the fact is that you will note that the proposal is that we administered, in association with the Accountant-General, the process will be put in place to ensure transparency and accountability. Mr. Speaker, in thanking the Honourable Member for his comment, I nevertheless beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

*On the motion of Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, seconded by Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, the House resolved itself into Committee on the Bill. Mr. J. D. PAUL, Chairman of Committees in the Chair.*

## COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee.

*Clauses 1 - 10, inclusive, were called and passed.*

On the separate motion of Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, seconded by Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, seconded by Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Criminal Assets (Recovery Fund) Act, 2016.

## ORDER NO. 23

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION (5) OF THE CROWN'S LANDS VESTING AND DISPOSAL ACT, CAP. 225, THE VESTING IN THE Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. OF A PARCEL OF LAND CONTAINING 23.51894 HECTARES (58.11 ACRES) TOGETHER WITH the BUILDINGS THEREON, SITUATE AT SAM LORD'S CASTLE, LONG BAY, IN the PARISH OF SAINT PHILIP IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF HOUSING AND TOURISM development, AND ALSO BEACH ACCESS.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Tourism.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution is to vest the 23.5 hectares of land in Long Bay, St. Philip, and the land where Sam Lord's Castle is located and is being vested in the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. for the purposes of tourism development. Mr. Speaker, just over a year ago we had a complete debate on the compulsory acquisition of the land under Cap. 228. We had a full debate then so that what I propose to do, since I do not think repetition is necessary, is to just maybe give a brief update on what has happened since then with respect to this piece of land.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, it is 23.5 hectares, that means that it is just about 58 acres of land. The plan is, I think this Honourable House is well-aware, to once again have the

Sam Lord's Castle site function as a hotel but of course to function as a hotel at another level. It will be 450 rooms, managed by the Wyndham Corporation. They, of course, are the second largest hotel company in the world, with just under 700 000 rooms under their care. They were actually the largest up until last month but with the merger of Starwood and Marriott's they control over 1.1 million rooms, so that they have actually now surpassed Wyndham by a significant margin.

The project, of course, is expected to cost US\$200 million. The funding has already been secured through a loan of US\$170 million from the Exim Bank of China. Of course, the remaining US\$30 million will be injected by the Government through the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has reminded the House only today that in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure \$80 million so far has been allocated and that is more than enough to get us going and we will, of course, over the course of the project invest the money that is needed.

The contract is an Engineering, Procurement and Construction Management contract, the so-called EPCs that the Chinese Government has been doing all over the world, a few of them have been done in the region. The contract stipulates that the Chinese input is to be 60 per cent and local input is to be 40 per cent, as far as to labour and other related inputs. Now, that is intended to be a guideline. Mr. Speaker, I want to flag that issue and I know that the temptation is there to jump up and say that it should be 100 per cent local. The truth is that these Chinese projects in the region very often are 100 per cent Chinese.

6.36 p.m.

Having the capacity to negotiate that position and also to enjoy all of the other benefits that you get from the preferential buyers' credit 2.5 per cent interest rate loan, of which the House is also well aware, it is good that we were able to negotiate that. I can appreciate the need to have as much local labour as possible, and certainly I do not expect that the labour will be at 60 per cent. It will probably be less than that in terms of the Chinese labour. It is not cheap to bring people here from China, and we therefore are happy to see the number of jobs that will be created during the construction phase. More importantly, at the end of the construction phase you are going to have jobs on a permanent basis, and I think it is fair to say that the percentages at that stage will be 99.9 per cent Barbados and probably 0.01 per cent Chinese. That is the real employment that matters. That is the employment on the long-term basis. I think that will be good news for the St. Philip Members of Parliament (MPs). We have three of them, but of course we have other MPs who have strong connections to the parish of St. Philip, including the MP for St. James South and of course the Prime Minister, the MP

for St. Michael South. Beyond that, it is of course of benefit to the entire nation. Yes, the Minister of Finance lives on the border of St. Philip.

I therefore think that the redevelopment of the Sam Lord's Castle is expected to enhance the competitiveness of our local tourism product, but at the same time it will also have significant community benefit for the parish of St. Philip. We all know, of course, that the legend has it that Samuel Lord built the castle in 1820 and it is alleged, according to folklore, that he used to lure ships with lanterns onto the reefs and was able to go and plunder these vessels. The treasure was taken and is said to be buried somewhere in Barbados. While that is the folklore, it of course gives the developers of the hotel an opportunity to have a theme that could be actually quite attractive and appealing, and they will be drawing on that theme so that the whole mansion and the whole legend of Sam Lord can be used to actually have a property with a family theme. That is very significant for a couple of reasons. Having a hotel with a family theme means that the summer months, which are traditionally not always our strongest as far as our hotels are concerned, can have more summer business. Families tend to travel during the summer for some pretty obvious reasons. That is when the children are on vacation. We think that having properties that can appeal to that family niche is quite important.

Apart from that, the site is to have multiple restaurants, a fitness centre, pools and so on, but two significant aspects of the property, I think, are quite important. There will be an expansive spa that will allow us to go after the health-and-wellness niche as well, and these are the discussions that we have been able to have successfully with the Wyndham group. Of course, of extreme importance to me, or should I say to Barbados, is something that I have certainly agonised about in the time I have been in this job: It is the absence of conference facilities to handle large groups in Barbados. It is a fact that there is nowhere in Barbados where you can seat 400 people banquet-style in a formal setting. The conference facilities at the Sam Lord's Castle, a Wyndham grand property -- that is how it will be branded -- will be able to seat 1 200 people in a formal banquet-style setting, thereby giving us a significant boost in that very lucrative MICE (meeting, incentives, conferences and events) market. It is a very lucrative niche of tourism. You have the Bahamas, for example, which has been able to do extremely well in that department. Of course, Las Vegas are the experts but you have even Trinidad and Tobago, which is not a tourism country by any stretch of the imagination, has been able to attract all kinds of events with one property. I am talking, of course, about the Hyatt there on the waterfront that allowed them to surge ahead of other tourism countries in the Caribbean for that particular niche. It is a very good niche. We get some business in it, but we think we can get

a lot more with improved facilities in that department. I think that is some very good news that we can extract from.

Also of importance to the House, and in keeping with the Government's overall theme of promoting the Green Economy and policies that are environmentally sensible, we will be building the hotel to the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards. It will be a "green" building, and will seek platinum status in the LEED. That will mean, among other things, that it will be generating virtually all of its electricity on the property. That is the kind of direction in which people expect us to go. It is also something which, believe it or not, discerning visitors are looking for. It is interesting that people are planning their vacations and are planning the carbon footprint that they will impact in their vacation choices, so they will want to know that they are going to hotels that meet Green Globe and other standards. The plan is that the new hotel will in fact meet those requirements.

Mr. Speaker, I already spoke to the loan. The Import Export Bank of China is state-owned by the Chinese government, and is under the direct leadership of the State Council. Its international credit ratings are the very same as China's sovereign ratings. I need to say that because we are entering an arrangement for quite a large sum of money, and I think that the House, and by extension the country, needs to be assured that this is indeed a very sound financial institution and therefore we need not worry about those elements. I also mentioned that it is an EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) contract, so the contractor would have come along with the financial arrangements. The contractor is Complant, the China National Complete Plant Import Export Corporation. This is a company which was established in 1959 and is also a wholly owned state company. It has registered capital of US\$170 million and owns eight subsidiaries, and has two branch companies as well. The main business of the company is, of course, international co-operation including China-aided foreign projects, international contracting, labour services, complete plant export and other related businesses.

Aside.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: The assets are \$170 billion. This is a very large Chinese company so, again, I am giving the House the assurance that we are talking about entities that have the wherewithal and the capacity for a very large project.

6.41 p.m.

We are talking about BDS\$400 million, which in dollar value, I am told is probably the largest infrastructural project of this nature ever done here in Barbados. Sir, as a

percentage of GDP, you probably would have to go back to when the Bridgetown Port was built, so we have to make sure that the entities and players are indeed capable of handling the project.

- Mr. Speaker, having completed the project, we also need to make sure that the arrangements for the hotel are also up to standard. I have mentioned already the Wyndham Hotel Group but what I did not mention is maybe some of the brands that come under the Wyndham Group. These are Beaumont Inn and Suites, Days Inn, Dolce Hotel and Resort, Hawthorne Suites by Wyndham, Howard Johnson's, Knights Inn, Microtel Inn and Suites by Wyndham, Ramada, Super 8 Travel Lodge, TRYP by Wyndham and, of course, Wyndham Hotel and Resorts. These are well-established brands and I do not think there is any doubt that we will benefit from having Wyndham properties. In fact, one of their premier properties is going to be a Wyndham Grand Property. There are only 30 of those in six countries in total, so this is an elite set within the Wyndham Group. The contract that we have negotiated with Wyndham Group is very favourable and, as a matter of fact, it is better than the one we negotiated with the Hilton Hotel. Sir, for obvious reasons, I cannot reveal either one of the two. I am not going to reveal what the last Government negotiated with the Hilton Hotel and I am not going to reveal what this Government negotiated with the Wyndham Group but I will tell you that ...

Hon. R. SEALY: Well, the people would stop dealing with me tomorrow if I were to get and do that in public. You do not do those things. The Hilton Hotel would pull out and the Wyndham Group would pull out and the Opposition would love that because both of them would stop doing business with me immediately. You do not do those things. I would not do that but what I will say is that what we have also insisted on with respect to the Wyndham Group is a performance test, where if the hotel manager fails to meet certain targets with respect to revenue per available room over two successive years, the owner has the right to terminate the contract without penalties. In essence, there is a performance test that is also put into this arrangement and that in itself is also quite good.

Mr. Speaker, the Wyndham brand is going to be the particular brand and, as have said earlier, it will be branded as, in fact, the Sam Lord's Castle, a Wyndham Grand Property. Sir, that is important because one of things we thought we should do is to maintain the Sam Lord's Castle brand. There were some other offers as well but people that basically wanted to rebrand the whole property but Sam Lord's Castle still has a lot of strength as a brand in many of our source market. It also, to my mind, carries some importance with respect to the national psyche et cetera, part of our cultural reality, all be it folklore. We do not know how much is it fact and fiction but it is still a part of who we are and I think that maintaining the Sam Lord's

Castle brand is quite important and it fits right in with the point I was making also about the benefits to the St. Philip community as well.

Mr. Speaker, I do there are some other hotel properties up there but I think the farming community in St. Philip should be able to benefit as well and other community groups and other businesses should be in a position to establish themselves and to benefit from the 1 000 plus workers that will be at the hotel, 1 200 during the construction phase but then that will come down slightly. We will have businesses, et cetera that will be important to the whole functioning of the hotel, things like providers of transportation and so on and you have a plethora of opportunities as well.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is worth mentioning that if our calculations are correct with the 450 rooms, there could be as many as 37 000 additional people coming to Barbados because of this property. Sir, that was worked out on the basis of having had consultants advise us on projections based expected occupancies and such like. We look forward to seeing this hotel become a reality.

Mr. Speaker, another thing I would mention is that all of the consultants are in place. There are eight consultants and two of those consultants are local. The project managers are actually led by a local company, Design Collaboratives but they will also have overseas inputs in that regard. The civil structural engineers, Mahy, Ridley and Hazard, are going to be doing that. We have sought to have the local input but, of course, have the technology transferred. The architects, S. B. Architects, are the same architects that did the new Hilton Hotel, so if they were go enough for the last Government, they probably should be good enough for us but the Opposition will find some reason to criticize us for choosing them even though the Opposition chose them but it is what it is. We have found opportunities for local consultants and that team has been hard at work in order that we can have a June 27th start of major construction. Sir, June 27th is the day that we will start. The other understanding is that we are building to the Triple A, five diamond standard. I cannot say that we are building a five diamond hotel because they have to come and rate it afterwards. It does not work that way. Those are the standards you are aspiring for and them, if all goes well, we will be so certified.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have given an update of exactly where we are. Sir, only to say as well that the BTI is moving full speed ahead with the requirements that were mentioned through the initiatives from the Ministry of Finance to work closer with the Needhams Companies and, in essence, the management arrangements for the Wyndham Sam Lords' will be done where synergies can play off each other. This is, of course, a Government led effort. It is a fact that we have to do these things carefully.

Certainly, we know that Governments getting into the hotel business can do it very right, as was the case with the Barrow Government and the Hilton Hotel in the 60s but you can also do it very wrong as was the case with the last Government and HRL and the GEMS debacle that we had to deal with. We have seen how you can do it right and how you can do it wrong, and we have certainly chose the way to do it right. Sir, there is no doubt that once completed, this is a project that will make a significant contribution to the tourism and the economic life of this country for many generations to come. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I really do not intend to detain the House for too long on this matter. I have to say what a difference a speech makes because up to last Tuesday, we had no insight at all into any component whatsoever of the project. We have managed this evening, after raising some issues last week, to hear some aspects of the project. I take it that the grandiose announcement that the Minister has made would be based on or predicated on some sort of plans and drawings which the Minister has not yet produced but we trust that they are ... No, the BTII Chairman appeared in the newspapers two Sundays ago to say that drawings were still on the way so I do not know how you are going to project how many jobs are going to be created during construction when you have not yet determined what you are constructing or the magnitude of the construction but I would assume that would or might perhaps have been done.

A couple questions though. I just want to know from the Minister, first of all, in terms of the contractor for this project, the Minister has not said that there was any tendering process. We have a longstanding process in Barbados where we ensure that tendering takes places so that there is transparency and that the best person gets the job but the main point, Mr. Speaker, that I really want to make on this is that as the Minister himself has revealed, the Government of Barbados is really embarking on a significant level of financial expenditure in relation to a project that is a project that ought to be carried out by private sector investors. A few years ago, there was massive interests expressed by the private sector in Barbados in this project but now because of this Administration's incompetence, no one is willing to come forward and invest in this project. It is a question of investor confidence. What the Minister has said just now in a very "fancified" way, as we would say in Barbados, is that no one will come forward and the Government with certain unparalleled and thus far, unexplained defiance, has

decided that it is going to commit itself to the construction single handed of a \$400 million plus hotel at a time when the Government has no money. The Government has decided that it is going to become a major hotel owner at a time when it is cash strapped. What have we seen so far in Government's financial input into this project? The unlawful intervention of the Cabinet to direct that \$55 million from the National Insurance Funds, originally allocated to a project in St. Peter at Almond, be diverted to the Sam Lord's Hotel project. The National Insurance Protested, as their right to do, and they have gotten their money back. How did the money get its money now? It had to use whatever techniques it used to get two commercial banks to take up Government paper to give it \$55-\$60 million to get into this project. The Government has no money but is embarking on a \$400 million project.

It has decided it will invest, it used to opposed the GEMS project and it obviously still does. A set of Barbadians indebted to Government, the Government got involved and rescued that. This Government has decided, having condemned that, it is going to invest, thus far, over \$500 million in hotels in Barbados, \$120 million in a dead Four Seasons project and now \$400 million at Sam Lord's Castle. Can the Government please tell us the likely return on investment for this project? The Prime Minister said that it was going to make \$70 million, without any drawings he was breaking ground and making that statement but perhaps the Minister can tell us, by running a parallel with the said Hilton Hotel that he referred to, the Hotel is now showing a profit, but tell us how much to see if it is really realistic to think that this Government will ever recover the money that it is putting into this project. The disgraceful aspect of this project, or one of them, is the fact that this Government, unable to attract any private sector investor, went cap in hand to the Chinese and I say cap in hand because anytime at all that you can go to somebody to borrow money from them for a commercial venture, ... This is not a gymnasium type thing, this is a commercial venture and somebody is going to tell you, if you want money from me, at interest, no matter the terms, you are paying the interest on it, and you have to employ 60 per cent of our nationals, 60 per cent Chinese, you have become a beggar. That is what this Government was forced to do because it has no longer ... In fact, Mr. Speaker, I do not even know to what extent really it is even in compliance with fair competition laws for a lender to determine that I am going to lend you money but you must use my labour. Has this Government even contemplated that in the fair competition legislation? Of course, when, as Sparrow said, when you catch them broke you can get them all for nothing. This Government could not even raise points like that vis-à-vis this alleged lender.

Mr. Speaker, as I said I am not going to detain this House. I want to hear about the tendering process. I am not going to be drawn into the nothingness of comments like

\$37 000 more people are going to come to Barbados because those are the things that sound catchy. I am not going to be drawn into, that you are going to have 1 000, well we heard 1 000 last week during construction and we heard 1 200 tonight but in case that would be 800 Chinese and 400 Barbadians anyhow so that is no big deal. Then we are going to have 3 000 ...

*Asides.*

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Those are the platitudinous statements that we hear from this Government but in this case, Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate truth is that the proof of the pudding is going to be in the eating and that is not going to be for many, many years to come. Barbadians will be repaying a loan of some half a billion dollars or so plus interest, after Government scrapes and when a Government so shames itself that it has to literally run around Barbados begging for money to get to put into a project and then to take on another US\$170 million or so more to be repaid, Mr. Speaker, God knows when.

I have spent time last week going into other issues, I am not going to repeat them now. As I said, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the proof of the pudding in this project is only going to come in the eating which is going to be way down the road when we are going to be confronted then or we were going to be receiving all sorts of apologies and excuses by which time it is going to be way too late but at this point, Mr. Speaker, we can only really go on what we are hearing and quite frankly, I wish the Minister well. I would be glad if 37 000 more people per year come to Barbados as a result of business itself. Nothing that has happened so far suggests that is even remotely possible but I wish somehow, Mr. Speaker, that it could happen and I am sure that 10 years from now, whoever is sitting in these chairs will hear the excuses from the Minister for this very, very ill-advised investment.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

7.00 p.m.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, Sir, like the Honourable Member who just spoke I do not intend to be very long but I hope that I would be a lot more substantive than the Honourable Member who last spoke. In fact, I believe that without much effort I could be far more substantive than the last Honourable Member who spoke.

Mr. Speaker, it has really become now almost laughable the contributions of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North because no matter what the Government

tries to do the Honourable Member tries to pour cold water on it and then tries to make some comparison between what the last Administration would have done, which of course in his case since he ran from the Cabinet in conditions that have not yet been properly explained to the public of Barbados he takes responsibility...

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: He said he got fired. Oh, I am very sorry about that. I know you did not get fired though, I know why you left but anyway we will deal with that at another time.

The Honourable Member takes responsibility for things which he knows he had nothing to do with but for some strange reason to make his point in criticism of this Administration he associates himself with decisions that were not the absolute best decisions of the last Administration. I could not believe my ears when I heard the Honourable Member tried to term, as though with some kind of reverse Midas magic, the decision by the last Administration to pursue what is now known as the GEMS Project as some kind of stellar, sensible and otherwise comprehensible intervention by the Barbados Labour Party Government in relation to tourism. Last I remember, the last Government spent over \$300 million bailing out a handful of hotels some of which were owned by very close and known supporters and associates of the Barbados Labour Party. There is no problem with that. They are Barbadians so I guess they are entitled to have their due from the Government or the party which they support. Mr. Speaker, after \$300 million of investment, let us put it this way, US\$150 million of investment, just \$50 million short of what we are doing here, we cannot point to 37 000 more visitors as a result, we cannot point to 3 000 or 4 000 more jobs as a result or we cannot point to any five diamond properties that have been left. We may be able to point to somebody who got rich out of it, but none of these things we can point to as a success so I do not know how you could compare the GEMS Project or whatever it was called with what we are proposing to do with...

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Transformed. No, no, no, not in here, not me. It did not transform anything on the South Coast. I never said that.

*Asides.*

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member please address the Chair and continue.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member is suffering from political amnesia because when I signed the Agreement on Savannah Hotel it

was to rescue a loss-making property that was draining the public purse and to put it in a situation where at least the Government in the lease would not be losing money and possibly could be in a position where it would be gaining some resources to repay the \$300 million odd that they would have put down the drain in the GEMS Project.

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I know he wanted me to say it, but the point is that the last Government took up \$300 million of the taxpayers money and today we have nothing substantial in terms of a financial return to point to to say well yes that money was well spent and the people of Barbados can say that they have gotten back the money that they put in there. I know the Honourable Member for St. Michael North does not want to associate himself with that but that was a time when money was flowing, when there was a lot of honey and milk and money was being thrown around all over the place so they could do these things.

In circumstances where we all admit that the Government is constrained financially, we had a situation where a property in the north fell into financial difficulties and the private sector owners decided to close it, this is the Almond property, which is their choice. The Government of Barbados recognising the impact of that on our tourism product decided that we would pursue bringing that property or rather a most spectacular property back into operation.

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: The Opposition said that the Government should move with alacrity to get this property back in. This is a private sector failure you know. The property was a Government property. A previous Democratic Labour Party sold it to the private sector, it then run into difficulties under the private sector and the Government of Barbados under a different Democratic Labour Party Administration had to step in now to try to get the property back up again. Yes, they always talk about Government, that people in Government cannot manage anything but this is a private sector failure and Government had to come to the rescue. Alright, fair enough.

We approached the Sandals people and they said they were prepared to manage the property under a management contract so long as we go ahead and construct the property. We spoke with the Chinese Government and they said that it is an excellent opportunity for them to fund an investment in Barbados because they had never done on any grand scale or any substantial scale a major commercial investment in Barbados. They had done social projects like the gymnasium and so forth but never before any major commercial investment in Barbados. They have done it in Antigua, they have done it in The Bahamas and

they have done it all over the Caribbean. In fact, at some point in time the Chinese were wondering whether or not Barbados was not interested in doing that type of investment with them, and we told them no it was not that we were not interested, we were looking at the appropriate project and in the appropriate time to do such a collaboration with them, so we came up with the Almond property. An opportunity presented and we took the opportunity. We asked the Chinese Government to support that particular opportunity and they readily agreed, so you had three parties, the Government of Barbados, the Government of China and the Sandals people as represented by the Sandals Corporation. At a very advanced stage of those negotiations, the Sandals people said look we are so impressed with what we are seeing in Barbados, we have such confidence in Barbados, we are not only going to do the property at Casuarina in Christ Church, we want to purchase this property down here, do not bother with the Chinese, we are actually going to buy the property from you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes Honourable Member, what is the point of order?

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member is giving the impression that this was some love relationship.

7.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sandals decided that they were not going to have Chinese build anything for them, given their record, that is a fact. They went into the Bahamas and they screwed up everything and Sandals said no, they were not going to get into Chinese labour, but what is not good for Sandals is good enough for this Government, that is a fact.

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order is found, Honourable Member. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, of course it can be no point of order because again as I said, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North is so far out of present day reality. The Honourable Member is a 1960s politician who is operating in a 2016 body. The Honourable Member must know, in fact, the Honourable Member really does not know that the same Sandals Corporation used the same China Complant Group to build the Beaches Hotel in Grand Turks. The largest hotel in the Sandals Group was built by the Chinese only a few years ago. In fact, the very model...

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member does not know what he is talking about. As a matter of fact, Sir, not only is it the largest property in the Sandals chain in terms of what is there in Grand Turks, they said that they wanted almost the identical type of product that they have at Beaches Hotel built down at Almond, and it was built with Chinese labour, hired by Sandals Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member must go and do his research before he comes into Parliament trying to mislead this Honourable House and the public of Barbados. The Honourable Member should do a little research, the Honourable Member should keep off the internet and off Facebook, reading foolishness.

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to allow myself to be sidetracked, the Honourable Member does not want to hear the point. Mr. Speaker, Sandals had such extreme confidence in Barbados and the Barbados market and the Barbados Government that they decided that they were going to buy the property, and they bought it. Sir, not only did they buy one property but they bought two. Sir, frankly if they had their way they could have bought a third property too. I am not going to go into that, but the Minister of Tourism knows exactly what I mean. In fact, they are still looking around for good investments.

Mr. Speaker, they decided that they will take on the Almond product down there by themselves. Of course, the Chinese were justifiably, to some extent, disappointed. We did not go cap-in-hand to anybody, they were disappointed and they expressed that disappointment because they felt that this was the star intervention that they were going to make in Barbados to demonstrate the strength of Barbados' relationship with them to move it to a whole new level in terms of commercial investments. Sir, they were disappointed that they did not get that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, the Right Honourable Prime Minister, the Minister of Tourism and I met with them and gave them the assurance that if another good opportunity came up, we would give fair consideration to involving them and partnering with them in that project. Sir, that is what happened, that is a fact, I do not have to come here and tell any lies in this Honourable House of Assembly. Mr. Speaker, we found that opportunity Sam Lord's Castle. When we invited the Chinese to look at the project, without even batting their eyelids they said yes, this is what they wanted to do. Sir, the rest is now history.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister has come here and laid out the facts and I am happy that the Minister has done so, but in his time. The Honourable Member was not hustled and harassed into giving information before that information

was ready to be revealed to the public. The Minister has given the suitable details in relation to this particular project.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Members of the Opposition do not want this project to happen. They do not want the jobs to be created, they do not want the activities to be able to create an economy, they do not want the project to happen. They want to put a spanner in every works that the Government is doing so that they can continue to walk around giving the public the impression that the Government is doing nothing, so that they try to scandalize the Sandals arrangement trying to give the impression that somebody is taking money, that this body got paid, that they want to know the deal because they want to know how much the Ministers got, and a whole set of rubbish trying to turn the public's mind against it.

Mr. Speaker, they come down to Almond with another set of stuff. They have not talked about the Four Seasons to his credit, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North has been asking for the information on Four Seasons and the Honourable Member is going to get it at the right time and very shortly too. In fact, the days are very short in number because the deal is very short to be signed and as soon as that act is committed...

Mr. Speaker, they say that we cannot get any private sector investment but they are going to hear soon enough about private sector investment. Sir, as soon as that act is committed, I will come to this Parliament. In fact, I have to come to this Parliament and I am going to give chapter and verse about what went on down there and what role certain people played in relation to that project, but nobody is jumping me to that gun before I am ready.

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: If you cannot give details why you left the Cabinet, I am going to give details about the Four Seasons in time. I know you all want me to... You see, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the problem is that the Honourable Members on that side want us to do their work for them but we are not going their work for them, we are working on the behalf of the public of Barbados.

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Rattled? Rattled? Can you imagine "Radio St. Thomas" talking about somebody being rattled? Mr. Speaker, let me tell you something, I do not mind what trump card you have for me, dear, that is okay. You cannot say that I have killed anybody; that I have kidnapped anybody; that I have dug up any roads, nothing, so you could say anything you feel like saying about me, that is not a problem, it is okay.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, why do you not address the Chair and stop with the cross-talking?

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, I am trying my best to but you see, when the Spanish stations are cutting in... That is not a problem, she can say anything about me. That is okay.

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Me? Never, that does not bother me. Mr. Speaker, down the line, the Opposition wants us to do their job for them, but I am not going to do their job for them, not yet, we are working on the behalf of the public of Barbados. Sam Lord's Castle is an excellent project. We are getting good concessionary rates for it.

Mr. Speaker, this talk about 60 per cent and 40 per cent, as though it only happens in Barbados, this is a standard rule that the Chinese use in all of their commercial contracts. Mr. Speaker, Sir, would you believe that under the last Administration when Four Seasons was being built, a wash pan of Chinese were in Barbados down at Four Seasons and some of them did not even have work permits, and members of the unions of Barbados had to complain about it and had to see the Minister with responsibility for immigration in relation to that matter. In fact, when we got into Government and that project was closed and we went down there, they had a whole operation down there including a pharmacy. Mr. Speaker, an entire operation was done there and you did not hear anybody in the Democratic Labour Party cussing and carrying on with them in relation to that, so I do not understand what is the big thing that they are carrying on about.

Mr. Speaker, the problem is that they not want any of these projects to get off the ground, that is the long and short of it and I have to question why.

*Asides.*

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Are you getting rattled now? You do not want the projects to get off the ground. Sam Lord's Castle, you are trying to muddy those waters. Sandals, you are trying to muddy those waters. Everything that we do you are trying to muddy, nothing this Government does is right.

7.31 p.m.

Nothing this Government does is right. The Ambulance Service is the same thing. Up and down, up and down Barbados. I say to the Honourable Minister, "I am not even getting involved." Mr. Speaker, this is the last point I want to make in relation to this, because I hear the Honourable Member making it. The last point I want to make is this whole question about NIS (National Insurance

Scheme) funds. We addressed this issue. The only reason the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated (BTII) had to ask for an extension of the repayment of the loan from the NIS in relation to the Almond project in terms of the sale price, was because they had to take out a substantial amount of the money to pay a bond which was borrowed by the last Government in 2002. The bond became due, and the BTII did not have the cash available to pay the maturity of the bond and they took what proceeds they had in the bank and retired that bond, as well they should have.

Therefore, we came to this House in the Estimates. We did a move-in for the \$16 million or \$17 million. I gave the assurance that the BTII would get the money. The money had been received, and has been paid over to the NIS, and that is that. The thing is done. There is nothing else. It is finished. The NIS have got their money. Now, the Member for St. Michael North is saying, and he said it, kind of sotto voce, "The NIS got the money but you know they had to go and get Government paper to get it." This is the same Government which the Leader of the Opposition just said could not raise any money from private banking institutions, but we were able to get Government paper from a banking institution to help BTII pay back the loan. You cannot win with them. The Prime Minister has said it before and it is true, because it is not the first time I heard it: Even a clock which has stopped is right twice per day. Do you know that this Government can do nothing right for them at all? Nothing. Nothing right at all.

I do not understand. Rather than get up and say to the Government, "We hope that you can get this process going so Barbadians can get jobs" or "We hope you can get this process going so you can get the foreign exchange flowing in," he poured cold water on it to say, "I know many years from now when whoever is occupying this seat, they will not get any visitors because that is just pretty talk. They will not get investors. They will have all these Chinese running around about here. This is a bad deal. The government should not do it at all. Just go home and do nothing." For us to do that would be to do a "top in". We are not doing a "top in", we are doing a "top up".

Aside.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: This is a good project. The Minister must be congratulated for the work he has done. Whatever little two cents' worth I put in was just that. It was no big thing. The Minister has done a fantastic job. I just put a little two cents' worth. There was nothing much to do with me, Mr. Speaker. I really did not have too much to do with it. We gave the Ministry of Tourism and the BTII all the support they needed and will continue to do so, and come June 27, rain or no rain, sun or no sun, the work will start and Barbadians will begin to see progress in relation to that project. We hope that can continue straight out until it is finished. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

MR. SPEAKER: I am obliged. Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, for giving the very important background to the project. I think that the fundamental point is that the Government of Barbados is engaging in an arrangement with the Government of China. It is a government-to-government arrangement, and therefore, as is expected under those arrangements, I mentioned the EPC method that they use where they are responsible for the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC), so there is nothing untoward occurring at that level. With respect to the projections of the \$70 million in foreign exchange which we expect to earn annually, we had contracted the services of a firm, a specialist commercial real estate firm, Jones Lang LaSalle Incorporated (JLL), financial and professional consultants, and they concluded that the new Sam Lord's Castle project, in terms of the property's size, ability to capture various types of demand including leisure and groups, combined with its branding, should reach an occupancy penetration of 1.05 times the competitive set. The study, therefore, forecasts stabilisation at 68 per cent occupancy. In addition, in terms of the average daily rates, it is estimated that with a penetration rate of 1.25 times the competitive set, based on the quality and international branding, the hotel should be able to capture a high rate of demand as well. It is anticipated that the ramp-up period will be two (hours?) years and the facility should stabilise at an average rate of US\$383 a room. Mr. Speaker, we did in fact do a study, and not just any ragtag group. These are international people, so to answer the question about how we are arriving at these figures, we are contracting with the specialists because we understand this is a serious investment and we have to make sure we get it right.

Again, I do not want to get into too much about what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North said because I am not altogether convinced that he is really speaking for the Opposition. I say that because the BHTA (Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association) at its annual general meeting in 2013 had as its feature speaker the Leader of the Opposition, and she indicated then that she figured -- it was shortly after the Election and she felt helpless that she did not win the Government -- they should be thinking in terms of mobilising capital resources to see an additional 800 rooms in Barbados by 2017-2018. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East is looking. She was present. In fact, she spoke about mobilising \$500 million toward the sector to build and improve rooms. Where was the money coming from? Guess what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said. "Three per cent money from China." That is what she said. We got 2.5 per cent money from China, so let us put the comments from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North in their context, because I do not know if it is really

what the Leader of the Opposition is saying. I do not hear the Leader of the Opposition going on and on with this Sandals thing, because the Honourable Member knows it has done a good thing for Barbados. He says “the proof of the pudding is in the eating”. The proof of the pudding is that in 2015 we had more visitors here than at any time in our history, and whether you like it or not, Sandals had a lot to do with that. They know that Sam Lord’s Castle will also help us in future years to set new and better benchmarks. That is the real issue here. It is something good so you have to try to pull down. All the efforts to muddy the waters and to chase away the Sandals investment did not work, so now what you are trying to do is, “let us make the Chinese nervous now. Knowing the sensitivities involved in that relationship, let us make that relationship a little nervous. Let us see if we can mess up that one now.” That is the point. They do not want to see these projects become a reality, and that is the bottom line, and I think we need to accept that, let us forge ahead and do what we have to do. With those few words, I want to again thank the Members for their contribution, and I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

7.30 p.m.

We need to accept that and let us forge ahead and do what we have to do.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I want to thank Honourable Members for their contribution.

I beg to move this Resolution do now pass.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with that we have come to the end of Government Business for today. I beg to move that this Sitting be adjourned until Tuesday, June 21, 2016, at 10:00 o’clock in the morning.

Hon. R. A JONES: I beg to second that, Sir.

*The question that the House be adjourned until Friday, August 28, 2015 was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Speaker adjourned the House accordingly.*

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**SEALY, Hon. R.L. (St. Michael South Central)**  
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**SINKLER, Hon. C. P.**  
**STUART, Hon. F. (St. Michael South)**  
**SYMMONDS, Mr. K. D. (St. James Central)**  
**TOPPIN, Mr. R. St.C. (St. Michael North)**

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**EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT**


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

**EDITORIAL QUERIES**

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

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

**Q2. Order No. 7.** The Order is numbered ‘ORDER No. 7’ over the debate, but on resumption the Speaker says ‘we were on Government Business, Order No. 17’. Printed as in the source.

**Q3. Order No. 7, second reading.** The sentence ‘The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division’ follows immediately after the Attorney-General moves the second reading, before the debate; the second-reading question is recorded again at the end of the debate. Printed as in the source.

**Q4. Order No. 7, before the luncheon suspension.** The Speaker calls ‘Honourable Member for Christ Church South’, but no speech follows; the next item is the motion to suspend for lunch. Printed as in the source.

**Q5. Order No. 7, Committee.** The source records that the Chairman ‘reported progress’, yet the next sentence has the Bill read a third time and passed as the Immigration (Amendment) Act, 2016. Printed as in the source.

**Q6. Adjournment.** Hon. J. D. E. Boyce moves that the Sitting be adjourned until ‘Tuesday, June 21, 2016’, but the question is recorded as adjourning the House until ‘Friday, August 28, 2015’. Printed as in the source.

**Q7. Orders No. 19 and 23.** The Minister of Finance’s name is spelt both ‘SINKLER’ and ‘SINCKLER’ in speech headings and procedural sentences. Printed as in the source.

**Q8. Order No. 7, Attorney-General’s opening.** The source reads ‘between 600 000 to 800 000 individuals being smuggled yearly’. Printed as in the source.

**DEBATE SUMMARY**

*(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)*

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 17th May, 2016 at 10.00 a.m., with His Honour M. A. Carrington, Speaker, in the Chair; prayers were taken by Reverend Mark Harewood. The Minutes of Thursday, 12th May, 2016 were deferred, and on the motion of the Leader of

Government Business, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, Standing Orders were suspended for the rest of the Sitting.

The Attorney-General, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, moved the second reading of the Immigration (Amendment) Bill, 2016, which makes fuller provision against the smuggling of persons in line with the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, and is to be read with the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act, 2016. Mr. Boyce, Hon. D. O’N. Inniss (St. James South), Hon. S. A. Lashley (Christ Church West Central), Hon. D. Kellman (St. Lucy), and Hon. R. A. Jones (Christ Church East Central) supported the Bill. For the Opposition, Mr. D. D. Marshall (St. Joseph) said there was no objection but raised a treaty point.

After lunch Mr. K. D. Symmonds (St. James Central) used the debate to discuss foreign policy. The Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. F. J. Stuart, Member for St. Michael South, spoke of human trafficking as the new face of slavery and the need to protect the borders. The Attorney-General replied on CARICOM co-operation and training. The Bill was read a second time, passed through Committee with Mr. J. D. Paul in the Chair, and was read a third time and passed.

The Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Hon. C. P. Sinkler, Member for St. Michael North West, moved the second reading of the Savings Bond (Validation) Bill, 2016. The Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, said the Opposition would not oppose the validation but argued that the bonds were being used to finance the deficit; the Speaker questioned the relevance of the deficit to the Bill. Hon. D. St. E. Kellman argued that the 10 per cent limit in the 1972 Central Bank Act was out of date. In reply, Mr. Sinkler said that \$90 million had been subscribed in six months and attacked the Opposition’s planned march; a point of order from Miss Mottley was not upheld. The Bill passed all its stages and was cited as the Savings Bonds (Validation) Act, 2016.

After a suspension until 5.45 p.m., the Attorney-General moved the Criminal Assets Recovery Fund Bill, 2016, under which confiscated assets would go to the agencies fighting crime. Mr. Marshall supported it but argued that seized assets should also be able to compensate victims. The Attorney-General replied that the fund would be administered with the Accountant-General to ensure transparency, and the Bill passed, clauses 1 to 10 being agreed in Committee.

The Minister of Tourism, Hon. R. L. Sealy, moved the Resolution vesting 23.51894 hectares (58.11 acres) at Sam Lord’s Castle, Long Bay, St. Philip in Barbados

Tourism Investment Inc. for housing and tourism development and beach access, for a 450-room hotel to be managed by the Wyndham Corporation. Mr. R. St.C. Toppin (St. Michael North) said Barbadians would be repaying a loan of some half a billion dollars. Mr. Sinkler said the last Government had put some \$300 million of

taxpayers' money into the GEMS Project with nothing substantial to show for it; a point of order from Mr. Toppin was not upheld. Replying, Mr. Sealy said the project was a Government-to-Government arrangement with China. The Resolution was agreed to, and the House was adjourned on the motion of Mr. Boyce, seconded by Mr. Jones.