
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, January 24, 2017

met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, January 24, 2017.

PRESENT

His Honour MICHAEL A. CARRINGTON, B.A., LL.B. (Speaker) Her Honour Mrs. M-J. MARA THOMPSON, M.Sc. (Ph.Ed.) B.A. (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. OWEN S. ARTHUR M.Sc. (Econ.)
Mr. GEORGE W. PAYNE, Q. C.
Mr. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P.
Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)
Hon. D. St. E. KELLMAN (Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development)
Hon. Miss MIA A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Leader of the Opposition)
Miss CYNTHIA Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P.
Hon. R. D. JONES, B.A. (Hons.), M.A. Ed., J.P., (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. DALE D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B (Hons.), L.E.C.
Hon. MICHAEL A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of Transport and Works)
Hon. RICHARD L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)
Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART, Q.C., B.A., LL.M. (Prime Minister, Minister of National Security, The Public Service and Urban Development)
Hon. JOHN D. E. BOYCE, B.C.H., MRAC, M.Sc., C. Eng. (Minister of Transport and Works) (Leader of Government Business)
Hon. STEVEN D. BLACKETT (Minister of the Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, and Community Development)

Mr. JAMES D. PAUL, B.Sc. (Chairman of Committees)
Dr. the Hon. DENIS S. LOWE, Ed.D., M.Ed., B.A., Dip. Theology (Minister of Environment and Drainage)
Mr. ADRIEL D. BRATHWAITE, LL.B. (Hons.) (Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs.)
Hon. STEPHEN A. LASHLEY, B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports)
Hon. DONVILLE O'N. INNISS, Dip., B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development)
Hon. CHRISTOPHER P. SINCKLER, B.A., M.Sc. (Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)
Mr. TREVOR PRESCOD, B.A.
Mr. KERRIE D. SYMMONDS, B. A., LL.B.
Lt. Col. JEFFREY D. BOSTIC, M.V.O., B.A. (Hons.)
Dr. Mrs. MARIA M. AGARD, J.P., D.Ds., B.Sc. (Hons.)
Mr. DWIGHT G. SUTHERLAND, M.Sc., M.B.A. (Dist.), B.Sc.
Miss SANTIA J. O. BRADSHAW, LL.B. (Hons.)
Prayers were taken by Reverend Mark Harewood.

MR. SPEAKER: This House is now in Session.

MINUTES

MR. SPEAKER: Good Morning, Honourable Members, this House is now in Session. Honourable Members, I am not yet in receipt of the Minutes of our last meeting held on Tuesday, January 14, 2017 and therefore I ask for the usual Motion.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes refereed to be now deferred.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we have the pleasure this morning to welcome among us Ms. Maria Fitzpatrick, a Member of the Legislative Assembly for Alberta, Canada. She is accompanied by Mrs. Lorraine Comer. We wish to welcome you both to Barbados, as well as to this Legislature. I hope that you do have an enjoyable holiday. Thank you.

PAPERS

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

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. The Loan Agreement between the Caribbean Development Bank and the Barbados Student Revolving Loan Fund Management Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development. Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. The Barbados Investment and Development Corporation Annual Report for the year 2014-2015.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister of Health.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. The Health Services (Smoking) Regulations, 2017;
2. The Health Services (Packaging and Labeling of Tobacco Products) Regulations, 2017.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

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

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the following Bill be read a first time:

1. The Barbados Revenue Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of Government Business.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the following Bill be read a first time:

1. The Health Services (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

The question was put and was 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 rest of this day's Sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 19 – THE HEALTH SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2017.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to come to this Honourable Chamber and to introduce any legislation which continues to create an environment in our country Barbados which helps for the sustainability of good order and good practice, or indeed for the creation of a new environment which would not only bring us on par with international best practices but in many instances would take us to the front in these regards.

Mr. Speaker, it is no different today as I stand to introduce the Bill which would amend the Health Services Act, Cap. 44, to bring Barbados in line with regulations which inform the management of the smoking of cigarettes in this country. Of course, we would actually love to be saying to Barbadians that there will be no smoking of cigarettes in Barbados, but I am afraid we have not taken that step yet. May I remind you, Sir, that back in 2010 we have introduced in this Honourable Chamber an amendment which made it illegal for Barbadians to smoke in public places. This was an important step in keeping with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control which would have been signed and ratified by Barbados in 2004 and 2005 respectively, so that in 2008 this Framework Convention would have achieved the objective of the removal of duty-free concessions on tobacco

products at our ports of entry. In 2009 there was legislation prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to minors. As I said there was legislation prohibiting the smoking in public places in 2010 and of course from time to time there would have been tax increases in the retail price of tobacco products here in Barbados. I refer specifically to 2008 and 2012 when these items would have been particularly targeted for tax increases.

Mr. Speaker, taxation on tobacco, of course, falls within the ambit of what we sometimes casually refer to as “sin” taxes -- alcohol and the like where the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs of a country would normally target some of these products for special attention and move to so increase taxes as to cause the consuming public to think twice or three times about spending hard-earned money in this direction. Of course, we are still prone to enjoy what some refer to as the “pleasures of life”, and so people do continue to consume some alcohol. We in the Ministry of Health and indeed most persons urge that it be consumed responsibly. In the case of cigarette smoking, however, the Ministry of Health in concert with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) are of the view that tobacco smoking is really a no-no and we need to do whatever we can to wean our population away from tobacco smoking; and this is one such measure.

Mr. Speaker, the Caribbean has led the way in this battle against the wanton consumption of alcohol and, of course, smoking, because it is clearly documented that indiscretion in these directions can lead to over-prevalence of what is commonly referred to today as non-communicable diseases in our society. Indeed, non-communicable diseases, as I would have said many times, form the major battlefield for our health services team here in Barbados and, dare I say, Sir, it is a trend throughout the world. It is conservatively calculated that in some countries as many as 70 to 75 per cent of the population, especially the adult population over 50 years of age, can be suffering from some kind of non-communicable disease. Those related to smoking, of course, are especially to deal with cardiovascular disease, cancers of the throat, and those very debilitating conditions which, yes, cost the country considerable monies and cost the individual considerable sums; especially at an age when we are most vulnerable, of course. At the age of 50, with retirement approaching and so on, to be confronted on retirement with one of these serious conditions and non-communicable diseases can be an extremely treacherous situation; and more often than not, one has to revert to the State for some relief.

It should be noted, in addition, that in 2007 in the Port-of-Spain Declaration, CARICOM states were requested to take appropriate measures within the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control to protect their populations from the harmful effects of tobacco. I

pause just to mention that the 2007 Port-of-Spain Declaration is held throughout the world as an impetus for the strong focus of health authorities internationally on the whole question of non-communicable diseases. The CARICOM region, led very ably by the University of the West Indies, continues to bring to the fore the work done by CARICOM at that time, 2007, the continued acknowledgement of that work, and the progress which has emanated from this very significant initiative.

Mr. Speaker, there are specifically two matters for consideration of the Parliament of Barbados today. One relates to the use of electronic cigarettes, which was not specifically included in the 2010 Amendment. Then there is the packaging and labelling of tobacco products generally. Up until now, cigarette packages in Barbados have been very liberal in terms of their designs. I do not smoke so I am not even too familiar with it, but I think there is a mention that the Minister of Health indicates that cigarette smoking is dangerous for your life. However, we have always felt that we had to move beyond that, and the internationally accepted battlefield now is to move to a regime where the packaging is even more stark. Along with the messaging from the Minister of Health or the Chief Medical Officer of the country, we want to add to it some graphic illustration of the conditions which we could find ourselves having to deal with if we continue to use or abuse cigarettes.

In the case of the electronic cigarette or e-cigarette, this is a hand-held electronic device that vaporises a flavoured liquid and contains the addictive ingredient, nicotine. It is considered within the regulations as similar to the standard lit tobacco product, and therefore as of today in Barbados it will be guided by restriction of sale to minors and smoking in public places. Mr. Speaker, the Amendment will seek to include the e-cigarette in these restrictions. These restrictions will be in terms of sale to minors and smoking in public places. The Ministry of Health does not support the report sometimes made that this product can be used as a cessation device, and on the contrary it may be a forerunner to use of the smoked or lit tobacco product. The e-cigarette, as I would have hinted again, has been available in Barbados over the last four years and is sold in many convenience malls, stores and service stations, Sir. I think that out of an interest in what is happening around us, I would urge Members to have a look at what we are talking about so as to be familiar; so that if indeed we have to tackle the situation, we would know exactly what we are dealing with. The e-cigarette now is included in the package of regulations which will see an increased level of restriction in terms of their use. This is an important step, and certainly the Ministry of Health is happy to have reached this point in terms of that regulation.

Mr. Speaker, turning now to the question of packaging and labelling of tobacco products, we note that it

is consistent with the guidelines set out in Article 11 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, and seeks to protect the general public in two very specific ways. The package and label of any tobacco product should not contain any information that is false, misleading, deceptive or likely to give erroneous information about its characteristics, health effects or hazards of the tobacco product. We are familiar, of course, with the use of low-tar cigarettes and light cigarettes and that kind of thing. We do not recognise these as terms which change the form of the cigarettes from dangerous to not dangerous, but the Ministry of Health and indeed the framework convention does not subscribe to that distinction, so therefore we are aware of terms such as light, low-tar, mild and slim. Of course, the slim and the mild is used to attract the fairer gender, that is what marketing is all about. We have decided as a country, as a region and indeed internationally that we had to fight back against these marketing forces so we do not recognise these terms and do not suggest or urge that our people are not motivated by them at all.

Secondly, Sir, the package and label will give full disclosure about the harmful and hazardous health effects through graphic pictorial warnings. These warnings will cover the front and back area of the product to a minimum of 60 per cent on the front or back side of the tobacco product. In addition, there will be written warnings attributable to the Minister of Health and/or the Chief Medical Officer as I hinted earlier.

The standard for packaging and labelling in Barbados was adopted out of our CARICOM standard approved by the Council of Health Ministers of the region and facilitated of course by the regulatory body CROSQ (Caribbean Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality) and the National Standards Institute, so this work has been going on for a long time. I think as long ago as 2013 we started working on getting this packaging legislation right. Some people may say that is a long time but we have to get all of our organisations and statutory bodies in line so that when we make our moves we understand what we are talking about.

We recognise that something like packaging cigarettes cannot be handled by the Ministry of Health alone. As a matter of fact, we do not import cigarettes. We are not the agency that is responsible for the setting up of establishments who either import ourselves cigarettes ourselves so it is necessary to have all of our ministry approach. Indeed, I think this is one of the things which will benefit Barbados significantly subsequent to the establishment of the Inter-ministerial Committee on Non-communicable Diseases which they will be working on to put into effect these regulations. Mr. Speaker, recognising of course that these regulations be laid today, this amendment will only take effect when we are in fact able to introduce the regulations in our actual business practices.

Sir, I invite you and the Honourable Chamber to peruse the Schedule and to have a look at some of the warnings. There are some which are more graphic than others. I brought along a package which I was going to make a document of the House but I do not think I have to make the House untidy with this package. This is an empty box of cigarettes, Craven A is the brand, but since you have the regulations, it will be a much tidier document. Sir, I will put away my proposed document to the House and stick to the regulations which describe the kind of...

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: What the labelling, packaging and the graphics are trying to demonstrate is the kind of outcomes which are so possible if we continue to proliferate the use of cigarettes in our country. It talks about or demonstrates the causes of impotency and the kind of graphics associated with that. Sir, it is all above board. The graphics is quite acceptable and clean. There are warnings about blindness, the effect of children in the womb, still births, et cetera which comes from side stream smoking because we may sit in our living rooms and want to smoke and our children are around and playing, so the kinds of dangers which we expose our children to are also displayed. Then, of course, there are the personal effects such as the mouth diseases that can be caused by excessive smoking.

We grew up in a Barbados where smoking of cigarettes was a minute by minute occurrence. Sir, you must be very familiar with the term chain smoking where persons would not even out one cigarette and light the other but would light the second cigarette with the burning remains of the one that they were presently consuming, so these are practices of which we need to continue to remind Barbadians as they result in strokes and that kind of thing.

Sir, I think Honourable Members would be happy to pursue the document and to join with the Ministry of Health in promoting the fact that we have a battle which must be dealt with head on and which as a population we have to support.

Sir, I want to say in passing that I have now reached a certain maturity in Barbados which allows me to have experienced a number of things. I think that in general we are showing a good turn in direction. There is still too much smoking, do not let us pretend. As Minister of Health I will never want to stand in any way to sort of support the status quo but knowing what I knew many years ago I think Barbadians are getting the message in respect to how can we better take care of our own bodies and how can we look forward to a healthier old age. I keep saying that the Ministry of Health is not saying to anyone that we can prolong life or make anyone live forever, certainly not, that is not within our control. The point is that while we are

here we want to be able to demonstrate to Barbadians that with good healthy practices we can enjoy a much better existence here on earth, and that is extremely important.

Mr. Speaker, I want to stop and pause and just acknowledge how well the Ministry of Health is being supported by the many non-governmental organisations which have been promoting healthy lifestyle in Barbados. I will call a few names. I know in attempting to do so I may not call all of the names of these non-governmental organisations. When I chat with my team in the Ministry of Health on mornings I make the point that we must encourage our non-governmental organisations in this good work, people like the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Barbados Diabetes Association because when they have the momentum it reduces the burden on the direct ministry so that we become almost in many cases facilitators for their activity, and I think we have reached this very, very important stage. I mentioned the University of the West Indies just now where the Chronic Research Unit at the University is now fast becoming the leading repository of data with respect to health trends in Barbados and in the region, and this Unit must be congratulated. I believe it is being headed now by Dr. Alafia Samuels and I really want to congratulate the team at the University of the West Indies for their hard work. I want to acknowledge my colleague the Minister of Trade who would have been Minister of Health for sometime between 2009 and 2013. That is when this thing tack battle started and tremendous work was done in the Ministry and in the private sector in building this. He has already indicated to me that in our Parliamentary group we have a term called, "I want piece of that". In other words, Mr. Speaker, he is going to be speaking on this amendment because I am sure he has a lot to say on the matter. I look forward to his contribution, Sir.

Sir, as I said teams like the Healthy Caribbean Coalition, which is led, of course, by Professor Trevor Hassel, who is also Chairman of Non-communicable Diseases Commission, these organisations - the Barbados Diabetes Foundation, I want to acknowledge the work of the late Oscar Jordan who would have left us only last year in establishing this, along with the Maria Holder Foundation, which is doing excellent work around the country, has been importantly instrumental in establishing the Barbados Diabetes Foundation. A recent review of the work of the Foundation has indicated that we are beginning -- as I said, it is extremely encouraging when we start to see the results of our efforts and the kind of information coming back on the outcomes of patients who attend the treatment centre at the Foundation, which the Government of Barbados pays for. Presently we set aside some \$800 000 for that organisation to see Barbadians who are afflicted with diabetes and to more or less focus treatment on their major areas of concern and we are beginning to see good outcomes. The idea being that our chronic patients would go into this centre, they would benefit from a three-

month/six month programme of intense treatment with some of our dermatologists and other medical practioners and paramedical praticioners, by the way, because we need to acknowledge that medicine is no longer only the domain of the consultant specialists. So the treatment of heart disease does not lie only in the hands of our Cardiologists. The therapists associated with recovery are extremely important. So that expertise is also building in Barbados and we need as a ministry and as a country to recognise this and to start to understand that we have to make important provisions for the execution of these projects. So these are the organizations, the Diabetese Association, Barbados Diabetes Foundation, the Heart and Stroke Foundation -- I see they have changed leadership at the Heart and Stroke Foundation. I was trying to find out what happened to the former Head, but I will find out. I welcome their work. They do very important work. All of these organizations have their place. The Diabetes Association has its place. They are usually associated with a certain strata of our society who will present at their treatment centre at Beckles Road. They have a donated vehicle, so they go out in the communities from time to time, Miss Merritt, is the Head of that Organisation. I also want to acknowledge the hard work of Miss Merritt and the establishment and the maintenance of that Diabetes Association.

Sir, I make that point to demonstrate to you, Members and indeed all of Barbados the fact that the Ministry of Health believes we have so created a momentum in Barbados in terms of the private sector participation in our battle against non-communicable diseases that we can look forward to a much healthier nation and we can look forward to the message of the Ministry of Health constantly being brought to the fore, but most of all we want to see the lifestyle of all Barbadians change in such a way. This regulation is a further nudge, I should say, in that direction.

As I was saying, in terms of Barbados' location in terms of the legislative trends, et cetera, the legislation is in keeping with the international trends which have now been widely adopted in Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South America and the United States, you name it, most of the international countries. As a matter of fact my now failed document of the House would have been purchased, I believe, in Canada. That package which I was planning to use, which has now become unnecessary.

In addition, of course, in our region, labeling and packaging laws are currently on statutes in Jamaica and Trinidad, important statements. When we pass the law that has already indicated, when we pass the amendment here today the work does not stop. As a matter of fact that is when the work starts, because we then have to move to the point where we actually put monitoring in place so that when the regulations or the law is broken, those who are

party to that breach would actually feel the weight of the law of the country. Therefore it is very important after we have passed the legislation here today that we put these regulations in place.

The responsibility of producers and manufacturers and distributors will be to comply with these legal requirements or whatever the appropriate changes are so as to be within the laws of Barbados. That statement is important. The producers and manufacturers of these cigarettes and these products will be given a reasonable timeframe to become compliant. As I said, the Ministry of Health will work with the Ministry of Finance and of course the Attorney General's Office in making sure the initiatives are properly supported.

So these two legislative initiatives are done to protect the public from the harmful affects of tobacco and signals to the international community Barbados' commitment to the framework, convention and tobacco control.

Mr. Speaker, the battle in Barbados against non-communicable diseases has only just begun. We believe that we are establishing within the Ministry of Health and in our private sector and environment which will allow us to collect important data to help us to focus on the areas most critical to progress in this direction. We are convinced that one of our programmes must be to focus more on our young people and in so doing it is immediately recognisable that we understand fully it is not a task that the results will necessarily be seen today and tomorrow, yes people if they receive treatment will feel better, they will live healthier lives, but the significant turnaround will only occur when we have a youth population who have taken onboard all the practices that we are trying to so ably promote. Again the Ministry of Health along with the Ministry of Education have started initiating programmes within our primary schools to make sure healthy lifestyles become part and practice of the Barbadian child psych. We will almost create a youth population that would go back home on evenings and on weekends, who will be helping their parents in changing that environment. There are mitigating circumstances, of course, but that is why we are given the task because we have the intelligence, the capability, the team -- we have the intelligence. We have the capability. We have the team that can move the population in that new direction. So overall healthy lifestyle makes this job easy. It empties the corridors of our waiting rooms, whether in our private medical institutions or in our public hospitals and Polyclinics, and it helps to fill instead our playgrounds, our recreational parks and our beaches with a population who are indeed enjoying the benefits of this existence here on earth.

Mr. Speaker, therefore with those few words would want to urge that this amendment to the Health Services

Act be supported by this Chamber and stand willing, of course, after the contribution of other Members to come back in the wrap up to address any questions which may need answers.

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

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

Hon. Mr. D.G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise to say a few words on this Bill which seeks to amend the Health Services Act Cap 44 to make provision for electronic smoking devices. At the outset I wish to say on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party, that we have no challenge or difficulty with the amendment that is before the House this morning. Actually, Mr. Speaker, I start by saying we in the Barbados Labour Party urge all Barbadians to stop smoking as well, and we will support the Ministry of Health in all of their efforts to sensitise Barbadians to the dangers of smoking. We have no difficulty with this.

Sir, what is before the House this morning is basically the way the world is going and messages on the dangers of smoking is indeed what a Government should be doing. Non communicable diseases/strokes are some of the things that are impacting our citizens negatively. We will join with the efforts by the Ministry of Health and all practitioners in ensuring Barbadians are sensitized in a more meaningful way of the dangers of smoking.

One of the things that bother me is this whole aspect of smoking in public. I know there has been a ban on smoking in public places, but we are still seeing a number of persons taking it upon themselves to smoke in public places. We believe more stringent measures should be enforced by the Government to ensure that people like myself, and there are many of us out there who do not smoke, should not be damaged by the side stream smoke. There are people who carry out their day to day duties, whether working or going to school, who suffer from chronic cases of asthma. I am saying smoking in public places when you pass someone smoking can lead to an asthma attack or lead to certain issues that can impact your health negatively. We would want to join this morning with the Government in supporting this Bill before the House.

Mr. Speaker, I would not detain the House much longer. I support the Bill but equally as dangerous as smoking is the present state of the economy in this country. While we can spend the whole day debating the Health Services Amendment, we believe the time has come for the Government to tell the people of this country the true state of our economy. While we can stand here and we can debate the Health Services Bill, I believe the state of this

economy is just as dangerous as smoking in public places, and I think it is high time the Prime Minister of this country, The Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South and the Minister of Finance address a number of issues that are impacting the citizens of this country, just like smoking.

We keep hearing this country has turned the corner in terms of the economy, but we have failed to meet certain targets for economic growth and deficit and debt reduction. The time has come for us to address these matters just as the Ministry of Health will address the matter of smoking in public places and the dangers of smoking.

I would urge the Government in my wrap up and my few minutes, to come and address the state of the economy in this country, in collaboration with these issues we are attempting to address this morning, as it relates to the health services. With those few words, Mr. Speaker, we support this Bill and we support any efforts the Government will implement to give the citizens of this country an ease, as it relates to economic pressures that they have been faced with over the last 8 years.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course I rise to give full support to the Bill to amend the Health Services Act Cap 44 to make provision for electronic devices in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a very serious matter. I know the Honourable Member for St. George South would like to deflect attention to other matters, which we also think is important, but the truth of the matter is, we are speaking here to an issue that really and truly can touch the lives of each individual in this society, whether you are a smoker or nonsmoker. At the end of the day as Parliamentarians we must give great attention to these issues that really do confront the average citizens, not just to speak about the economy and finance matters but matters that really affect our sons and daughters of Barbados and Barbadians in this society. As a Government we continue to show that level of commitment to many of these issues.

I thank the Honourable Minister of Health and his team in the Ministry and those in civil society who take great interest in these public health issues for getting us to the point today where we can wrap our minds around the issue of e-cigarettes in a Barbadian context.

On July 29, 2010, when I was Minister of Health I did pilot the Health Services Prohibition of Tobacco Smoking in Public Places Regulation, which frontally addressed the issue of smoking in public places in

Barbados and there was a lot of hue and cry back then. People asked how important it was an issue. What was the problem? Where was tobacco smoke in Barbados? We were told by others that it would affect the tourism industry

y. All manner of excuses were brought to bear in Barbados and elsewhere on the issue. The reality is, it was out of an abundance of love, care and concern for our citizens that we pressed ahead and got that to happen.

At that point in time, almost 7 years ago, the issue of e-cigarettes was perhaps now coming to the fore. It really was not a major issue. There was still a lot of research that needed to be done around it. There was dispute as to whether it really could be treated in the same vein as we treat tobacco smoking through your traditional cigarettes. Mr. Speaker, therefore, at that point in time we really did not focus on it as we are today, but obviously a lot more research has been done, not just on the epidemiological impact of it but certainly in terms of what has been happening in other jurisdictions around the issue and therefore as a Government in a very small open economy in this world we are bold enough not just to be followers but also to lead in respect of addressing the issue e-cigarettes in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, let me say, at the root of it all is a concern from the perspective of public health, it is also the concerns of social implications, and certainly there is concern with our young people in particular and the need for us all, at both at the individual and community level in Barbados, to focus on a healthier lifestyle.

Mr. Speaker, needless to say, the Ministry of Health is one of the largest consumers of funds from the Consolidated Fund and a lot of what we face in Barbados from the public health perspective really relates to lifestyles. If you look at the prevalence of diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular challenges and such like, really and truly, a lot has resulted from our changing lifestyles over years, now where we have pretty much adopted what is considered, in many respects, to be more a developed country lifestyle, as opposed to what we would have had, certainly where our parents would have engaged in a lot more exercise, they consumed a lot of what they produced and not necessarily the packaged and imported items, per se, the whole attitude was somewhat different than what we have today. The State therefore has a duty to ensure that we seize the challenges that can confront our citizens to do the right thing by way of legislation to frontally address these particular challenges that can be harmful to our individual citizens. Mr. Speaker, we are at a point today where the goodly Minister has decided to bring this amendment before this Honourable Chamber and it is a matter that we therefore take very seriously.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, I can zero-in on what is an e-cigarette, because if you ask the average person and the prevalence rate for tobacco consumption in Barbados, the

last figures I saw were from the PAHO/WHO Report, 2011 on tobacco control where they would have cited the prevalence rate for tobacco consumption in Barbados at 13 per cent for males and 3 per cent for females, which in the grand scheme of things people may not think is a lot but that statistic does not really relate to secondhand smoking challenges that we face in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, a particular concern that jumped out at me from that report, albeit an aged report, is the prevalence rate of tobacco consumption among young people in Barbados which pointed at 34.5 per cent for young males and 23.2 per cent for young females. Sir, if you relate that back to what research had been done before we would have noted that there has been a gradual increase in the prevalence of tobacco consumption among females in Barbados, which is a growing concern particularly since you look at the harmful effect on developing fetus and such like around the world and so these are matters that we have to take very seriously.

Mr. Speaker, e-cigarettes are basically defined as devices that resemble cigarettes, cigars, pipes, et cetera. They are designed to deliver nicotine or related substances via vapor. Sir, we must admit that the manufacturers of these products have been very innovative or creative, the ingenuity is there that they are able to recognise that they are able to conceptualise, design and manufacture a product that is able to deliver, fundamentally, nicotine and other substances that can cause harm, that people can, quite frankly, become addicted to, therefore, we must continue to treat it in the same vein in which we treat traditional tobacco products such as nicotine.

Mr. Speaker, in reflecting upon the e-cigarette, we have also recognised that over the years there have been very aggressive marketing of the product by manufacturers, they claim it is less harmful than the traditional cigarette, that it is safer and that certainly it is more cost effective because many jurisdictions, including Barbados, have imposed heavy doses of taxation upon the traditional tobacco product. We have also prohibited the advertising of tobacco products on television, radio and print media in Barbados, but the e-cigarette which is yet, around the world, to be heavily regulated has been able to fly under the radar in many respects, vis-à-vis, tobacco products and therefore through aggressive marketing, especially through the use of social media, they have been able to get into the hearts and minds of many, including our young people, to whom it is now readily accessible particularly through internet shopping.

Mr. Speaker, manufacturers have gone a step further. In many jurisdictions you cannot add any flavours to tobacco products, except maybe the menthol, but now through e-cigarettes they have the flavours that are appealing to young people -- the tutti-frutti, the bubble gum, the water melon, all kinds of flavours have been

added so as to make it more attractive and tasteful. Mr. Speaker, for those of us who have studied this, I caution it is really an initiation to tobacco smoking, that is why as a responsible Government we have to say, look, even if the jury is still out in terms of nicotine content and other pharmacological issues therein, the reality about it is that one concern must be the extent to which the e-cigarette is used as an introduction to the traditional smoking and consumption, what we call initiation. Mr. Speaker, therefore as a responsible Government we have to do something about it.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the sales, if we speak to what is e-cigarette and how it has taken ground, back in 2013 the e-cigarette market in the United States of America, for example, was about US\$1.7 billion in sales. By 2016 it had hit almost US\$3 billion in sale and is poised to go past that of your traditional tobacco and other cigarettes therein. Mr. Speaker, when you fuse that with the inherent risk of e-cigarette being an initiator into tobacco consumption and all the harmful effects of it, we must have reasons to be concerned in this small Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot say that it is somebody else's problem and that it is not here, it is here in Barbados. There are Barbadians, including young Barbadians, who purchased the e-cigarette online. We do not band the importation, neither are we seeking to do that. As a responsible Government we are saying, look, here is the information, here is the education about it, here are the risk factors. We are now going a step further and placing laws on our books to add the issue of the use of it around the place. Mr. Speaker, therefore I think that we are definitely on the right track with respect to this.

Mr. Speaker, again to show the linkage between the traditional tobacco product and the e-cigarette, some of the major tobacco manufacturers have either purchased e-cigarette manufacturing companies or they have developed their own brand. I do not think that you could want a close linkage between tobacco consumption, production and the harmful effects, except through the corporatization and the corporate world out there in terms of who owns what in the industry. Mr. Speaker, today you have the large tobacco manufacturers like R.J. Reynolds, Lorriard and Altria that are very much involved in the ownership, manufacturing, distribution, marketing, sales, et cetera, of the product therein.

Mr. Speaker, having looked at the definition of e-cigarette, a product derived from nicotine or any other product which stimulates smoking, we also must look at the issue of the packaging of it which is also critical in many jurisdictions, including the States of California, Arkansas and other parts of the United States of America, the packaging is now by law one that ensures that it is child resistant, greater attention is placed on the labelling so that

you must indicate clearly on the label what are the contents of the product. Also, there are restrictions that it cannot be sold to minors. Of course, it varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, in some States it cannot be sold to anyone under the age of 21, while in other States it cannot be sold to anyone under the age of 18.

Mr. Speaker, also of great importance is the prohibition in terms of wherever other forms of smoking can take place. Mr. Speaker, it is therefore perhaps very instructive and I join with my colleague, the Minister of Health, in reminding Barbadians as to why we have prohibited the smoking in public places in Barbados and the attendant to it. In our context, if I can use this opportunity to remind Barbadians, a public place is a place, structure or facility that is owned, controlled, managed or occupied by the Crown or a statutory board in Barbados; a place, site, building, factory, workplace, et cetera, that is substantially enclosed, and other places, whether you pay money to go in or not, which can be deemed as public places in Barbados. Therefore, the e-cigarette use, I believe, is very closely related to that as well because they all must fall within the ambit of where we prohibit smoking in Barbados. People ask if the street is a public place; no, it is not. They ask if the beach is a public place; no. However, when you decide to have major activities on a beach in Barbados and the public is invited and may have to pay a price, it automatically becomes a public place in that respect. I know there are some business places which still grumble about banning smoking in their places, but the truth of the matter is, "tough luck". Somebody has to be concerned about your clients and customers besides how much they are going to pay you for whatever they consume in your place. Some of us also have to be concerned about the workers therein, who invariably, prior to this, were forced to consume second-hand smoke in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, just quickly in the few minutes before I wrap up, I think we ought to zero in a little bit more on the health risks of e-cigarettes. As I said before, there is a need for more epidemiological research on the issue, but enough has been done to show that there is a relationship between traditional tobacco and e-cigarettes as a product that delivers nicotine and other things in that respect. We must look at the harmful constituents, because when people look at an e-cigarette -- for those of us who have bought them or seen them in use -- we think it is a rather small and not-too-risky product, but the danger really lies in the content of that product. Certainly the evidence is there that there are very harmful constituents in the e-cigarette which are delivered via the vapour. There is the diaphoretic elements, the genotoxins, the animal carcinogens and the various diacetyls. Diacetyl, for example, as far as my own research has indicated from a previous life, is a butter flavouring known to cause lung damage to factory workers who manufacture microwave popcorn. You start to realise the very harmful products that lie within that small, maybe two

to three-inch or four-inch, instrument called an e-cigarette, which has been proven scientifically to be dangerous to human beings. As a responsible Government, we have a duty to help protect our people; not just to share information with them but, wherever possible through legislation like this, to help contain and reduce the use of it around here.

Mr. Speaker, we also know from historical research that nicotine is highly addictive; it is toxic in high doses and has immediate biochemical effects on the brain and the body. If that is the case in your traditional cigarette, bearing in mind that the same nicotine is now contained in the e-cigarette, the risk does not go away. The harmful effects cannot go away just because you are using a different tool to consume your product. We know that the evidence is there, based on all we have seen, that e-cigarettes can contain between six and 24 milligrams of nicotine per millimetre which certainly, based on my own research, is significant enough to lead to quick addiction. As I said earlier, remember the e-cigarette is also meant as an initiator to get you to move from the e-cigarette onto traditional tobacco consumption in whatever form one consumes it. The evidence is also there that these products contained in e-cigarettes do affect adolescent brain development, and that is a matter which all of us must be concerned about in Barbados, Mr. Speaker.

As we go forth in Barbados frontally addressing the public health concerns, we must take this matter of e-cigarettes' availability and use quite seriously. That is why I say there is very much of a holistic approach to public health issues in Barbados. We cannot look at one item in isolation. As I said at the very beginning, the quest here is to help Barbadians to start really appreciating the importance of a healthy lifestyle involving diet and exercise, and not excessive consumption of these products such as tobacco and alcohol; and to help Barbadians to take a greater level of responsibility for their own health outcomes. As a State, it is our duty not just to provide facilities such as hospitals and polyclinics and access to clinical services. The success in public health reform really lies in how we can get Barbadians, our citizens, to use these facilities less than they have perhaps been using them in recent times. We will maintain the facilities to the best of our ability. We will continue to have access to well-trained physicians, nurses and other support staff, et cetera. Barbadians ought to be happy to know that as a small, open economy, we are still able to provide the best possible medicines at an affordable rate to most Barbadians, and the State does assist in that. We are also happy to know, and I heard the Minister of Health only yesterday speaking about changes which have taken place and others that will take place in respect of mental health in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, what is very critical is that the State exercises its right to ensure that our citizens are well-educated on health issues and have access to the right

facilities; and that those who engage in practices which can be deemed harmful to that agenda do feel the full weight of the law through the appropriate penalties.

Mr. Speaker, with these few words I am very much in support of this Health Services (Amendment) Bill, 2017. I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I too join in this Debate and I make the point from early that foresight is something which this party does not lack. Early we recognised the problem with smoking, and we did not seek to ban it; what we did was to allow Barbadians and other persons to have control of themselves. When one looks to see what has occurred since we banned smoking in public places, it is quite clear that it was a good decision, and all those who felt it was going to be a negative have now recognised that it is a positive. There were some persons who were quite prepared even to do it before the Bill was passed, and I remember when they did it a lot of people talked about how much business they would lose and all of that. I remember that there was a discussion that instead of losing business, the places would gain business. Sometimes people focus so much on the negative that they do not look at the positive, and a lot of businesspeople did not realise that they were actually keeping their customers away from their businesses; because a lot of the customers did not want to be associated with anybody smoking around them, especially females who sometimes had to answer to their husbands when they got home as to why they smelt so smoky. In the office atmosphere, people were allowed to smoke, and when you are in air-conditioned offices and so on, that scent tends to stay on the clothes and this sometimes created some problems at home for people.

I want to congratulate the Minister and the Cabinet and the party for taking that bold step once again in turning a negative into a positive. As I keep saying to the people of Barbados, people will get angry with us but everything we do, we do in the interest of the country Barbados. One has to recognise also that you cannot only look after the interests of a "too-few" when one considers the health bill which we have to pay as a people. In life, it is not necessarily smoking or drinking or eating; it is always the abuse of these things. We have to find out, and the best way to find out and test people to see what control they have of themselves is to place things like these on the Order Paper. What I am happy to see also is that the e-cigarette is now targeted, because some people moved from the normal cigarette to the e-cigarette as if we were giving them an excuse to make the shift. We are not doing that. We are a small, developing country we recognise that whenever there are any medical effects that it puts pressure on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. At a time like this when

the debate is all about productivity, one must ask oneself what impact these things have been having on the productivity of our country Barbados. We have to stop being selfish and spiteful and recognise that the most important thing at this stage when one considers the economic situation in the world is how we are going to get our people productive.

There is a saying that healthy people make a wealthy country, so no one can fault this party for bringing this type of amendment and this type of legislation before Parliament because it is obvious to one and all that we are not about the money that we are about looking after the health of the country and the people. Any political party that seeks to look after the interest of the people should be one that should be praised and not badmouthed all over the world or in the streets of Barbados because it is not in our interest but in the interest of the country that we do these things. It might be harsh, some people might not like it and some people might believe that we are taking away their rights but one must ask why should we give someone a right when they are already taking away rights from other persons. There are some people who felt that there is nothing wrong in taking the smoke and throwing it in the air without any care to see how pretty they can blow it and things like that without looking at or appreciating the impact they were having on their neighbours and people they call friends. If they were truly the friends of people they would not have done it.

This Government has done these things and this Government has demonstrated that it is not about a 'two-few' that it is all about the interest of the people in Barbados ensuring that we not only protect the people of Barbados but we protect their interest and their health and also ensuring that we are leading to increase the productivity of the country, so no wonder no lesser a person than the Prime Minister now needs productivity for the simple reason we understand that there are not only social problems but there are also productive problems that we have to solve.

I want to say to the people in Barbados fear not because there is nothing that we will do in this Parliament that will go against country Barbados. There might be a couple who might feel that it is against them but we cannot only think about the couple we have to think about the country Barbados and that is why we have to do the things we have to do. They might create a little pain and they might interfere with certain social aspects of them but they have to understand that at the end of the day it is country Barbados we are interested in and if it is country Barbados that we are interested in it means it is for one and all. Mr. Speaker, that is why I keep telling people that we are not a 'two-few' party, we are a party with the people's interest. It is not a situation where we will look after the interest of

one or the other. When we think, we think collectively and when we administer we do that.

There are people who say bad things about us who will continue to say it because a man can only accuse you of what he had planned to do or what he is thinking, always remember that. I live on the philosophy that when somebody accuses me of doing something I have not done it tells me that it is something that they had planned to do or have done already, so I do not worry when I hear the negative talk because I have no room in my body for negativity, I have room for converting negatives into positives, so I am happy today that we have brought this before Parliament and I want to tell the people of Barbados that we are not against them.

Mr. Speaker, you can see from the statistics already that it is working. Look and see how many centenarians we have in Barbados living. It is all because we have asked people to moderate. We are not banning or taking away anybody's rights, we are just asking them to moderate what they are doing and appreciate that once they abuse anything, they are impacting on themselves, their family and friends and on Barbados in a negative way. All we are asking them to do is to join hands with us and let us help them to help themselves.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, January is normally drug awareness month. This is championed by the National Council on Substance Abuse part of the remit of the Ministry of Home Affairs of which I am presently the Minister responsible. In that regard therefore I felt compelled to say a few words in support of this measure. I had the pleasure of taking to Cabinet the Barbados National Anti-Drug Plan, I believe, in July last which is a broad framework in terms of how we as a country want to approach drug-related issues both legal and illegal. In that regard it occurred to me not long ago that it is such an important plan that maybe in some ways I should have brought it to this Parliament because of the significance of it because I think that this is one area that we as parliamentarians must speak to with one voice.

What I am hearing from the National Council of Substance Abuse is the fact that in spite of our efforts we are having more challenges among our young people so we need to place more emphasis, more money and programmes into our schools and our communities to persuade more of our young people to move away from the abuse of legal and illegal drugs.

Mr. Speaker, if I use e-cigarettes, it is my opinion, not based on any scientific research, that many of our young people seem to agree that smoking is bad is for their health which is part of the programme that we initiated, I believe, in 2008 but e-cigarettes now seem to have taken on a bit of a fad so you see groups of young people with their implements, and as the Honourable Member for St. James South mentioned in his presentation, and because of the various taste, et cetera, it seems to be a bit of a 'lime' when they get together partaking in this exercise and we therefore need to have another crack at the public health campaign persuading our people, note my emphasis on our young people, to the dangers of these e-cigarettes, that in fact that nicotine addiction is still dangerous regardless of whether or not it is assumed through cigarette smoking or through inhaling via e-cigarettes.

The cost to us as a country in terms of Non-communicable diseases continues to escalate and that is why we have our emphasis on drug awareness month during the month of January. Yes, it is a continuous fight, yes, it is a year-long fight but in January we take the time to go into the highways and byways of Barbados and try to persuade more of our people to stay away from the abuse of substances both legal and illegal. In that regard if you would permit me, Mr. Speaker, maybe I could mention the success that we have had in terms of the implementation of our drug treatment court recently because, as you would have heard me say on more than one occasion, we took the initiative to establish a court which is addressing not the criminal behaviour but the root source of the criminal behaviour and if the genesis of that is the abuse of substances whether it be alcohol, marijuana or cocaine. I think we are seeing more of our individuals now being engaged in the use of cocaine which is of significant concern to us as a country.

The point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that this is a continuous fight for us as a country. The cost to us as a country is significant if we sit back and do nothing and if we sit back and accept that in fact that we cannot save everyone because we do not know how many individuals we are going to save.

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Mr. Speaker, yes, we all know persons who would have smoked all of their lives. I can think of one or two of my teachers from secondary schools, it was like if they could not wait to get out of the classroom to smoke. I can think of one who is now either 100 or 101 years old who smoked continuously when I was at secondary school, but that may be the exception as opposed to the rule.

Mr. Speaker, we sometimes focus on these exceptions and ask where is the evidence because, for example, we can show the individual whom I mentioned,

but what we do not see is the numbers of our people who end up at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital suffering from cancer-related issues that can be traced directly to the use of their lifestyle, to the use of cigarettes, alcohol, et cetera. Those are the persons we want to save, that is why as one voice as a Parliament we need to be consistent in our message to our people that the abuse of substances, both legal and illegal, should not be encouraged.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes I feel like if we are losing the battle. Recently I saw a Whatsapp message -- and I brought this to the attention of my colleagues about two weeks ago -- where there is a young man guzzling down a bottle of A.S.A. Field White Rum and being cheered on by others. I am told of another instance where a chap was doing it with what is commonly called a 'long-necked' brandy. Sir, as young people would call it, 'straight-pulling' cannot be good for you by any stretch of anyone's imagination. I am not a scientist or doctor but I do have some experience in terms of the consumption of certain substances and I understand the damage that they can cause.

Asides.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Parliament, I have to admit that though I am not a teetotaler I must also be able to say to my constituents and to Barbadians that I do understand the limit of having a social drink and that we in this Honourable Chamber have to set the example for the rest of the public because we claim to be leaders and we have to be leaders in all aspects of our lifestyle. Certainly, I think that as a legislator or as Member of Parliament that therefore I have to set an example for the young people of Barbados. I have never been a smoker, I supposed it because of the persons with whom I do associate so that it is easy for me to say like the Honourable Member for St. George South, to let us encourage all smokers to quit smoking because I have never had the addition and so I can lend my voice to that. Mr. Speaker, what I would want to be more consistent about is to encourage our people even the substances that are legal, i.e. tobacco and alcohol, that we need to address the abuse of those substances and the cost in terms of loss of time at work, the cost in terms of issues at home. There is no doubt that many of the domestic issues that we see are related to the abuse of substances. As to the cost in terms of crime in this society, there is no doubt that much of the crime that we are seeing, particularly burglaries that based on research that we have seen, at the time the individuals were either 'high' on alcohol, cocaine or marijuana. There is no doubt that there is a link between the abuse of these substances and many of the areas of our society and therefore we have to address the issue of abuse.

Mr. Speaker, I have said to the National Council for Substance Abuse that we need to take to the highways and

byways again, we need to go back into the churches, schools, community groups, the footballs and cricket teams and ask people to stay away from these substances. We need to ask our young people in particular to stay away from the abuse of these substances because we do not know the level of damage but what we are clear about is that there is a direct relationship between many of the ills that we are seeing in our society and the abuse of these substances. Mr. Speaker, therefore it is easy for me as a legislator, as the Minister with responsibility for Home Affairs but more importantly as someone who believes that we have a responsibility as a country and as a people to steer away many of the more vulnerable from the abuse of these substances and that we must do something about it. I want to commend therefore the Honourable Member for Christ Church South for bringing this measure to this Honourable House at this point in time.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to make one final comment in this regard. Sir, when one looks at the packaging, when one looked at the exhibit that my friend the Honourable Member for Christ Church South wanted to bring into these Honourable Chambers, I am appalled that that alone is not enough to deter someone from smoking, because many of them are so graphic that if I had bought a box, I would be so afraid that I would have to put it down. Sir, the fact that even with these displays, the fact that many people are still disregarding them and opening up the packaging means that what we are doing will not be enough unless we also continue our public health campaign. Therefore with the aid of the Ministry of Health and the National Council for Substance Abuse, I can commit that we will up the ante in terms of our public health campaign because these measures, yes, it is a step in the right direction but we want to take our educational programme back into our communities again. Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I lend my support to these measures.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged to you. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give support to the amendment and also to indicate that I believe it is important that we bring amendments like these because very often things change and sometimes the source by which people get used to doing things also change and so we have to adopt and recognise that we have to cater to those changes, that is why it is so important that we try to ensure that the message goes home, especially to our young people, of the dangers of smoking and how it can impact on their health.

Mr. Speaker, very often we find that today these things are being made to look extremely attractive, the advertisements that are done on smoking are done in such a way to try to ensure that people would seem to think that their lives are not being fulfilled unless of course they had

a cigarette in their mouth. Furthermore, with the attraction of the e-cigarette especially, we tend to find that people might have a false sense of comfort in respect of what cigarette smoking can do to one's health, therefore, that is where the danger actually lies because our young people you would find are attractive to this type of lifestyle and do not understand the consequences that it has in terms of their own personal health and their offspring.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore want to compliment the Minister for moving to look and maybe place certain standards on cigarette advertisements because I think that we can no longer have advertisements that purport to give individuals something which really is not true. Sir, very often we have in our society advertisements on different commodities to be sold and very often when you look at what the advertisements are proposing to do or to give people, when you do the fact checking you would find that in many cases they are not true. I think it is Government's responsibility to try to ensure that consumers are aware that there are certain advertisements done which really hold forth certain things that simply are not true and have certain potential dangers. Of course, when I remember the work that has been done by organisations such as NCPADD (National Committee for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency) in terms of trying to make Barbadians aware of the dangers of drugs, alcoholism and smoking in general, I think really that we need to recognise -- and I do agree with the Member for St. Philip -- that having the warning of the advertisement alone may not be the only thing. It can help and I think it will also help to at least turn away some, but what is also important is to have an initiative in our society which makes our young people aware of the dangers of advertisements and the fact that in many cases they are only designed to sell a product. Very often, we do not understand in this commercial world that the persons who are selling these products -- whether they are cigarettes or whatever -- are not interested in the person who is buying them. That is the sad thing. That is the conflict which we have in our society where we have people who operate quite legitimately in the business world and who basically break no law, but we forget the statement "caveat emptor" which is "let the buyer beware". Very often the buyer, who is actually looking at what is being said to them, is not made aware of the dangers of using the substance which they are going to consume at the time. It is not only that, Mr. Speaker. It is packaged in such a way that it tells the buyer, "Do not worry," because it showcases somebody else who is purported to have no fat on them at all and lives a comfortable lifestyle; and therefore that is what it wants you the buyer to emulate. On the other hand, they do not say to the buyer that the person whom they are showcasing might be experiencing certain difficulties in their own life which they might not want to showcase. Therefore, that is why I think it is extremely important that this piece of legislation be put in place.

Mr. Speaker, we also need to look at what other initiatives we need to put in place to try to ensure that persons, who sell products in such a way which encourages recklessness in the way in which they are consumed, are held to a certain standard. This is done in other countries by the labelling. Even outside of cigarettes, there are other commodities that are sometimes sold whose dangers we need to make our consumers aware of through the labelling process. We also have to encourage our consumers to pay attention to labelling. Just recently, there was a situation where people would have been selling products which somehow looked good but then, when you looked at the fine details in relation to the product, somehow what it was claiming to do it really could not do. An unsuspecting consumer who may be trying to be "with it" in terms of purchasing the product, will find himself trapped if the product is unsafe because he is merely trying to follow the trends. I think, again, we as representatives of the people have a responsibility to ensure that people are not trapped in this type of behaviour which, of course, only benefits the persons who are actually selling those particular commodities.

I also would like to make a special appeal to our young people; very young people. We need to protect our young people from the dangers of this type of advertising where, again, a picture is painted that unless you consume the particular product, you are not with it or you are left out. Young people are extremely susceptible to this. In our communities as well, I think we have a problem with our adolescents especially, and you would be surprised to know that there are some children around the ages of 13, 14 and 15 who, sometimes because of the lack of parental supervision required, are caught up in the world of drugs, smoking and whatever. I think really in a sense that this particular piece of legislation puts us on the way now to be trying to look at legislation which deals effectively with those persons who exploit our young minds. It is not only that; at those tender ages, they could actually destroy their health and ability to contribute to our community. I know of instances in communities where you have extremely young people who, because they may be influenced by older folk in some cases, actually smoke these substances. I really think that our society needs to recognise that it has a level of responsibility to our young people, especially juveniles between ages 12 and 16 who might not be able to make reasonable decisions on their own but are influenced by people to actually get into these habits. At the end of the day, the habits do not benefit them but they benefit those people who are actually selling the products. That is why we have to insist that even the shopkeepers not sell products such as cigarettes to persons below a certain age. This is still happening in our country, where young people go into shops and are able to buy cigarettes and other items which they should not really buy.

Sir, we have to ensure that we educate our adults to the fact that they should not engage in the practice of selling our young children these things. Sometimes it happens in our homes and communities, where you have adults taking up young children and sending them to the shops and supermarkets to buy from alcohol to cigarettes to everything else. Sir, this practice we need to cut out. We cannot place the responsibility for cutting out that practice on Government alone, because Government now is trying to put in place legislation to try to make sure that kind of packaging is illegal. We also need the cooperation of the shopkeepers, the persons out there engaged in this practice of selling young people these substances, and the parents. We have a practice that is now developing in our community where we like to feel good, and sometimes we encourage our young children in the most ridiculous types of behaviour. Sir, I think we must recognise that we have a responsibility in general in our society to try to ensure that what this legislation is trying to achieve is, first of all, to make sure that people are aware of the dangers posed by smoking; to protect our very young people and those who are least able to defend themselves from getting access to the substances; and to ensure that they do not get access to those substances. With that, Sir, I thank you for allowing me to make the contribution.

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

Hon. S.A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to voice my support for this Amendment to the Health Services Act which, in short measure, focuses attention on e-cigarettes and the whole arrangement in relation to basically protecting consumers in terms of this new smoking phenomenon. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that this certainly is a move by the Ministry of Health to provide a buffer, a protective mechanism for consumers. Of course, the approach as you would have heard has never been to ban access to these instruments whether it is cigarettes or now of course this new phenomenon in terms of the e-cigarettes. Of course, I am sure as you heard from the Minister of Health and the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Health recognises that it has a responsibility to make our consumers aware of the dangers of items such as the e-cigarette. I do not intend to repeat what has been said before because I think it is important to make our consuming public aware of the new developments, and in this case the e-cigarettes has been a new development globally and has been used to target particularly young users...

In this case, Mr. Speaker, the information available to me suggests that the e-cigarette has been very skilfully used to target young people who have never smoked in their life. In fact, the success of the marketing has been such that the number of young persons who have never smoked have actually increased as a result of the very

skilful marketing of the e-cigarette, so I do agree that certainly a parliamentary debate on the introduction of legislative mechanisms to include all aspects of smoking... Indeed, going forward whether or not the innovators come up with new ways to entice people to smoke, I believe that our legislative arrangements would need to be flexible enough, to be very quick and very rapid in incorporating these new developments. Mr. Speaker, that alone suggests that the Ministry of Health and the officers in the Ministry of Health of course led by the Minister have been on the ball on this one in not only recognising the global trends but in coming to the House in quick measure ensuring that this particular matter is given the legislative treatment, and therefore the ministry in my view needs to be congratulated for that. Certainly from my own perspective as Minister of Youth we know that in many cases smoking, whether it is the abuse of tobacco or as in this case the abuse of many of the chemicals that are used in the e-cigarettes, is often used largely to target young people.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, the abuse of marijuana has also been a topical issue in relation to young people. I will say to this House, for example, that we are not talking now of young people generally who are not aware of these matters. They have access to fairly immediate and most of the time accurate information on the worldwide web in which to access information on these new developments, so to a large measure most of the things that we are talking about and most of the alarms that we are raising are known by our young population.

Mr. Speaker, I think to a large measure that most of the policies aimed at young people are successful when they are deemed to be relevant, when they are deemed to be sincere and when they are deemed to be accurate in relation to the implementation of those policies. I think, Mr. Speaker, that this particular measure before the House does give us an opportunity to not only delve in on the area of this new smoking development but to also speak of how we are going to use innovative means to ensure that accurate messages in Barbados are sufficiently targeted for young people. I believe that we have to find ways to widen our partners who are involved in youth related activities that are popular and of course those places where young people frequent. I think we should enlist the owners of bars, the owners of party spots and the owners of entertainment facilities that young people frequent to find ways to have them partnered with the Ministry of Health to send strong and relevant messages to our young people because to a large extent much of the abuse of not of only cigarettes and so on but of illegal substances take place in Barbados particularly in those night spots, bars and party spaces. It takes place on 'the block' as well. In fact, there are many locations across Barbados that these substances are abused. In fact, much of the damage that is done to young minds by the abuse of legal substances only turn up when they

present at the health facilities including the Psychiatric Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, information available to us suggests that this is a big problem. The abuse of tobacco is a problem but certainly the abuse of marijuana to my mind looms large as even a bigger problem. I believe that oftentimes our young people are abusing marijuana based on inaccurate information about the ingredients of marijuana and we have to be very forthright and go to the next level if we are talking about protecting young people from marketers that are out there seeking only to make money through their sales of substances that could threaten their health. Mr. Speaker, that is why I talk about where young people sense where a Government is going in the sense that we have to look at it comprehensively and holistically.

The discussion that we are having today to my mind calls for a bigger national dialogue in Barbados on the abuse of all smoking substances. We must not be shy about it, we are aware that it is happening in our communities, we are aware that it is doing immense damage to our young people and certainly we have an obligation to address our minds to the question of the abuse of marijuana smoke.

Mr. Speaker, we came to this House some time ago and obviously took a decision to ban smoking in public places and I ask the question how successful has that been in terms of achieving compliance in relation to adhering to the ban on smoking in public places. I am saying, this, Mr. Speaker, because that particular bit of legislation was very well in scope. The banning of smoking in public places not only relates to the abuse of tobacco, it relates also to the smoking of marijuana and other substances. My concern certainly in relation to protecting people generally but more particularly our young people is the fact that my observance has been that there are persons who are not adhering to the ban on smoking in public places in the way they should particularly in party spots. When you go to various events, whether it is in the open or not, whether it is at Farley Hill or other places, you can smell the pungent odour of marijuana smoke right in your face. Mr. Chairman, people are so bold that they are using the substance, they are smoking it and they are spewing it in your face, without consideration to the fact that you are not a user of any kind of smoking substance at all. Of course, what this raises is the question of apparently those who do not want to smoke are now being forced to smoke because if you are not a smoker and persons are not adhering to the legislation, the ban of smoking in public place, then you become a victim of the inhalation of secondary smoke which I understand is even more dangerous to you than smoking is to the actual user who smokes himself.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a particular matter that we have to pay keen attention to because as lawmakers in

terms of convincing young people of the genuineness of legislative intervention, as I said before we have to do the entire picture and therefore, Mr. Speaker, I believe that there is good reason to look at the whole question of whether or not having enacted regulations dealing with the ban of smoking in public places what are the levels of compliance and what mechanisms can be used to ensure compliance to protect not only the user but I think the bigger concern for me, Mr. Speaker, is the protection of persons who, for example, go to a nightclub to have a good time or who go to a concert to have a good time but they are confronted by persons who are not in any way considerate about smoking and spewing their smoke of whatever substance it is in your face. Mr. Speaker, that to my mind is the acid test of whether or not the legislation in relation to the banning of smoking in public places has really been successful.

I agree that we have to do much more public information. I think that there is a good case to say that our public information strategy, of course, must also include targeting our social media and ensuring that we could find ways to capture the attention of our young people. Certainly, if we are able to outline the dangers of what is happening then that could help, although, Mr. Speaker, I am of the view that much of the information in relation to the dangers of smoking the various types of substances or smoking generally are readily available and that it could be that of course our public information strategy can be more effective in relation to putting the information in the face of young people.

Mr. Speaker, of course, whether it is on the Internet, if you do not want to be advised and educated and so on then you would not go look for it, so I think we have a responsibility, certainly in the Ministry of Health and working along with our partners, to be able to do what I call targeted and purposeful online public education, particularly utilising our social media. I think now that we have come to recognising that we have to be on the ball in relation to developments that could endanger the health of our citizens such as the use of the e-cigarette, I think this is a good time to put in place an aggressive public information strategy to target our young people, particularly in relation to the wider issue of the abuse of the abuse of substances. Mr. Speaker, also included in that is the abuse of alcohol as well, because I think that is a subject that we do not discuss often but there is often a huge amount of abuse of alcohol which leads to other abuses. Mr. Speaker, I think we have to find the techniques and strategies to be able to address these matters.

Mr. Speaker, I am certainly very supportive of this particular amendment which is before this Honourable House and would want to encourage the Ministry of Health and also its officers to be engaged in ensuring that the dangers inherent in the use particularly of the e-cigarette,

because as you know the e-cigarette uses a combination of different things, for example, the use of vapors to transmit dangerous drugs into your lungs, that is why I think the labelling is so important. I believe that our young people who would be captured or caught by very skillful and smart marketing need to be aware of what those substances are. I think they also need to be aware of the short, medium and long term impact on health, particularly the different types of cancers that are traceable to the abuse of substances and the smoking of various things.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that it is important to connect the chronic non-communicable diseases to the things that may seem fun in the short term. It may be fun to use the e-cigarette and to abuse illegal substances, but what about the medium to long-term impact on health. I heard, of course, a reference to the threat that all of this poses to national productivity. To that extent certainly I agree that there is a wider and larger issue in relation to what we are doing when we bring these types of Bills to the Honourable House because they have a significant relevance to the things that could impair and endanger national productivity.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that one of the things that is currently endangering national productivity in Barbados is the abuse of illegal substances, particularly the abuse of marijuana. Sir, it is impacting on national productivity in this country. Mr. Speaker, I think that once it is impacting national productivity in this country that it calls for a reaction and response by the Government which I am sure will happen. Mr. Speaker, we have to send the signal that we are not turning a blind eye to these critical matters and therefore that is why I embrace this particular amendment. I think as lawmakers we have to engage Barbados in a national dialogue on these issues. We must not believe that if we come here and talk about the dangers of marijuana smoking that we are engaged in some extra sensitive discussion, not when the issue of abusing marijuana can impair the thinking and can determine whether a young person will or will not be productive.

Mr. Speaker, if we are saying that and we are having discussion on national productivity and on the role of the State in protecting our productivity levels, then I believe that discussion and dialogue must be enlarged and we have got to be bold enough to confront it. Indeed, I believe that we have to be bold enough to be proactive enough to take the necessary decisions and to engage in the kind of national dialogue that will cause our young people to have confidence in us as lawmakers and to take the advice that we give. Mr. Speaker, those young people out there who are listening to this debate on the issue of protecting them from the skillful marketing, in this case e-cigarette, many of them would tell me that they would also want to hear our views on the abuse of other illegal substances, inclusive of alcohol and marijuana and why it must become a part of

our national discourse is because of the impact on our national productivity levels and on our young people's ability to become productive citizens. Mr. Speaker, this, to my mind, must become part of our discourse and, I believe, poses one of the most single dangers to us achieving sustainable levels of national productivity. Mr. Speaker, if our young people are not fully engaged, if their young minds are not healthy, then we run the danger of developing a generation which is not physically equipped to tackle some of the very significant challenges which the New World Order will bring to small, open economies such as Barbados. Mr. Speaker, to that extent I will just end my remarks by saying that this Amendment to the Health Services Act certainly is a step in the right direction. Certainly under that legislation, the Minister of Health has been given some very wide powers to do a number of things. I only wish that other Ministers of Health would have taken the path of this Minister in being bold enough to take measures to protect public health within a very short time. As soon as this matter came on the global agenda, I must say the Minister of Health was very quick to bring the draft Paper to the Social Policy Committee of the Cabinet and ensure that the Cabinet could very quickly agree to this Amendment and the regulations. I certainly have to compliment the Ministry of Health on that. With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would restate my agreement with this Amendment before the House and certainly say to young Barbadians who are listening to this Debate that they now need to take this information and act on it wisely. I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. Yes, the Right Honourable Prime Minister.

Rt. Hon. F.J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a very brief intervention on this Amendment and to, of course, signal my support of it. Any Amendment before this Honourable House which targets the health of the people of this nation is an initiative deserving of the House's support. Undergirding the thinking of the Government is the view that Barbados is not just an economy; it is also a society, and if you get all of the economic indices right but you have a society that is in decay in terms of health or all of the other social indicators, you are penny-wise and pound-foolish. Therefore, the health of the nation is of paramount importance. All those who have spoken before have mentioned productivity; in fact, there is a link between the health of the nation and its capacity to produce the goods and services which we all want to consume.

Ironically, Mr. Speaker, when Barbados was settled in the 17th Century one of the first crops with which the settlers experimented was tobacco. Had tobacco turned out to be a viable crop, Barbados would have been an exporter of tobacco products. It just happened that the soils of Barbados and other factors rendered tobacco unviable and

that is how we ended up with sugar, which is also now associated with some of the problems we are trying to solve. When we talk about alcoholism, the rum that we boast so much about is a byproduct of sugar production, and as long ago as the 18th Century it used to be an offence -- a criminal offence -- in the United States of America to be found with rum that was exported from Barbados. Of course, you go even further and today even as we talk about environmental sustainability and the use of renewable energy and so on, we are still trying to exploit our fossil fuel potentialities; the very fossil fuels which we say are a threat to the environment. We have these contradictions in our developmental processes, but they do not in any way undermine the need on our part to ensure that we have a society that is healthy and that our young people are protected from its perils.

Barbados has been leading the fight in this region and across the developing world, among Small Island Developing States, against the high incidence of chronic non-communicable diseases. We carried this crusade to the United Nations and tried to sensitise the General Assembly of that body to this problem and how it has been affecting our developmental prospects. I was made aware by our NCD (non-communicable disease) Czar here in a meeting he had with me some time ago that any time you see ten Barbadians sitting down, standing or in a gathering anywhere, you can be sure that seven of them are suffering with some kind of non-communicable disease; diabetes, heart problems, obesity, any of these. Therefore, it behooves us as a country to pay very special attention to all those potential causes of the incidence of these NCDs.

Operating in our current economic environment, it is obvious that the people who produce tobacco, the people who produce sugar, the people who produce rum and even those to whom the Attorney General in his speech referred to as "those who produce legal drugs", are interested in the profits they can make from the production of these things. I think it was the Scottish philosopher Adam Smith, in his famous landmark work, 'The Wealth of Nations', who reminded us that it is not out of the benevolence of the brewer, the baker or the butcher that we get our dinner. It is out of their regard for their own profit. Therefore, we have to face the reality that it is absolutely necessary sometimes for our economic development that we have to produce items which we would want to caution others not to consume. That, I believe, is one of the contradictions that would be facing those countries which have strong tobacco industries.

It is true that ever since this Government took the decision to abolish smoking in public places in Barbados, there has been a noticeable decrease in that practice, and this Amendment, as I understand it, is intended to plug a loophole left by the previous legislation.

Our young people, of course, are always at risk because they are highly vulnerable to advertisements and the kind of marketing that the producers of these items invest so heavily in.

It is not without significance that even though the western world has just passed through what is being billed the Great Recession that the pharmaceutical industry was largely untouched by it in any negative way. Other businesses were closed down, the automobile industry was challenged and this industry was challenged, insurance companies were challenged and banks were challenged but the pharmaceutical industry was left largely untouched because our use of drugs legal and illegal, but for the purposes of the pharmaceutical industry our use of legal drugs, which is so much a part of our way of life that routinely we invest very heavily in the pill-popping as it were that has now become a part of our daily lives.

Mr. Speaker, this is not another way of saying that countries like ours can afford to push our hands in the air in despair and say that it is a battle that we cannot win. Recently we took a decision here in Barbados to impose a tax on sweet drinks because we want to control that source of chronic non-communicable diseases by steering our young people in particular but our adults as well away from the abuse of that source of the contraction of non-communicable diseases and to discourage manufacturers from abusing their positions of dominance as well. Hardly had we done that when we began to get overtures from producers of soft drinks abroad who brought delegations down here to meet with the Minister of Health and tried to meet with me and so on to advise us that if only we would remove that tax they would be willing to invest some money in helping us to deal with the issue of chronic non-communicable diseases because as far as they were concerned what we were doing here had the potential to spread. In fact, when I was in the United States of America not too long ago a meeting was actually requested with me to discuss how we were able to impose this tax on sweet drinks so easily without there being any national outcry, and I had to make the point that we properly educated the nation on the critical factors involved in what we were about to do and prepared them for it so that by the time it came everybody understood the risk against which we were trying to protect them. Of course, we have seen developed countries follow our example as a result, so we must not underestimate our capacity to influence what is going on in other parts of the world. We have seen it happened before and this initiative in relation to smoking in public places and in relation to the electronic cigarette and so on can have the effect of influencing how people in other parts of the world behave and in that way contribute to making our civilisation a more secured civilisation, making our people healthier people and more productive people and that can only conduce to the benefit not only of Barbados and of the Caribbean but our western civilisation as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, the Minister of Health, for the stick-to-itiveness which he has permitted himself to issues of this kind and for bringing this amendment to the House so that we can add yet another layer of protection to the health of our people.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise in this debate to support the initiative which is before the House and to encourage the Minister of Health to continue to treat to all of these matters that relate to chronic non-communicable diseases because that as well as the symptoms relating to an ageing population are in fact the greatest challenges that we confront as a society. Maybe the Minister of Health and myself are the two people who can speak to this issue and I commend him because he like me knows what it is to deal with the attraction to smoking cigarettes and he like me or I like him...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North lived the way in abandoning the habit. There are others in here who had the habit and abandoned it. I like the Minister of Health am now trying to abandon it too.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I have not had one for a few days. What I am saying is that for somebody who is a regular smoker that is a large thing as the Minister of Health would tell you but I speak from this perspective because I would want from the heart to tell all young people not to start smoking, and I say this with sincerity, because it is something that in fact will harm them in one way or another. Much of the habits that we are now asking people to abandon, whether it is smoking, drinking, an addiction to sugar, eating too much carbohydrates or whatever, the truth is that if we carry on these conversations at a much earlier stage in people's lives and if we do it not as the promulgation of Government policy but as the experience of individuals in fighting how to combat these behaviours, I think we would have more success with a lot more of our younger people and not so young people in terms of changing their habits. Within in the last 12 years I made a determination that I was not eating anything that comes out of a tin because for it to be in a tin it has to have some kind of chemical to keep it fresh, and immediately I also made a determination that as much as macaroni and cheese tastes good, (1) I am not

making it in my house and (2) I am not eating it more than two or three times a year. The others joke because I tell them straight that I will eat ham two times a year, at Easter and Christmas. In any event if you eat ham all of the time it does not have the same taste or allure that it would otherwise have.

Mr. Speaker, I want simply to lend my voice and my support to this because I am acutely aware that chronic non-communicable diseases are in fact the biggest challenge that we face. I am also aware that the lack of exercise is taking a major toll on our population and however-which-way we can reinforce the message, we need to do so, as the statistics are staggering in terms of the number of Barbadian women and men who do not exercise. Sir, let me put it another way, there are less than three out of every ten Barbadian women who exercise and if we do not get on top of it we are going to see more people suffering with strokes, heart attacks and diabetes affecting more people.

Mr. Speaker, the amount of young friends that I have lost in the last few years is unreal and so we have to find a way of getting on top of each of our own health circumstances. Some things, obviously there is a genealogical disposition to, we accept that but we have to make certain things 'kool' if that is going to influence behaviour and we have to explain to people why excess in any form is bad for you and that balance is really what it is about. Sir, invariably, even for those who have problems with weight, this continuous dieting, et cetera...

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has done an excellent job in dropping his weight. The Honourable Member needs to continue to speak and to encourage those around him. I have managed to drop some, about 50 pounds and would like to drop even more, but it is a continuous process. Sir, for anybody who would want to make people feel that this is easy would be telling a lie, it is not easy. Mr. Speaker, it is to get individuals to recognise that we have to push past the pain, we have to suck it up or suck it in, if it is walking, swimming or whatever, let us do it. Sir, I am not at all saying that it is easy but the key is that on these things I believe that we can speak with one voice as a people because really and truly it has to do with how we live every hour of our lives, rather than large policy issues. Of course, we need the policy issues, of course, we need the legislation but above all else...

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. George South once said that you cannot legislate a culture out and it is one of the wisest things that the Honourable Member has ever said, you cannot legislate a culture out. Mr. Speaker, it is wise because invariably we introduce legislation but that does not mean that we are bringing about behavioral change and it the behavioral change that we now need to get on top of.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my voice to this debate, to say that it is not easy but to encourage all young people and all persons in this country to let us do what we can to control our behavior but in particular if you have not started smoking do not start. Secondly, it does not cost us anything but I do believe that the Government Information Service ought to embark on a programme of public service advertisements encouraging people to get testes -- men, to test for their prostate- women, to go for their mammograms and pap smears, people to check their blood sugar and to ensure that these early tests are done on a regular basis. Sir, people who are better educated and perhaps have the money to go to their own private doctors may do it more often but we need to make sure that everybody does it and I think that that constant reminder with the public service advertisements of the Government Information Service will be a good way in which we can influence people's behaviours.

Mr. Speaker, there are too many constituents and friends that I have that when they find out that they have a problem they are already at stage 3 or 4 cancer. I remember the first time that I went for a colonoscopy ten years ago the doctor said to me that this is the one preventative form of cancer, that if the polyps are taken out you virtually have no chance of getting cancer of the colon. Sir, religiously every two to three years I go for a colonoscopy because my family is predisposed to it. What they tell you is that if you have it in your family you should start testing ten years before it appeared in your family, hence, I have been testing now for about 11 or 12 years and I have had polyps and knock wood, each time they have been able to take them out and therefore I have not had the problem of having to confront cancer of the colon as a possibility.

Mr. Speaker, if we could get more and more of our people and if we could speak with one voice... We have done with HIV/AIDS where every year the testing period comes around the Government and the Opposition speak in one voice to send the message that this is something of which the society needs to take control. I think we need to do it now with these other things.

Mr. Speaker, the last point I would make is this and once again I will speak from personal experience. I have said in this Honourable House before, but when you start to recognise that it is a new diagnosis and that many people have it but do not know that they have it and how it affects both your heart and a whole host of other aspects of your health, then it becomes important for people to check, and that is sleep apnea. There are a lot of people in this country who have sleep apnea and do not realise that they have it. Sleep apnea can either be caused by being overweight or otherwise. When you stop breathing when you are sleeping it deprives the brain of oxygen, it means that people remain tired throughout the day, it means that they are underperforming but worse than all of that it means that

you are putting pressure on your heart and on other aspects of your organs. Mr. Speaker, because it is a diagnosis that perhaps is less than 20 years around in terms of how people have traditionally diagnosed it, a lot of people do not know about it. Of course, the machines that are able to regulate people's breathing if they use them make a significant difference not just to the quality of life but to the length of life.

Sir, these are the public service advertisements that I think that the Government Information Service can quite appropriately start putting out there as forms of public education for many of our citizens who may not be necessarily reading in this respect but who if they start to understand what they are at risk of getting they will make changes to their lives and would start to do their testings. Sir, I can only urge that we embark on this process in relation to the Government Information Service public service announcements but in general to support the Government with this initiative and also with the e-cigarettes.

Mr. Speaker, I saw a horrific graphic on Facebook with an e-cigarette that exploded in a gentleman's mouth. The truth is, when you really start to think about it, anything that has battery and is electrically charged has the capacity to do exactly that and we are taking faith in our hands if we believe that every one that has been produced has been produced to the right quality or to the highest quality. Are you prepared to take that chance? I certainly am not. That is the question I think that each person should ask themselves with respect to a lot of these attractions. Is it easy? No, it is not. Are there risks? Probably there are.

Mr. Speaker, I will always remember Sir Harold St. John, when Sir Harold stopped smoking he used to have rubber bands or paper clips wrapped around his hands over and over because for many people smoking is also a tactile thing and I too find myself doing it with my watch because you feel the need to do something with your hands. Mr. Speaker, whatever it is it is not easy, we all need support in breaking bad habits but I would want to encourage persons not to start up the bad habits. I am obliged to you, Sir, in respect of these remarks. I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, in wrapping up this debate let me thank all Honourable Members for their very important contributions.

Asides.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I have sat here and waited for all the Members of the Opposition to speak because that was the position last week. The position was

that if it was not on the economy and if the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance were not speaking, the Members on that side were to be silent. That position obtained this morning when we started this discussion, because the Honourable Member for St. George told me he had a lot more to say on this question of health but was deprived of that opportunity by the leader's policy, Sir. The Leader of the Opposition now comes in here....

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

Mr. D.G. SUTHERLAND: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South is misleading the Chamber. In my brief remarks to the Lower House, I never said that we were deprived of speaking on this Bill, so the Honourable Member should correct the Lower Chamber with what he just said in his wrap-up.

Mr. SPEAKER: No Point of Order. Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I want to apologise to the Honourable Member. If the Honourable Member had nothing to say, he certainly misled me so I apologise and will never venture to associate the Honourable Member with any fullness of presentation in respect of these topics. Mr. Speaker, we have made the point and Members who have spoken in this Debate, one after the other, have made very clear the seriousness and intent of our Amendment this morning. Certainly, Sir, I want to commend the Members on this side who were fully in support of the Amendment and who spoke widely of their experiences and indeed their good wishes. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition has added to a lot of what had been said before, and has indeed made some comments about the usefulness of the Government information system, the Health Promotion Unit of the Ministry of Health and, as I pointed out this morning, the participation of those health-related non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Barbados in promoting these activities. Sir, I would note, in passing, that I have asked a question of my team at the Ministry, and I think we have on record something like 47 health-related NGOs active in Barbados today. This is something to be really well appreciated, and again my thanks to them and all of their leaders.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister spoke to the question of the ten per cent Sweetened Beverage Tax. It was referred to from time to time here again. Indeed, those who would have followed the events of the weekend would have seen in the media a comment from the leader of the Pan American Health Organisation here in Barbados, who not only spoke to the success of the ten per cent imposition on sweetened beverages but suggested that Government should consider increasing that tax. He used the figure like

20 per cent. These are all ideas being thrown out, not only by the Government and not only by us in the Ministry but by other associated leaders.

I would like to add that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central spoke to the very important need to gather information about the performance of these impositions, or these taxes or these measures. The Honourable Member spoke to the need to be able to speak accurately to the success or the performance of these measures, and I want to tell him that as far as the University of the West Indies is concerned, only yesterday we had a session with the research student who is carrying out a study of the success and progress of the ten per cent imposition on sweetened beverages in Barbados as a Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) thesis. We already are gathering a lot of information. As a matter of fact, she was able to share with us, for instance, that on average the actual flow-through in terms of percentage in increase in the prices of sweetened beverages has been more like six per cent. Although there has been some absorption of the taxation by the distributors and the manufacturers, the actual flow-through to the consumer averages out at something like six per cent.

Yes, we hear you, Sir, but we certainly are mindful of the importance of gathering data on these impositions, so that our stories become not only anecdotal but so that we can actually put figures and data to what has been happening. This is a newish sort of venture in many of our agencies. The collection of data has usually been left to people like the Statistical Department and the Ministry of Finance, et cetera, but the need for other line Ministries like Environment, Health and Education.... In terms of education, my colleague, the Honourable Minister of Education, of course, is a statistical and data freak. He operates on just running figures and graphs through his mind all the time. That is the direction we have to go in. Whatever we do, whatever we embark on, we need to be able to measure so that we can demonstrate to ourselves, first of all, and then to the public that we are actually proceeding in the direction contemplated.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly again want to thank Honourable Members for their contribution and I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

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

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 -- 3, inclusive, were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE, 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. J.D.E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Health Services (Amendment) Act, 2017.

12.57 p.m.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES (Recommitted)

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the Profession, Trade and Business Registration (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

FIRST READING OF BILLS (Recommitted)

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I beg to move that the Profession, Trade and Business Registration (Amendment) Bill, 2017 be read for a first time.

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

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.30 p.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Good afternoon, 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 – INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR
RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT
(MEMBERSHIP OF BARBADOS)
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2017.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, the matter before this Honourable House is an amendment to the Act that permits for Barbados' membership under the World Bank or what we call the I.B.R.D. It relates relative to the Articles of that Act that speak specifically to the issue of Barbados' subscription to the bank. Madam Deputy Speaker, as you know, when Barbados joined the World Bank many years ago in the 1970s, the process of joining involved the retention and ownership of part of the capital stock of the bank. This is not exclusive to the World Bank, of course, we have done it with the International Monetary Fund where we hold S.D.R's. It also relates to the C.A.F, for example, as another international financial institution which we recently became a member of and had to purchase shares, so that in each of these international financial institutions the membership is denoted and your voting powers are denoted by the amount and numbers of shares which you hold. Those shares are then given a nominal financial value noted either in United States of America dollars and/or in other currencies as are internationally accepted.

Mr. Speaker, in this particular regard, Barbados holds outstanding subscriptions in the bank which from time to time, as is the case with all other members of the bank, it is necessary for those subscriptions to be updated and/or reevaluated and if necessary redistributed among members of the World Bank. This usually happens when there is a reevaluation and General Capital Increase (GCI) in the bank's stock as held by its members. That General Capital Increase in the stock was conducted over the last four years and in 2015 the Secretary of the Bank wrote to the Government of Barbados indicating that out of the reevaluation exercise Barbados would be accorded additional shares in the bank. Madam Deputy Speaker, as a member owning those shares it is our responsibility to accept that reevaluation, unless you want to drop out of the bank which we are not proposing to do, and to pay the additional amount as represented by the stock increase that you will get from the reevaluation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in that regard, the note from the bank indicated that Barbados and other Members were asked to subscribe to an additional 253 shares on the terms identified in Resolution 613, entitled "The 2010 General Capital Increase Resolution" which was formally adopted by the bank a few years ago in 2011. Madam Deputy Speaker, under those Members' laws on Regulations and Procedures Barbados wrote back to the bank and indicated that it was our intention to take up those

shares. Madam Deputy Speaker, of course, in doing so it means that we would have had to pay to the bank an additional amount estimated at \$30 520 655 million to facilitate our ownership of those additional shares to be paid to the Accountant-General to the I.B.R.D. Madam Deputy Speaker, of course, that is a substantial amount of money and Barbados would not have been in a position, as is most Small Island Developing States, to pay over such large sums in one fell swoop and therefore we wrote to the bank and indicated that we wanted to pay that over three successive financial years so as to reduce the amount of burden that it would have caused, both on the Treasury and on our reserves situation. Madam Deputy Speaker, the bank wrote back and indicated that indeed the rules did allow us to pay that additional resources into them over a period of time.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we would have been purchasing those additional 223 shares to add to the existing total at 2012 for 948.4 shares for Barbados. Each share, I believe, would have gone from the original amount of

\$100 000 per share in 1973 when we first joined, to a total of \$1 831 239.30 per share at the new valuation of the General Capital Increase (GCI) ended March 16, 2016. Madam Deputy Speaker, Barbados agreed by principle and by letter and spirit that we would accept the additional shares allocated, as has been the case with other countries as well.

Madam Deputy Speaker, having done that the next step in the process would have been to pay over those resources. However, the existing Act which permits for such ownership of shares and the way how the subscription to the ownership of shares were written did not permit for the Memorandum of Law and the accompanying documents in the Articles of Membership of the World Bank for Barbados to increase that subscription without an amendment to the existing legislation. To the extent that this is the case, the advice was sought of the Solicitor General and this confirmed that acceptance of such an increase and the execution of such an increase would require an Amendment to the International Bank for Reconstruction (Membership of Barbados) Act, so that we could permit for such to be done. It was, however, also discovered and felt that since it has now become the practice over the years for these general capital increases to occur, and will likely occur in the future more over a short to medium-term period than in an extended period, that an Amendment to the Act may not be the most efficacious if we did not so amend to allow for any future capital increase. Simply said, it means that we would not have to come back each time there is an increase and Barbados is requested to take additional stock to have to change the Act. Therefore, it was agreed that we would insert in the legislation the following terms at Section 4 of the

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (Membership of Barbados) Act, CAP 323D, that it should be amended to reflect at Section 7:

“That the Government is authorised to subscribe to shares of the capital stock in accordance with Section 3, Article 2, of the Bank Agreement”.

This, of course, provides the conditions under which such stock should be taken; so that in the future any increases in the capital stock and any request from the Bank for us to subscribe to such increases and to have any resources paid over to the Secretary of the Bank would be permitted under the legislation, so long as the Bank writes officially and requests it and the Government of Barbados accepts its responsibility in that particular regard.

This is a relatively simple Amendment, but of course it allows us to maintain our status as a current up-to-date and fully subscribed member of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development World Bank. Therefore, with those few words, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have no difficulty in recommending this Amendment to this House of Assembly, and I ask that the Bill be read a second time.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I can actually second it. I can second it. Nobody has formally done it before I stood up, so I am agreeing to second the Bill that is before this Honourable Chamber. It is not contentious.

Aside.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I have seen many things but this one takes the cake. I am not sure why they would not want the Opposition to second this Bill. I suspect that there may be more in the mortar than the pestle. The truth is that this Amendment in and of itself is not contentious. It is one that allows us to retain our relationship with the World Bank, but it brings into sharp contrast where we find ourselves today. The truth is that we have not been able to borrow from the World Bank other than for HIV-AIDS projects for the last 15 years or so. The last major project before the HIV-AIDS projects was in fact the education loan, and that was at the height of the 1991-94 economic difficulties. The first task I had as Minister of Education with respect to that loan was to go back to the World Bank to remove the condition precedents for the disbursement of that loan with the World Bank. Those condition precedents in fact were the charging of tuition fees at the University of the West Indies and at the Barbados Community College. When we went back to the World Bank to ask for them to be taken off -- if not we would not accept the loan which was negotiated in the early

1990s -- the World Bank indicated that it was not them who had put that precedent and requirement on the table, but it was the then Government which had done so. I suspect that there may have obviously been some pressure but the bottomline is that we made it absolutely clear to the World Bank that we would not take up any loan that required us having to charge fees to Barbadian students at the University of the West Indies, the Polytechnic or the Community College.

I am not going to keep this House long on this matter, but it just brings into reality the fact that downgrades do matter, and credit downgrades do matter, because until we can solve the problem as to why we can borrow from the World Bank which has graduated us as a middle income country, we do not have access to the international capital markets easily because of the credit downgrades and, in relation to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Caribbean Development Bank and now the Latin American Development Bank (CAF), those are the three sources of concession funding remaining for us. Therefore, I will await a full economic debate rather than to engage the Minister of Finance at this point in time, because all of these things are inter-related. I appreciate that this is a pro-forma exercise but substantive for the benefit of the World Bank, and I shall not detain the House any further on this matter. Suffice it to say that I trust and pray that we will have an opportunity for a full economic debate in the near future. I am obliged to you.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her intervention. Of course, she said this is a perfunctory matter; it is a matter that as members of the Bank we have to do. We have been graduated. I was making the point last evening to the Parliamentary Group that it has become so bad that, other than the HIV-AIDS project of which we recently wound up the second iteration, Barbados has not received any substantial benefit financially from being a member of the World Bank. Somebody asked why we are still in it, but we are in it because it is an important institution. Even when you go to the capital markets to borrow privately, there is certain information which they require from the International Monetary Fund and there is certain information which they will only accept on the Barbados economy from the World Bank. When creditors are asking for information, ratings agencies and so forth, they expect that information would be provided by certain institutions; and when it comes to economic development issues, the World Bank is the institution which is looked to. It is the institution to which it is expected that Barbados will report all of what is happening in its economy, and that those reports will be accurate and can be relied upon. They place an onus on the Bank to provide that analysis and, of course, to give their views on what is happening.

Being a member of the World Bank is not only just to get projects. Of course, we would much prefer to be ungraduated, if that is a word, in order to receive funding. I remember when I first became Minister of Finance after Hurricane Tomas, the then new Country Head for Barbados and this region was in fact in Barbados and happened to be here while the storm was occurring. I met with her -- I cannot recall the lady's name at this moment -- only days after the storm had passed. Even knowing from my own non-governmental organisation (NGO) days what the situation was, I asked if it was possible that the World Bank could give us some funding to help with the rehabilitation of the country. She said, "I am here. I have seen it. I have experienced the storm, but unfortunately, as you know, the graduated rules do not allow you to access even funding for natural disasters" and that is hard.

I reflect on the history of the Bank in many ways. I also know that in the 1980s their excused or ungraduated what we call South Korea and allowed South Korea back in as an IDA country because when you are not graduated you are able to borrow from IDA, the International Development Association. In fact, up to a few years ago Barbados, I am not sure what our position is now, was actually a net contributor to IDA in that we would send US money into IDA to help other less developed countries around the world. They ungraduated South Korea and it was able to go back into IDA and get large sums of development resources which it used in addition to its own resources and its expansion of its business and so forth and so on to build up its economy. Today Korea is one of the leading economies in South East Asia. It is a technology leader of course. Samsung and some of these modern-day technological giants have actually emerged out of Korea.

We use South Korea always as an example in our discussions with the World Bank that sometimes a country or countries may reach what they call development country status, we do not necessarily support the GDP per capita standard measure that they use to determine who is middle income and who is not middle income and who is rich and who is not rich, but because of circumstances, natural disasters, social unrest, political unrest and economic challenges globally they may fall back into a situation where some development assistance might be required.

We feel the World Bank is a little harsh and we always plea that case to the United States of America because as you know the United States of America controls the World Bank so to speak as they say unofficially. The Europeans control the International Monetary Fund and that is why the Director of the Fund always tend to be a European and the Director of the World Bank always tends to be chosen by the President of the United States of America. We petitioned the US Treasury on the matter but they have been fairly difficult. In fact, in some respects in recent years even though they have backed off a lot of that

at least when in the last years of President Obama's tenure they were trying to actually get the IDB to be interested in graduating Barbados and both Administrations have fought them on that. They backed off of it for the time being. I do not know what would happen now that President Trump is in office and who he may have in his Treasury and what their position is, but there are these people who believe that Barbados is this very rich country and ought not to be receiving these development assistance, but we know that is not true. We have done reasonably well. We strive to do well but circumstances have taken hold, so I think that this is an important thing. We will continue to be a member of the World Bank.

The Bank does have vast technical skills, probably over 300 PhDs who work in there in all aspects of development. I know when they were developing the Global Development Gateway that you can now access electronically and pull down almost any subject matter or discipline that you can imagine, so it is a phenomenal global institution but I fear that its focus is over generously heavy towards these developed countries where they believe their mission is to fight abject poverty but in fact there are other belligerent pockets of poverty existing in small vulnerable developing countries around the world that need to be focussed on. Issues such as climate change, de-risking and the corresponding banking issue that is affecting all of us are the things that we feel that the Bank should focus on and we will continue to put that in place.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Leader of the Opposition again for her constructive contribution and beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

On the motion of Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. J. D. PAUL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee.

Clause 1 - 3 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to Her Honour the DEPUTY SPEAKER the passing of one Bill in Committee and MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

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 International Bank

for Reconstruction and Development (Membership of Barbados) (Amendment) Act 2016.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 3.15 p.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 3.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Good afternoon, Honourable Members, this Sitting is resumed. When the Suspension was taken we were on Government Business and with that we shall resumed.

ORDER NO. 17 – PROFESSIONAL AND TRADE IN BUSINESS (REGISTRATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2017.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, you would recall that in the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2015, we indicated that it was the intention of the Government as part of our effort to make business facilitation a lot easier, professional registration a lot more reasonable in terms of the fees passed and generally to improve the professional business climate in Barbados that we would prefer to implement measures to reduce the fees paid by certain professionals under the Profession Trade and Business Registration Act in two phases, in the first phase of 25 per cent and in the second phase by 25 per cent, so that over a course of two financial periods that would be reduced by 50 per cent.

Madam Deputy Speaker, also in that Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2015, we had indicated that it was our intention, certainly our desire and intention, to try to bring a situation to some kind of reasonable understanding that those persons who operate businesses within the various professions should be required to make their contributions to the Barbados Revenue Authority in relation to the payment of their taxes because we had seen across a number of headlined professions that there was an unacceptable level of delinquency in those professions. We met with the various staff associations, particularly with the Barbados Bar Association, including others, relative to this matter and we

proffered to have the professional procuring tax clearance certificates in order to be able to register their practice.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this, of course, was met quite vociferously by the members of the various professions, particularly of the legal profession. As I said having written the Bar Association we had subsequent meetings and we thought that in the circumstances that we should seek additional legal input as to the constitutionality or legality of such a move. Ma'am, to that extent we have procured the services of two particularly prominent practitioners at the Bar and they are currently studying it. However, the delay in getting that done since it was associated with this particular Act, was holding back this particular measure that we wanted to have done to benefit our professionals across the spectrum of services that are provided by professionals in Barbados.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I therefore returned to the Cabinet and asked that as we wait on the varying legal opinions, some of which are at variance with each other as is normally, I am advised is to be expected, that we should not detain any longer those persons who should be benefiting from this particular provision as we had devised it in the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2015, any longer. I therefore ask that we delink this particular one from them and that eventually, I hope later this year when we come to a definitive position, to inform the Cabinet, the Parliament and the country one way or the other whether or not it is feasible for us to move ahead with the other business.

Madam Deputy Speaker, today I want to present to this Honourable House an amendment to the Profession, Trade and Business Registration Act, Cap. 373, as the Schedule would indicate to permit for the fees of those persons who register across the various professional classes to benefit from that budgetary proposal as we had intended.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as you know, some time has elapsed and therefore one of the questions that will legitimately and regularly be asked is whether or not we are going to allow those professionals who should have gotten the benefit if this was done, potius, to still get that benefit. I believe that they ought to do so and very shortly we will go to Cabinet with an Administrative Note, once this legislation is passed, to indicate that we will. We cannot give a rebate, because people have already paid for the year 2016, but what we would do would be on the advice of the technical staff, design a met-off or a credit on future payments into the system so that those persons would not have lost the years' benefits that they ought to have gotten in the first place.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to commend this particular Bill to this Honourable Chamber. I believe it is a useful thing to do, certainly I believe the professional could

do with the adjustments in it. I think that it is worthy of support. Ma'am, having said that, I want also to indicate, and this something that I am not quite sure how it would have slipped us in the last Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2015, relation particularly to persons who come into certain professions. I am not sure that we can necessarily isolate those but I am going to use those as examples. As Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs over the years I have been asked to waive the fees for young lawyers being admitted to the Bar for the first time and being asked to pay a fairly stiff registration fee. The truth is that quite a few of them, both lawyers and doctors, dentists and others who are now coming in and are unable to pay that high fee. Ma'am, the fee can be a little stiff. In fact, one or two of them have had to asked for a waiver, after having been given a job offer but because they did not have the money to register and could not show properly articulated registration documents they have had to come to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs to ask for a waiver of the fee so that they can get registered and so would be able to show their prospective employer who is presenting them with the job offer that they are legally registered to work. I think not only is that a little embarrassing but a little unreason in the circumstances and I can give this Honourable House the assurance that working with the Honourable Attorney-General and other Ministries including the Ministry of Health and others we will come to Parliament soonest and certainly hopefully before the next batch of lawyers come out in October, to give a moratorium on that fee for a designated period of time to allow those young professional to be able to get on their feet and to get going. Ma'am, I think in the circumstances that are the only reasonable thing that I think we can do before this becomes too big a problem for us and then we have to find other ways of supporting it.

I just wanted to make that point because I know it slipped us last year. It really ought to have been done but, for what it is worth, in a few months' time we will get that before this House and commend it to the House for approval. With those few words, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Mr. R.St.C TOPPIN: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. On this side, obviously, we are not going to oppose this Bill but we certainly are not going to praise the Government for having brought it now. The fact is that there is a bit of a history, and really when it was first introduced back in 2008, I think, the increase in the fees that were being inflicted on persons out there was so obscene that we had no choice but really to raise an alarm and make a plea on behalf of those out there who found, in some cases, that fees had quadrupled in one fell swoop. When you see this Bill and you see the title which has the

word “professional” in it, you tend to think only of the doctors and lawyers, and you say, “They should not complain. They can pay.” That may not be true in any event, but really and truly this Bill encompasses a lot of very small operators. This Profession, Trade and Business Registrations Bill or Act encompasses the mechanic, the hairdresser, the plant seller, a whole host of people who really are of very humble circumstance; undertakers, barbers, everything, Madam Deputy Speaker. Really we felt then, as we still feel now, that the fees ought not to have been increased; or certainly if they had to be -- we did not think they had to be at all -- the magnitude of the increase was really obscene.

Of course, they would welcome any ease in that squeeze and the pain they have had to endure over the last few years to make these payments, but we would really hope that although there is a move in the right direction, this is not the end of the resumption of normalcy, and that we can see these fees really brought back down to more manageable proportions. It should have been done since last year, as the Minister pointed out. He gave a reason for it. We can accept the reason, I suppose, but in terms of logistics I want the Minister to make it absolutely clear. There are some people who have already paid, yes, and I mean for 2017; there are some who have not yet paid for 2017. I am in the batch who have not yet paid for 2017. I can foresee a number of people going on January 30 or 31 -- I do not know how quickly it is intended to get this fully into law -- to the Registry and being told, “There is nothing in my hand. There is no law I am aware of that has been proclaimed or whatever by the Governor General, and therefore give me the said old amount which you were accustomed paying up to last year.” I would therefore like the Minister to give us the assurance that the necessary notifications will be sent out to the various recipients of these fees; to understand that when you walk with what is stated in this legislation to be passed into law shortly, they will not give us any trouble. I know it may sound very mundane, but a civil servant sometimes has a certain mindset - some of them -- and they would be within their right to say, “We have received no communication, so go and bring us the greater amount which you paid up to last year.” Those small mechanics and whoever would have to be paying would find themselves being asked to pay larger sums of money in the hope that they would get it back or get some credit or whatever; but cash-flow is a serious thing, especially for those of us who find it pretty hard to grapple with the increased cost of living and various other charges and fees which we have to meet on a daily basis.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not going to detain the Chamber. We support the measure, but we hope that the fees will be returned even further; and sooner rather than later will be returned to at least what they were before or perhaps even less. The public of Barbados at this stage deserves some sort of ease. The belts are now so tight that

you will soon have to start borrowing belts if you are to be able to tighten the holes any tighter, Madam Deputy Speaker. We do not oppose it but we are not at this stage going to sing....

Asides.

Mr. R.St.C. TOPPIN: We are not at this stage going to sing any praises for the Government. Madam Deputy, I am sorry. With those few words, I am obliged, Madam Deputy Speaker.

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

Hon. D.O’N. INNIS: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise, of course, to give full support to this measure. As the Minister of Finance quite rightly pointed out, it is a commitment which the Government made in its Budgetary Proposals before in order to address these fees downwards. I am very grateful that we have been able to do it today, and it now results in a 50 per cent decrease over what it was hitherto. I note the comments of the Member for St. Michael North, and I am sure the Minister of Finance in his wrap-up will address the issue; the administrative arrangements which we put in place to address the issue of what happened since these fees were due to be paid by the beginning of January. Suffice it to say that one must ask oneself why there is a need for these fees at all. Over the years, the State has, as part of the regulatory process and as part of the administration of the State, had to ensure that for the standards of service provided by professionals to be kept at a certain level, we had to institute a fee. It is not a Democratic Labour Party or Barbados Labour Party thing. It has been there forever, and most countries do have a fee that is charged to professionals, which is clearly defined in law and which may be separate and distinct from whatever fee one’s own professional organisation may charge for one’s membership. We cannot have any divide from a historical perspective over the fee setting and the need for it going forward.

Mr. Speaker, however, to me there is a broader issue to which this ties in, because we cannot bury our heads in the sand that the number of attorneys and doctors we are producing on an annual basis may be very well be exceeding the demand. For those who keep their ears to the ground and engage with some of these young professionals, in particular, we are ever mindful of the challenges many are facing as they come into these professions now. I do not have the numbers before me, but I can safely say that we have quite a number of physicians and lawyers in Barbados. Certainly you can look on an annual basis and total the number who are being admitted to the Bar, for example, and the fact that there are not that many leaving the profession on an annual basis. Therefore, the State, as

the Minister of Finance has pointed out, is coming a bit to the rescue in terms of lowering the fees for those who have to enter these professions or practise in them. As the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West alluded to, and I fully support it, discussions are ongoing in terms of special arrangements which may be made for those who are now entering the professions. Let us face reality; gone are the days when lawyers, for example, were a privileged and select few in this society. Now they are a dime a dozen, and the fees have not come down; in many respects they may very well have gone up. You have a situation now where there are so many lawyers scrambling in the same market space for a little business, and I suspect there may be a number of them who are challenged to make a decent income on an annual basis.

Now, what the State is doing in terms of adjusting the fees downward is, I am certain, a bit of an assistance. It is not going to go all the way in terms of making their own income stream become a little stronger, but it certainly sends the message that the State is mindful of the hardships which can be imposed as the result of a higher fee structure. Having said that, we also need to look at the opportunities which present themselves. I am very mindful and very concerned when individuals enter these professions, for whatever reason. You may be following in your parents' footsteps, you may be taught at school that it is the way to go, you may feel it is the way to make money, or you may genuinely love the industry whether it is medicine, law, dentistry or whatever, but it cannot be business as usual. So I would suspect that these are times when one has to think and act outside of the box in many respects while safeguarding your professional integrity. It means that we have to look at new opportunities and we have to create new opportunities. We cannot believe that the world revolves around Barbados. We cannot believe that this population of 300 000 people is the only market space that you can provide your service in. I mean the lawyers today have to go online and look to offer their advice and services notwithstanding whatever obligations they may have in the courts system and look to specialise perhaps in some areas that now create an international market for them. We have the international business and financial services sector and yet still there are not that many lawyers that actually practice frontally and almost on a very dedicated basis on matters pertinent to that sector.

I am saying that people are now going to be forced to start to realise that there must be areas of specialisation that they are going to have to focus on. They are going to have to realise that they got to get up and go and find business which cannot just be those whom may be charged in the courts of Barbados with an infraction but they are going to have to start looking at what they can do to attract international clients, for example, to Barbados. There are those who are going to have to look, for example, at what they can do to do some work throughout the Caribbean

region, like perhaps be part of a larger grouping of professionals that offer services. The State will do its little bit in terms of adjusting fees but I dare say that the demands and the challenges at finding meaningful engagements in these professions on a daily basis in Barbados are there, and we are going to have to find ways of addressing them.

In the medical profession, a similar thing. There are a number of youngsters who are graduating with the M.B.B.S. from Cave Hill Campus and other schools who sometimes are even challenged in finding an internship position. You cannot go and hang up your shingles and practice unless you have completed your internship and then even when you do complete it there are challenges in finding a job or finding a place to operate. The State has a limited capacity in terms of jobs available in many of these disciplines so it means therefore that we are forced now or the society and these youngsters are forced now into a situation where sometimes it takes them quite a long time before they can establish themselves and practice in their chosen disciplines and start to make an income that is their desire.

I also throw caution though that Barbadians entering these professions, the ones we talk about a lot even though there are others that are affected here, must start to disabuse their mind of a belief that once they enter these professions they must live in a certain neighbourhood, drive a certain motorcar and have a certain kind of lifestyle. The reality these days dictate otherwise, and sometimes if you make that adjustment in your personal life you would find it a little easier to exist in this society.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am fully in support of this measure. Clearly it sends the right signal that as a Government we are listening and we are responding to these demands. All of us as Members of Parliament get the calls come October or June whenever people are coming out. We also get the calls from the other professions that are covered under the Profession, Trade and Business Act in terms of having to pay an annual pay and the fact that you have lost a little bit of business or things are a little challenged or more competitive and therefore you have to do that but the State cannot do it all. Individuals must now start to find ways to be more creative to control or contain or reduce their cost of doing business and they must start to see the world as their market space. I think once you bring all of these together we are going to find that we are going to have in Barbados not just a well-regulated trade and professional grouping but also one that is economically far more viable.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am obliged and I fully support this Bill.

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

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Madam Deputy Speaker, I too rise to speak in this debate and to make the point from the outset that I am very happy to see what has occurred here today. One has to recognise that as we move to increase productivity we also have to move to ensure that we expand the number of people who are seeking to be self-employed. Government cannot provide employment for all persons, and one must recognise that once we create the atmosphere as we are doing today that we would allow more persons to enter the job market. For example, I listen very carefully to a number of people sometimes badmouthing a lot of the self-employed in Barbados like the coconut vendors and so on but we have to understand that those persons are not only providing employment for themselves but the most important thing is that they are selling the produce of Barbados and they are increasing the growth of the economy.

We sometimes spend a lot of time promoting foreign goods and we do not spend the amount of time acknowledging, while criticising and rightfully so sometimes, that every time a man sells a coconut or an ackee or helps to cut canes in Barbados we are actually improving the growth in Barbados. We sometimes have to find a more positive way in dealing with people. I am not saying that we should allow the coconut vendors to dump the coconut shells and not recognise that they have a social responsibility to remove them. What I am saying is that we need to educate them and tell them what good they are doing and not only focus on the negatives they are doing but also focus on the positives things they are doing. What the coconut people are doing reminds me a lot of what occurred when we first started to have the poultry industry in Barbados when a couple persons started to keep boiler chickens and when they recognise what could be made from keeping boiler chickens everybody started to keep boiler chickens in Barbados and it so happened that once we used to import poultry products in Barbados now we can export poultry products and we should have been exporting poultry products under the BAS at that time not like the present one had listened because instead of cutting back they had the capacity to increase, so I am saying like the coconut people now all of a sudden everybody now involved in the coconut industry and people are going to tell you how many acres they want to plant. We sometimes need to stop and think that the problem is not only the people who are blocking up the road but the problem is the people who are increasing the growth of the economy. We get so caught up in systems that instead of dealing with how we are going to solve a problem we think only of punishment and do not recognise that we are not only punishing those persons but we are also punishing the country Barbados. I am saying if they are doing it wrong, deal with them and show them what they are doing wrong

and put systems in place and find a way that you can capture some of the revenue that they are getting to correct the particular problem because you know what every single coconut that is grown in Barbados has a positive impact on the growth of the economy.

Most of the people who criticise, do not want to soil their hands, they do not want to get involved. If disposal is the problem, let us find the solution because these same people that we want to ignore sometimes you need to be very careful because you find that when they are finished that they are the ones who create an industry. It is for us now to stop seeing the coconut shells as a negative and start seeing it as a raw material. Some creative person has to find some plant where those coconut shells can be sold to and turn into something so that it can be used back to help build the soils of Barbados but instead of us doing that we are focussed on how they are dumping them. The reason they are dumping them is because we have not used our free secondary education and our educational system to solve the problem. Madam Deputy Speaker, there is nothing called garbage, everything is a raw material. Ma'am, if we adopt the policy that everything is a raw material, then we would not have problems with coconut shells because we can create an industry using the raw product that we see as a negative and turn it into a positive. We need to do research, we need to look see who is selling the piece of equipment that can grind those coconut shells into a product that can be blended with something else and make that product into manure.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what is wrong with blending the coconut shells with chicken manure and putting it into the fields to improve our capacity? Madam Deputy Speaker, after 50 years of free secondary education can you tell me that we cannot find in any way a system where we can turn a negative into a positive? Today I proffer to you, Ma'am, let us stop seeing the coconut shells as something for the landfill and let us come up with something where now that we are talking about the deterioration of the soil and so on, let us see how we could use the same coconut shells to help built up the soils in Barbados. I thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to thank all Honourable Members who have contributed. I have taken note of the points made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North who himself is a member of one of the professions and I trust is familiar with what happens and transpires on a daily basis in the execution of the responsibilities of professionals across the spectrum, particularly in his area of practice, law. I want to give the Honourable Member the assurance that we will try in our earnest to ensure that what the Honourable Member

describe could potentially happen and we do know that in circumstances these things do happen. The wheels of the Civil Service may not sometimes be as efficient as we would like them to be but the course of action that we are proposing is that from here it goes to the Other Place tomorrow and once approved by the Senate we have put it on track where both the advice going to the Governor-General can be done expeditiously, as well as the gazetting of it. We are hoping that by next Thursday, certainly before the end of January that the law can be fully accented to by the Governor-General, gazetted, published and of course backed up by a letter indicating to all the offices, including the Registry, that it is now in effect and therefore the new status quo should obtain.

Madam Deputy Speaker, with those few words, I beg to move that this Bill be 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.

On the motion of Hon. C. P. SINKLER, 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 to 7, inclusive, were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

On the separate motion of Hon. C. P. SINKLER, seconded by Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to Her Honour the DEPUTY SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Her Honour the DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. C. P. SINKLER, seconded by Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Profession, Trade and Business Registration (Amendment) Act, 2017.

ORDER NO. 14

Resolution to approve the Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 2016.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, as you no doubt and other Honourable Members would recall, on 13th December, 2013, I had reason to address this Honourable the House of Assembly and to introduce some additional fiscal measures to assist the Government in containing its fiscal situation as part of its Fiscal Consolidation programme which we had largely iterated in the then August 2013 budget. That was in response to a spike in the Government's fiscal deficit to almost 12 per cent - I believe it was 11.4 per cent the previous year -- with the intention of bringing that deficit down to reasonable and more manageable levels.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as part of those measures, the Members of the Cabinet, in consultation with our colleagues in the Parliamentary Group of the Government, felt that in solidarity with the public of Barbados, the workers who would have been affected by the cuts -- and also as a contribution by the Cabinet and Members of the Government to whom this matter would apply, and certainly by the Parliament in general -- that we should take a ten per cent salary adjustment downwards; ten per cent downwards of the then existing rate of pay for Members. That matter would have been expected to run for 19 months and would have ended on March 31, 2015. It was then decided at that period when it came to March 31, 2015, given that we were not in complete success in getting our deficit down to the levels that we wanted, that some of the measures would be discontinued, as had been indicated, but others would be continued. One of the measures which we thought should continue for an additional 12 months was the ten per cent reduction in the salaries of Members of the Government and certainly Members of the Parliament, including Parliamentary Secretaries, Senators, Members of the House of Assembly, Personal Assistants, and so forth. Rather than just go in the 19 months, we went an additional 12 months as well, even as we had pulled back some of the impositions which were made in the then previous measures of August 2013 and December 2013.

Mr. Speaker, following that, the period for which we had extended -- the 12-month period -- would have come to an end, again, on March 31, 2016. Through discussion at the Cabinet, it was decided that those salaries would be restored from that period onward. Members of the Cabinet agreed, after much long discussion and debate, that those salaries, in keeping with the recommendation from the Ministry of Finance originally for 19 months and then extended for an additional 12 months, should be restored. The Ministry of Finance therefore prepared the relevant Order and submitted it to Parliament. Intervening matters prevented us from doing it at the time when we intended to do it, but it has now come upon us that, rather than going through to the end of another financial year which would be March 2017, this matter should be dealt with now at this particular time and those salaries should be restored. I know that in between the time, there has been a lot of

debate on the matter relative to the fact that people have indicated that this is actually a salary increase. It is not a salary increase for Members of Parliament. It is to restore the status quo ante - is that the correct terminology? -- so as to ensure that Members of Parliament are basically going back to what they would have been at prior to the announcement of December 13, 2013.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I put the matter before the House. I know Members of the Opposition, at the time when we first mooted the salary cut, had themselves said they were not going to support it then because some of them felt it was not necessary and/or that it was only a public relations exercise. We did not see it as that. I do not know what their position will be now but, for what it is worth, we put it before the House of Assembly and we ask that, with those words, this Resolution do now pass.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I will be brief in this matter. The Opposition's position is known, and indeed when we brought the No-Confidence Motion in this Honourable Chamber last year I made a Document of the House a letter signed by all Members of the Opposition indicating that we will not be accepting the restoration of any salary, any increase in emoluments, until such time as the public servants of Barbados, who have not had a salary increase since 2010, are put at the front of the line.

The truth is, Ma'am, Government makes choices, and they have chosen to bring this matter before the Honourable Chamber, claiming that they do not want to break the promise because it was supposed to have been only for 19 months and they kept it an extra year. When the Minister of Finance introduced the Value-Added Tax (VAT), that was only supposed to be for 18 months. He has broken that promise to the people of Barbados. Before the last Election, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West said there would be no sale of Barbados National Terminal Company Limited's (BNTCL) assets; that promise has been broken to the people of Barbados. When the Prime Minister said before the last Election that there would be no fees for the University of the West Indies' students, as he spoke to the graduation of the Barbados Community College, that was a breach of a promise too. Ma'am, when they said that there would be no layoffs, from the Prime Minister to the Minister of Finance to all of them, we in fact saw 3 000 layoffs in 2014. The sale of assets and the privatisation I have spoken to already, but more importantly, I asked the Minister of Finance how can he justifiably seek to ensure that Ministers get more money next month in their pockets when public servants will not be getting any more money in their pockets, in circumstances where the debt is more; indeed the debt is

almost \$2 billion more than it was in 2013 when he first made the adjustments and the fiscal adjustment strategy. How can we justify it when the deficit is more or less the same, according to the Central Bank Governor's Report that came out two hours ago, when the deficit at the end of 2016 was at 8.2 per cent and in 2013 it was at 8.5 per cent? How can we justifiably agree to this Resolution which will see Ministers and Senators and everybody getting more money next month -- ten per cent more -- in circumstances where the Central Bank is continuing to have to print more money to meet the increased expenditure of Government?

I say to you that Government is about choices. The Government has chosen not to settle the issue of Public Service salaries before it settles this. As far as I know, negotiations have been going on for over a year and no mandate has been given to the public servants to appropriately settle any increase or thereto with the unions. Similarly, there have been cases where the people of the north have asked for relief in relation to water. There have been the people on the South Coast with the sewerage issues, the people in Bridgetown with the sewerage issues and the people in the Belle with the water issues; but the Government chooses to spend its money giving back itself an increase of salary. Government is about choices. Madam Deputy Speaker, I say quite clearly at this stage that I also feel that when times are hard, you must lead from in front. You cannot at this stage seek to feather your own nest while others are outside suffering, and I feel strongly about it. If this was brought at the same time as the public servants were getting their increase, so be it, but what we cannot have is to ask people, especially against the background of the Governor's Report today, to continue to tighten their belt. How do we ask people to continue to tighten their belt when we in Parliament have a Government that is appearing to open their belt and to be large and in charge and to give themselves back money that others are not getting?

Madam Deputy Speaker, they can choose to rely on whatever fine point they want to, the bottom-line is that last month the Government and the public service both reflected sacrifices: The public service because they have not had an increase for over seven years even though prices have increased in this country. Indeed, the last negotiation was in 2008 for 2008 to 2010 but there has been nothing at all since 2010, and whether we like it or not, if this Resolution passes, in February Ministers, Senators, Parliamentary Secretaries and all who are entitled to benefit from this will get more money than they got in December last year. You can call it a restoration, an increase, whatever you want to call it, the bottom-line is that when the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central reads the Governor of the Central Bank's Report and the last paragraph as well, but more importantly goes to the Tables, what does the Governor say? This reduction in wages and transfers will assist in eliminating the

Government's deficit on its current account. The fact that the Government spends more on the current account than it receives in taxes and other current receipts is the reason for the increase in the Central Bank lending to Government. There is general agreement that any additional financing by the Central Bank should be avoided.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what do we have the Governor saying?

(1) that down to December I had to increase the level of printing of money in this country again to meet the Government's deficit;

(2) that this cannot continue;

(3) that in order for it not to continue we have to reduce the current account fiscal deficit; and

(4) in order to reduce the current account fiscal deficit, there must effectively be a reduction in wages and transfers effectively.

That is what he is saying.

Madam Deputy Speaker, how could we have that signal coming at 2 o'clock this afternoon but at 10 past 4 the same Parliament is in here seeking to give back money to themselves in circumstances where last December and January they were getting less? Now, we cannot turn around and ask Bajans in the same breath to tighten their belt again because when we lead we have to lead from in front and they will believe that not only are we not leading by example but that the Parliament is seeking to feather its own nest and the rest of them are literally tightening the belt to the point where they cannot breathe anymore.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I say to you this is the wrong message. The Opposition is very clear - we took a decision on this in May last year, a letter has gone into the Accountant-General - we will not be accepting any restoration of salary until public servants in this country have an increase in their wages, and we are clear, clear, clear on that matter.

In addition to that, we will not remain in this Chamber for the vote on this Resolution or the next Resolution for anybody must not be in any doubt as to where we stand. We do not want to be close to the scene, some may argue at the scene of a crime but I cannot say so because I am in Parliament, of this vote because we feel that it is wrong and knowing where the country is economically, knowing what we have to ask of the country, knowing the sacrifices that people will have to continue to make and knowing the sacrifices that people are making at the hospital, in the schools, in the School Meals Department, with the water in the north and with the

sewerage and with everything else, how can this be a priority for the Government to restore this when the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados says very clearly at 2 o'clock today that effectively there has to be a further reduction in wages and salaries in this country.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Opposition will have nothing at all to do with this Resolution or the similar Resolution that is before us on the Order Paper, and if you see us leave the Chamber it is no disrespect to you but we will not be in this Chamber for any vote with respect to this Resolution.

I am obliged to you, Ma'am.

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

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak too and I want to make the point that the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados is not the Prime Minister, the Cabinet or the Minister of Finance. I find it rather strange that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition would make the point that about what the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados is saying when the Leader of the Opposition is always telling the Minister of Finance not to follow the lead of the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados, but all of a sudden we are now hearing today the Governor of the Central Bank, the Governor of the Central Bank.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to make this point. I have been in this House since 1994 and I will never be a hypocrite to myself. I was in here when the Barbados Labour Party moved in money for parliamentarians not by Resolution but by the dark of the night and I did not hear one word. We are now restoring by law what was taken by law and all of a sudden the impression is being given that we are doing something that is criminally wrong, that we have not come to Parliament to do it, that we are doing it through a back door.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am saying that we took the cut when they were against it. I can still see the back page where the Opposition had said do not cut our pay and used the argument at the time that it did not make sense for the cut because the cut would not impact on the deficit, their words you know, but it is near election time and all of a sudden now they are now reversing themselves. Madam Deputy Speaker, in life a man must learn to be consistent because if he is not consistent then he cannot be taken to be truthful. Your morning words and your night words must be the same especially when the facts remain the same, and it is clear that something is wrong.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what worries me is that they gave themselves a move in and we are now restoring

what was taken from us and they are now calling it a salary increase. They are misleading the House and the public of Barbados. It was not us who talked about the cut and was against the cut, every man and woman in the Democratic Labour Party when we saw the need for it agreed to it. It was the Opposition led by the Honourable Member for St. James Central that objected. Go back and check your newspaper and you would see that was done by them. What is worse if you are against something, you do not walk out on it, you stand and vote for it, and that is why when we were against anything we voted against it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, they are not against getting back the money, if they were against getting back the money they would have said to give it to a charity, but this is the sweet one, “we will only take ours when the civil servants get theirs”, when they know full-well that the civil servants might get. Madam Deputy Speaker, what they are doing is that they are allowing the Government to put aside theirs and if the civil servants get one cent they would then come back and say that they want all. Do you see the trick? They are not against getting their money, like Doctor Haynes and others who previously said that they do not want back theirs, to give it to a charity, they are not giving it to a charity, and they are saying to put it into the bank, like how they had put the land in the land bank. The only difference is that somebody else would not be able to use it, only them.

Madam Deputy Speaker, they are saying that they are so rich, that they do not care about charities that they want their money but that we could store it up for them. They want to say store up their riches, so that when they come here and try to use the civil servants or the public of Barbados they cannot trick me because I was in here with the ‘move-in’. The public did not know about that but we have been upfront, we told them when we were going to cut and we told them then when we were going to restore. Fortunately for us we did not restore it at the time because we had consideration for everything else.

Madam Deputy Speaker, how much fair can you get? How much more honest can you get? We are being fair and honest and an Opposition is going to come and tell you that they cannot support it, that they are going to walk out. If the Opposition is against the measure not only should they come in here and vote but they should tell the public that they do not want it and to give it to charities. Do not come here and trick the public giving them the impression that it is being done for them when you know that you are storing up your money for later.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is a very serious matter, the truth is that the whole Cabinet could have sued the Government for breach of contract because we were told that the cut was for “x” time and we being considerate men and women understood the economic situation of the

country and allowed the Minister 19 months, then another 12 months and then another delay. How much more can you lose? Madam Deputy Speaker, you would then get the Opposition who in the first place did not want it, now come pretending again? What manner of man or woman can that be?

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is very interesting today to see... do not mind all the talk about they do not want there is a war going on over there because you would see this is a very serious debate and you can check the numbers over there. If I were Leader of the Opposition I would have walked out to, because I would be embarrassed to see that I do not have my backup troops to fight this. Do not forget the numbers are 16/14, with the Speaker in the Chair and one could be missing, so they could have defeated us. Do you understand what I am saying? So that when the Leader of the Opposition talking about walking out, it is a good political ploy because the Honourable Member is not telling the public that she is walking out because she does not have the firing power. Can you imagine that? They have a good opportunity to defeat us on this and they walked out. Do you know what this says? It says that as much as the Honourable Member said that she has the backing of all, I will bet you that the Honourable Member does not have the backing of five Members. If the Honourable Member has the backing of five Honourable Members then let her bring those Members in here and vote.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I challenge the Leader of the Opposition to come show the public of Barbados how many of her Members are against this act. I will sit down and let the Honourable Member come show us.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART: Madam Deputy Speaker, I feel obliged to make a brief intervention on this Resolution. I am making it because I want the record of this Honourable House to reflect the correct position upon this issue and of course because I think the public of Barbados should not be misled by the empty grandstanding of the Opposition Barbados Labour Party on this issue. Madam Deputy Speaker, as far as I am aware, Parliamentary salary increases have been linked to the increases for public servants going back to the years when Mr. Tom Adams was Prime Minister. A principle was established in this House that Parliamentarians were entitled to increases only at those times when public officers were getting increases, so for so long as public officers are not getting salary increases, Parliamentarians are not entitled to salary increases, that is the settled principle of this House for many, many years across several Governments. Ma’am, that is the first point.

The second point I want to make is that in the month of May last year, I think it was when the Barbados Labour Party brought a No-Confidence Motion here, the Leader of the Opposition indicated to this Honourable House and to the country that the Resolution which we are now debating in this House was a Resolution for increases for Parliamentarians. That was not true, the House therefore was being misled and I dare say being misled with the full knowledge of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. I want to set the record straight that Parliamentarians are not entitled to any increase of salary unless increases for salary are settled for public officers in Barbados.

Madam Deputy Speaker, so far as the present Resolution is concerned, when the Government took the decision some time around December 2013 that we were going to embark on a 19-months' programme because of the stresses and strain through which the economy was passing, the Cabinet of Barbados took the decision that we could not ask the people of Barbados to go through a 19-months' programme which was for all practical purposes a programme of some austerity and not ourselves demonstrate that we were prepared to lead by example by ourselves accepting some kind of austerity for ourselves. We took a decision that we would accept a salary reduction of 10 per cent, Parliamentarians, politically appointed persons such as Personal Assistants and so on, all had to take a 10 per cent reduction of salary once the Government decided that it was going to implement this 19-months' programme.

The issue of salary reduction has been a controversial issue in Barbados since the early 1990s when a previous Administration asked public servants, by option, to consent to a reduction of their salaries. On that occasion they accepted a reduction of 8 per cent of their salaries. Option forms were sent around the public service and by majority public servants agreed that they would accept an eight per cent reduction. There was an international recession going on, resulting from, I think, the intervention of Saddam Hussein and the Iraqis into Kuwait, which led to a distortion in the oil market. The United States and British economies went into recession. The recession was felt all across the Western world. Barbados felt the reverberations and that is the context within which recessionary conditions existed here in Barbados. We took the decision to accept a reduction in our salaries of ten per cent for the 19-month period in solidarity with the people of Barbados, whom we were asking to bear some strain as the country was passing through serious challenges. When public officers were asked in the early 1990s to accept an eight per cent reduction in their salaries by option, and they agreed, I was in this House between 1994 and 1999. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy was also a Member of the House at the time. We were in here when that eight per cent was restored to public officers. Nobody called it an increase

then. Everybody said it was a restoration. It was what the public officers were entitled to. It was their money. The Government had asked them to make a sacrifice, they made the sacrifice, and now that things had turned around and the economy was on a growth path, the Government of the day was restoring the eight per cent to public officers. The only controversy around that restoration was how much of the eight per cent being restored was going to be retained by the Government as Income Tax. That led to some fairly robust debate but it was restored. It was not an increase. It was a restoration to a status quo ante: the situation that existed before from which public officers were asked to move and to which they consented.

Similarly, in this case, Members of Parliament were asked to move from a status quo to a position of ten per cent less in terms of their salaries for a 19-month period. When the 19-month period came to an end and the Cabinet received its report on how the economy had performed during the 19-month period, and we decided that what gains were registered should not be lost and that we would therefore extend the 19-month period for a further year, the question arose, "If we are going to extend the 19-month period for another year, what is going to be the position with the ten per cent reduction of salaries which was accepted by parliamentarians?" Members of the Cabinet, every single one of them, agreed that, again, if we were going to ask the people of Barbados to hold strain for an additional 12 months, we had to lead by example by being there with them and we should accept a further sacrifice for another 12 months. That was agreed. The 19-month programme and the 12-month programme are now ended. The credit unions have been restored to the position of status quo ante. All of the other persons who were asked to make sacrifices have been restored. The commercial banks have been asked to make a further sacrifice and we have dealt with that. We dealt with that only last week, I think it was, when we did the Banks (Tax on Assets) Bill and the other one.

This is just a restoration of salaries which parliamentarians voluntarily gave up. When I say "parliamentarians voluntarily gave up", I mean parliamentarians on this side of the House, because Members of the Opposition made it very clear that they did not want their salaries touched; that it was not going to make any impact anyhow, and that they wanted their money. They opposed the reduction and now, horrible to relate or marvellous to relate, they are opposing the restoration too. I am very glad to know that the Leader of the Opposition chooses the scenes of the crimes which she wants to be present at. It is very clear to me that she does not find all crimes offensive. She chooses very carefully the crime scenes at which she wants to be present; and if today's is one, fair enough. I can live with that, but there are other crime scenes which we are going to discuss in Barbados. You take it easy.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just thought I had to set the record straight. It had to be set straight. I said before that I have dealt with this issue in public before. The bold untruth which was told in this House about parliamentarians getting a salary increase rather than just having a restoration offended my sense of decency. It was an untruth, and any time you ask me -- I have said this before -- to compromise with an untruth as against fighting for the truth, I will fight for the truth. I do not mind the grandstanding. We are going to see a lot of this. Parliament resumed on the 17th day of this month, and this is the second walkout, and there are many more to come. There are many more to come. What is called the silly season, they think, is upon us. If there is a silly season, presumably there are some people who have to show how silly they are. If they want to be the exemplars in that regard, hip, hip, hooray. That is not a position being taken by Honourable Members on this side. I just wanted to set the record straight. It is not true, has never been true, that Members of Parliament on this side or that side of the House are voting any salary increase. It is a restoration of salary given up for 31 months in a 19-month programme as a result of decisions taken by the Cabinet.

I do not have any problem with Honourable Members on the other side deciding that they do not want to get theirs back. The truth is, I wish they could have been a little more generous and say they are going to give it to me. I certainly would not have refused it. I know of many things I could do in my constituency and in other parts of Barbados with what they are getting, in many respects, by false pretences, because they do not spend any time in here. That is a matter for them; I am not getting into that. They can choose how they want to do their business. The Member for St. Michael North East made the point that politics is about choices. Politics for governance is about choices, and politics for Opposition parties is about choices too. We make our choices, they make their choices, and the time will come when the judgement of the Government and the judgement of the Opposition will be held up to scrutiny and people will be asked to make a determination. So far as the empty grandstanding and the bold untruths are concerned, I will have no part of that. The narrative is now changed that they will not accept theirs back until such time as public officers get an increase, and that is a fair position. If that is what they want, that is their choice, but as far as I am concerned and as far as the Government is concerned the period for which parliamentarians were asked to give up their 10 per cent has expired, the status quo anti for all other parties to the 19-month programme and then the extension has been restored and the status quo anti for parliamentarians is being restored by this Resolution.

Madam Deputy Speaker, having set the record straight I want to indicate to this House that this Resolution has my 100 per cent support. I am obliged to you.

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

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 join this debate, of course, in the absence of the Opposition. They have determined that they will not stay and hear the truth having spun what I consider to be really an abuse of the truth in the House. Ever since this matter came before the public and was spun by the Opposition as a salary increase, I recall calling the call-in programme and intervening in this particular matter, and like the Honourable Prime Minister I would like to also speak to this matter fully because, of course, I stand with a Cabinet and with Members of Parliament in a matter of this kind.

Ordinarily, Mr. Speaker, this matter would be a very simple one but it has become the subject of some political partisanship on the part of the Opposition that is really not becoming of this House and unless we confront it the members of the public would get the impression that we are in this House voting salary increases for ourselves. In fact, the phrase that was used was that we were feathering our own nest, that the Parliament is engaged in an exercise of feathering one's own nest. Given the position which has been clarified by the Honourable Prime Minister oftentimes certainly in my career so far as a Member of Parliament and I hear the kind of submissions made by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition you get the impression that parliamentarians are their worse enemies in relation to simple matters such as what is before the House.

The Members of Parliament certainly led by the Cabinet of Barbados faced with a 19-month austerity programme voluntarily agreed to a salary reduction. The Resolution that is before the House is to restore the salaries of the Members of Parliament including the Cabinet and the Senators because the Leader of the Opposition only put a finger for the Cabinet and the Senators. This particular measure will restore the salaries of parliamentarians who would have been part and parcel of that adjustment to their salary.

There are some rather misleading comments made by the Leader of the Opposition which I believe ought to be confronted because she said that the Opposition will only accept a restoration of their salary once, of course, the public officers are given an increase in the normal course of negotiations. She said, of course, that the public servants were not given an increase for seven years. Now, for the record I would also like to say that certainly the Members of Parliament, the Members of the Cabinet and the Members of the Senate have also not received a salary increase for seven years. We have never been the

beneficiary of a salary increase for seven years or increments that public officers receive and that is because no salary increases were ever agreed for seven years so therefore when the Leader of the Opposition says that there is a salary increase now that puts the lie to the submissions that were being made by the Leader of the Opposition. There were never any salary increases and therefore they could not be a salary increase now. What we are dealing with is a restoration of a salary reduction that was volunteered and extended for a further seven months.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition also said that at a time when the deficit is in the vicinity of \$2 billion you therefore could not justify an adjustment of the salaries in a time of such a deficit figure. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition did not use that same benchmark in relation to her statement that she would support the adjustment once public officers get a salary increase, so we are putting two things together. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition would not support a salary adjustment that is returning the salary to where it was unless the public officers get a salary increase. In that kind of scenario there is no consideration at all by the Leader of the Opposition to any deficit situation, so the political grandstanding gets even worse.

Mr. Speaker, they are not in their seats because they do not want to look the truth in the face. I think the misleading of the public over the past couple of months on this matter really is a disgrace in relation to the persons who hold the office over there of Opposition Members.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central were ordered expunged from the record by Mr. Speaker.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, for the Leader of the Opposition to come in the House and mislead the House in relation to that is really a travesty because you cannot equate an adjustment where by virtue of a Resolution the Parliament is being asked to restore the salaries of all parliamentarians because the Government led on this and that is why I say to persons who questioned me on this that this was something being led by the Government, by the Cabinet of Barbados and certainly by the Chairman of the Cabinet. The Opposition after taking a stance in the public that they do not want their salaries touch, by virtue of public pressure they put their tail between their legs proverbially and reluctantly followed the position being taken by the Government and that is where they was, but for cheap political purposes they now want to take a position which really does not equate with the facts at all.

It is our duty, Mr. Speaker, in this House to defend our integrity and to defend our good name, so I take an exception to the whole question of feathering one's cap.

There is no action in this House that can be described as feathering one's cap or feathering one's nest. What that is saying is that we are doing something to put some kind of advantage on us, to put money in our pockets that we should not have, and I think that is totally out of place and the Members of the Opposition should have been in the House to hear it.

Mr. Speaker, of course, on this occasion the Leader of the Opposition seeks to quote from the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados which is rare occasion because oftentimes the Governor of the Central Bank is held up to such public ridicule by the Opposition that I would never have known or never have imagined that the Leader of the Opposition would actually rely on something that is being said by the Governor of the Central Bank. Mr. Speaker, I have not had the benefit of what the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados indeed said but I am taking the Leader of the Opposition at her own words when the Honourable Member purports to quote by saying that Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados is asking for a reduction in salaries and emoluments. Now, I thought that the Leader of the Opposition being a lawyer on record would have also said that if indeed that was what was quoted by the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados was that her Barbados Labour Party put an end to that because under an amendment to the Constitution no Government in Barbados can now adjust the salaries of public officers unless they come here. I believe they have to come back and amend the Constitution, but they have made it abundantly clear that no Government could ever reduce the salaries of public officers, because they have actually placed it within the context of a constitutional amendment and so it cannot now be done because they have removed that option that would have been available to Government in difficult times. Therefore the Leader of the Opposition should have said in here and should have advised the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados that they have made that impossible to do by virtue of an amendment to the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to confront those things because you can get involved, as I believe the Leader of the Opposition is getting involved, in guerrilla warfare tactics where if you stand up in the House and make a position known that the Government is giving itself and all Parliamentarians a salary increase, then the Leader of the Opposition should point to the Instrument, because the Government cannot come here and give itself salary increases just like that, so point to the Instrument that gives this salary increase. If you cannot point to it, Mr. Speaker, then I can boldly say that you are engaging in an act of misleading this Honourable House and also misleading the public of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I want to call on the Leader of the Opposition to point to the Instrument by virtue of which

they are saying that the Government is increasing the salaries of Parliamentarians. Therefore if the Honourable Member cannot point to that Instrument, then I am calling for a public apology for misleading not only the Honourable House on this matter but also misleading the entire public of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, if you are saying that you are against a return of the salaries of Parliamentarians to where it was before, then say that, but Mr. Speaker, you cannot to this Honourable House and mislead the whole House under which you are solemnly sworn to be forthright in your language, in other words, your language must connect with the truth you cannot do that and whereby also mislead the whole country and the claim that somehow you would wish in the future to be elevated to the pristine high office of Prime Minister of Barbados. You cannot do that, that becomes a slur even on the Office of the Leader of the Opposition and you cannot determine when you would follow the truth or not, Mr. Speaker. You cannot determine in the afternoon that you would follow the truth and in the morning it becomes a figment of one's imagination, you cannot do that.

Mr. Speaker, while this issue might be one in which they want to fight on to get political favor and so on, fine, we know that is the antics of the Opposition in recent times. Mr. Speaker, I certainly have a problem for the Leader of the Opposition pointing her finger at me as an Honourable Member of this House and claiming that I am being part of a Parliamentary action to feather my own nest. I take utmost objection to that. If that were true, then I would not be the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central as I am, that I am engaged in an action of feathering one's nest. I would say to the Leader of the Opposition too that if the Honourable Member was really sincere and frank to the people of Barbados and washed in the blood of the Lamb and really has this heart throbbing desire to commiserate with the public of Barbados, then I would say to the Leader of the Opposition that all of the fees and so on that the Honourable Member earned from Four Seasons Hotel, because as Members of Parliament we can only depend on our salaries, but the Leader of the Opposition can depend on earnings of legal fees from Four Seasons and other 'big-pockets' clients and therefore the Honourable Member exists in a world where her pocket size is larger than all of ours.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the Honourable Member to take that money and if the Honourable Member is serious about what she is saying in this Honourable House to take those earnings and give to the public of Barbados or to charity. I believe about \$10 million in legal fees and come here as though somehow they are so enamored by people and would want to commiserate and so on. Mr. Speaker, I really had to get up and speak, this is not an issue that we ought to remain silent about, the Government

is not engaged in any untoward tactic and therefore I take offence to the kind of discourse that I have heard from the Opposition Members who are also free to walk out, but when they stand up here and try to mislead the House and the country I believe that we have a solemn obligation to speak to the facts.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that no Member of the House, no public officer has received a salary increase for seven years but there are not many people in this country who took a 10 per cent cut in their salaries at the time we were going through difficult times. I cannot count one, except for the Members of the Cabinet of Barbados who took the initiative and of course Members of Parliament followed suit. No one in Barbados at that time had suffered any reduction in their salary or earnings. In fact, that was an initial 19-months sacrifice and we said we were going to do it for a further 12 months and that is why I said we are our worse enemies because somehow, somewhere when it suits their political purposes, the Opposition would wish to demonstrate or to tell the public of Barbados that they are the watchdogs of certain things, but of course there will be a time and place when many things will have to be said about the antics of the Opposition, including the Leader of the Opposition who is in a position, even her own colleagues cannot really determine whether or not she is speaking fact or fiction and they too will have their time when it is all made clear to the public of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, on this matter this is a simple restoration of a salary reduction that all of us voluntarily took. We took it at a time to demonstrate to Barbadians that we were going to take a sacrifice for a period of 19 months during the austerity programme and we continued that exercise for 12 months, therefore, both periods have come to an end. It is not at all linked to any salary increase because nothing has happened in Barbados to determine that public officer or Members of Parliament would get any salary increase.

Mr. Speaker, I would think that when a salary increase is given to public officers the Opposition's position should be that the deficit has not increased in the country, the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados has said that we have to watch our transfers in salaries and therefore they will not accept the increases either. Sir, they should say that because their premise is that once the deficit remains high in Barbados that nobody should get salary increases, including public servants. The issue is once the deficit remains at a level that is high, do not give a soul a salary increase. Therefore, I would understand the logic, and there would have been some logical sequence in their arguments if they said, "Whenever the Government negotiates a salary increase for public officers, we as Members of the Opposition will not take one until the deficit improves." That is a position I think they should take; that they will not take a salary increase until the

deficit improves in Barbados. That would then connect and collide with their position and, I would think, it would appear to be logical. Do not try and “mamaguy” the people, as they always do, because the Barbados Labour Party always does that. They always seek to “mamaguy” the people of Barbados, and to use all kinds of political manoeuvres to curry favour with the electorate. This is all that is going on, Mr. Speaker, because when you analyse the information, there is really nothing that you could say that connects with fact on this particular matter, and this matter has been allowed to continue in Barbados for many, many months. The kind of misleading information put out by the Opposition has gone out there, to the extent that people now believe that the Government is so insensitive and that kind of stuff and is granting themselves increases of salary. No salary increase is at stake here at all, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, it is only a restoration of salary.

I am saying it publicly, and I have said it to persons who approached me. Here you have a situation where the Government led on an issue. We led on it. We decided that we were asking the country to make a sacrifice, and we believed that even before we asked the country to make a sacrifice for 19 months, we should do the same thing. We never asked the private sector to take any salary cut -- neither the private nor public sector -- but we decided, as we should as leaders of this country.... The Leader of the Opposition said, and I want to quote her too, “When times are hard, you must lead from the front.” This was what she said.

Asides.

Hon. S.A. LASHLEY: I am quoting her verbatim. You should give the Government credit for leading from the front on this matter, but because it is not in their interest to congratulate the Government for leading in a matter which they did not have to follow, they decided they were going to spread some information and mislead everybody, and then run out of the House. In other words, run from your own speech. You want to come in here and you want to make certain statements which are misleading, but you do not want to stand up as a woman or a man -- whoever you are on that side -- and listen to the alternative position of the Government. However, you want to go out there in the public domain, and I would not doubt it that you would hear a media conference being called now to spew further innuendo and misleading comments and so on to the public.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that this House deserves the kind of respect which would cause us to listen to both sides, and it is irresponsible of the Opposition, having made a charge of the Government; because not even the Prime Minister spoke before the Leader of the Opposition instructed her Members to walk out. “I said what I said, so I done and I do not want to hear anything else”; that is an indication of

the kind of leader you are, because when it gets to the point where a leader of a party wants to say what he or she wants to say and does not want to hear the other side, that is a glimpse of the kind of leader that you aspire to be. Those are the same kind of things which the people in the United States of America are now grappling with. You have a one-tunnel vision when it comes to speaking, and therefore you declare.

Aside.

Hon. S.A. LASHLEY: It is an intolerance, a wanton intolerance and a passion for political power. You declare, “I have said what I had to say. I have spoken the gospel of the Opposition and I have no need to hear the Government on this matter.” That is what the Leader of the Opposition has said, and if that is an indication of her characteristics and so on, then I believe we have to call a spade a spade in here. That is a mere insight into the kind of political characteristics, and so on, of the Leader of the Opposition. I wanted her to hear my speech because I wanted to look her straight in the face and tell her that she is misleading the House, but of course I cannot do it. As a matter of fact, I am often unable to speak in this House to the Leader of the Opposition because she is hardly in this House. She is hardly in here. She spends most of her time out of the Chamber, and therefore cannot, in my view, properly represent Her Majesty’s loyal Opposition in anything.

Mr. Speaker, on this matter I wanted to make this contribution and clarify the record for the benefit of the public of Barbados here in this Debate, and to put this matter in its true perspective. I also want to wind up by inviting the Opposition, based on their own logic. The deficit has been an issue in Barbados for many years.

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

Hon. S.A. LASHLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is why we have something called deficit financing. Each Administration has had to grapple with financing a deficit, and therefore if the Opposition is going to link the whole issue of increasing salaries to a deficit, then let them declare it. Therefore, the position to me that ought to have been put and which seems to be more in tune with what the Leader of the Opposition is saying, is this: “We will not as an Opposition accept any salary increase in Barbados until the deficit gets to a level that we consider to be acceptable.” If they say that, then they should stand by it man-for-man and woman-for-woman. Mr. Speaker, I say and I recall that the Leader of the Opposition has to explain to the public. You cannot come in here and just make sweeping statements without explaining the full facts. She has to explain to Barbadians why it is that the Member for St. James Central went in the newspaper and declared that the Opposition would never accept a deduction in salary

when we were trying to consult with them on it. They said that. They had no intention whatsoever of following the lead of this Government in accepting a reduction in their salary as a sign of commiseration with the public of Barbados. That is on the record. Anybody can go and pick up 'The Nation' and read it for themselves. Therefore, the public cannot be fooled on this matter. Go and pick it up. They had one position. They were not with the Government on this. They said, "We will not be accepting any reduction in our salary," but all of a sudden now - because we would have done it whether they were going to agree to it or not, we were leading on this matter and then, of course, they followed suit -- they are preaching a different ballgame. Therefore, I believe they have to be called out on it, so that the public can see what is being put before them. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, with those remarks, I too would like to signal my support for this Resolution based on the premise that what we are talking about is a restoration of salary and that there is no salary increase being considered to be voted for in this House. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. Yes, the Honourable Attorney General.

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, just a short intervention on this matter. It has saddened me since my entry into politics that some politicians are allowed to go into the public space and, either through lack of knowledge or through malice or otherwise -- not in this Chamber, of course -- say things into the public space which they know very well are not true. Then, of course, they wonder why we all are tainted with that smear that politicians cannot be trusted, et cetera. My friend and colleague from Christ Church West Central just reminded this Chamber and reminded me in particular that not only did the Honourable Member for St. James Central go into the public's space and say that he would not accept a salary cut but that in fact that there was a time when he actually went into the public space and showed up his payslip and showed why as a Minister he could not live and survive. I remember that very well, so when I hear them sometimes carrying on I do not take them seriously.

Mr. Speaker, I just think that it is very unfortunate that you could have a matter like this and whether you agree with the Government or otherwise, it is very unfortunate that you go into the public space and say things that are blatantly untrue. Moreover though I just want to challenge the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East because I not only agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East for not excepting the return of her 10 per cent but according to my calculation the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East owes the people and the Government of Barbados on at least one project \$2.6 million because in 2003 against the advice of the then Project Manager in the Office of the Attorney-

General, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East awarded a contract in her hand to one Jose Y Jose Liquid & Solid Waste Management for \$1.483 million against the advice of those who knew better and said my friend must receive this. This was her friend. She had integrity then I assumed.

Now, because Jose Y Jose has never built not even a doghouse they could not get out of the ground. In fact, when they went inspecting the property they had toilet paper and some other liquid stuff that they brought from wherever they brought it. In September 2005 they wrote and said they cannot do this anymore they want to determine the contract. Not many contractors are honest enough to say they cannot do the contract any more they want to determine the contract. This was the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East's friend so she called them back in and said let us sit down and get this done and they said alright and rescind the letter. They went back on site and two months later said this is too much for us, we have never built anything, we only know about liquid waste and determined the contract, so we are now a year plus behind because the Honourable Member with all the integrity who cannot except her 10 per cent wanted her friend to receive a contract for \$1.5 million or thereabout, so what happens of course is that we had to go back and award the contract out, and that is why I have arrived at the \$2.6 million that she owes so the Honourable Member should not accept any more salary as Leader of the Opposition while in here until that debt is liquidated. If you want to talk about integrity and about doing the right thing, that is what she should do.

Mr. Speaker, what hurts most about this whole thing is what the Project Manager in my notes here said about the Honourable Member's friend. The Project Manager said that progress on this project is progressing satisfactorily in spite of the many drawbacks - that is after someone else went on the site - and obstacles due to the bad workmanship of the previous contractor - her friend we are talking about -- and him not following the drawings and specifications supplied to him for construction - her friend we are talking about. I have tried to keep this set of demolition of the existing works to a minimum by having test areas cut in walls for inspection but when external walls are affected, we ended up not having any alternative. It is beyond comprehension the incompetence and dishonesty of contractor Jose Y Jose. For example, areas of walls which were reinforced and specified to be filled in with concrete were instead found to be filled with bits of plastic cups, et cetera, thus rendering reinforcement useless.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please. Honourable Member what you may be saying is true and so on, I do not know what is the source you see, but my concern is that we have rules which point to the fact that

you should not attack anyone except in their professional capacity but not only that but before you do it, and you see that is why there is a very good reason with respect to calling names, you must indicate that and get the leave of the House. Now, I always allow passing references and so on but I think that you have gone far enough and that you should move on. Thank you.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, I am obliged by your ruling but I think I have made my point that in fact that the Honourable Member having been washed in the blood of the lamb should see it fit to pay this money back to the Government and people of Barbados and indeed in many ways this matter should be drawn before the Public Accounts Committee, I admit it is not too late, and let us address that.

All I am doing, Mr. Speaker, is calling on us as Honourable Member to be consistent and stop misleading the public when we are in the public's space and believing in fact that you could go out there because you are on a political platform and say whatever you feel like and it is alright, that there is no accountability. I happened to know, and I think we all know, that there are several Honourable Members on that said that said that they do not agree with the position of the Leader of the Opposition, but it is unfortunate that in her brand of politics you cannot agree with your leader and sit in your seat because you cannot survive, so it is unfortunate. In 2017 you should be talking about a new brand of politics which enables you to agree to your party's philosophy and lines but if you do not agree with the party on a matter to be able to sit quietly or state your position, that should be our present paradigm in this day and age, I am saddened. In fact, I have to say I have to give credit to at least two Honourable Members on that side. I want to give credit to the Honourable Member for St. James Central who was good enough not to be here and my friend from St. George North who is good enough not to be here because they both knew that they do not agree with the foolishness that they heard this afternoon.

I see nothing wrong with having committed to a path that we will accept a 10 per cent reduction, that in spite of going a year beyond the 19 months to say at this point in time, and at a point in time when I am sure that all of us can say this, when we are being asked to assist more and more in our constituencies, it is not a case where you are going to take the additional funds and go liming in Miami et cetera. I am sure almost all of us are going to end up spending this money as we do on a monthly basis. You name it, we contribute to it, but you go away making the public believe that in fact that we are a bunch of heathens that we are trying to feather our nest et cetera and that is why like the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central I found it offensive and I found it offensive in particular when I know the behaviour of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East cannot be held up to

scrutiny, and we will have more indeed to say about that. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to saying more about that when you cannot rule against me.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Speaker, I did not intend really to contribute to this debate because I thought that the Honourable Prime Minister truly put this debate in its true perspective and the two other Honourable Members who preceded me also did, but I think I have a moral right to speak to this debate although briefly, and I want to set it against a background of the Barbados Labour Party that is emerging in recent times. This is a party that is the oldest political party in this country well in excess I believe of 50 years old. It is a Barbados Labour Party that is emerging that I want to consider could be considered at the very, very bottom tier of most political parties not only in this island, this region or this hemisphere but certainly in the world. I really want to speak directly this afternoon to the Members of the Barbados Labour Party, to all the rank-and-file Members of the Barbados Labour Party. I want to speak to the sitting Members across the aisle in this Honourable House and to the rank-and-file, the fellows who are down there in the trenches because the Barbados Labour Party that is emerging in this 2017 is a Barbados Labour Party Mr. Speaker, that engages itself in political circuses, political Coney islands. They are involved in drama and theatrics. I believe when the Honourable Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth brought the Cultural Industries Bill in this Parliament and passed it when it should have applied generally to all the people involved in culture and the theatre, I believe the Honourable Member should have targeted this Bill to the Members of the Barbados Labour Party, they are dramatists, involved in Coney island and circuses. Mr. Speaker, this party is a rebellious party, it is out of character, leaderless, a lame duck Barbados Labour Party bereft of any real ideas, irresponsible and indisciplined to the core and the kind of indiscipline I am talking about in here is the kind of indiscipline that was displayed earlier today, a serious Resolution that is before this Honourable House they say they are against it and should stand up like men and women and speak and vote against it than to describe it as a crime scene. They are creating issues in this country where there are no issues. They are establishing doubt in the minds of the average Barbadian where there is no doubt. They are encouraging apprehension in this country where there is no need for apprehension. Mr. Speaker, every single week in this country there is another issue as far as the Barbados Labour Party is concerned. They would not let Bajans settle down and enjoy life at all, this Barbados Labour Party, a nuisance party I called it before and will call it again, they are confusing Barbadians

with an issue every single week, peddling in fear, anxiety and despair and hopelessly.

Mr. Speaker, want the rank and file members of this party to understand where I am coming from and to understand that the party that they want once respected, the party of Grantley Adams, the party of the founding fathers of the Barbados Labour Party, is now a shadow of what it had intended to be. The flavour of this week is the Honourable Member for St. George South, who before the Honourable Member gets up and do the kind of work that his predecessor did, the Honourable Member now with some foolishness talking about bankruptcy in the National Insurance Scheme and Government in debt to the National Insurance Scheme and not enough funds to go around for pensioners when they call for their pensions or to recipients of benefits when they call for their benefits, although... Mr. Speaker, I see that you are cautioning me.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am just going to caution you that "any foolishness" could not have been said in this House. A Member of this House does not talk foolishness. I just want to clarify that.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I know better than that. Mr. Speaker, anytime I speak pejoratively of the Members of the Barbados Labour Party it is utterances that fell from their mouths outside the four corners of this House, so that the foolishness that the Honourable Member spoke was at a Press conference or something that they had, although in the face of reassurances from not only the Administration of the National Insurance Scheme but also from the Minister with responsibility for the National Insurance Scheme, that everything is safe and sound but that is the flavour of the week. Mr. Speaker, last week it was about sowing seeds of doubt, about coming clean with this and that, about coming clean with the economy, coming clean with the foreign reserves, come clean with the deficit, come clean with the growth so that every single week there is a flavour of the week.

Mr. Speaker, I want to get to the question of the reduction in salaries of Parliamentarians and those who are politically appointed and the restoration that we are seeking to do today. Mr. Speaker, the point was well made that the Government led by making the sacrifice in the interest of the national call, 19 months at first, a further extension of 12 months and I believe it has probably now racked up to a further five or six months and so we are talking about 31 months-plus that we have made a decision that we will make the sacrifice in the interest of the public and in the interest of the people of Barbados. We disadvantaged ourselves in the interest of Barbados for a specific period and that was pointed out upfront.

Mr. Speaker, we readjusted our standard of living and said that we were going to make that sacrifice. We took

a reduction when no other person in Barbados whether in or outside of public life had made that kind of decision. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South made the point and I agree with him, in the face of the reduction we took constituents will come to you, we are the first port of call in this Government. If a constituents light, water or any other utility bill is cut off they do not want to go to the Welfare Department to go through all those hoops, they come to you as the first port of call because they know that you are going to go somewhere in your back pocket or somewhere and pay the bill so that it can be reconnected tomorrow and so we were the first port of call.

Mr. Speaker, in the face of the reduction all of those things still had to be done -- funerals, weddings, christenings, utility bills, rent arrears, all kinds of things come at us as Members of Parliament. We are not complaining because nobody had sent and called us, we say here we are. We want to serve. We want to lead my constituents to better places than they are when we found them. We are saying that we are not complaining about it, we are saying that every cent that we make as Members of Parliament and as Ministers of course some go towards our domestic responsibilities but a lot of it goes to our constituents, so when we get a 10 per cent reduction in our salaries by extension our individual constituents suffer as well.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a point here. Again I am going to couch my language in occurrences that occurred outside of this Parliament. Mr. Speaker, every Monday night we meet at Democratic Labour Party Headquarters for our Parliamentary Group meetings and I believe that these Members of the Barbados Labour Party also meet at Grantley Adams House or wherever they meet. Now, when they are planning their strategic planning for their meetings on Tuesdays I believe when they were planning for this meeting today that the Leader of the Opposition sitting in the Chair as Chairman of the Parliamentary Group would have said to them, look, these guys, these ladies, these Honourable gentlemen and women are going into the House tomorrow to restore their salaries that were reduced a couple of months ago. They are going into restore their salaries, they are not going to increase their salaries, they are going to restore their salaries but fellows, we are not going to say that, we are going to tell a blatant and unblemished lie on them. We are going to say to the public of Barbados that in the meantime currying favour with the public of Barbados that this is not a restoration, it is going to be an increase so we are going to tell a lie. So I am going to say to you today that I am going to call out the Honourable Member for the City. You may ask why I am going to call out the Member for the City. I am going to call him out for a few reasons. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Honourable Member for the City is cut off the same piece of cloth as I am. I do not hold myself up as any special thing, but I watch him and I like him. He is an

honourable man. He is not only a gentleman but he is also an officer; an officer and a gentleman, Mr. Speaker. I feel that he is the conscience of the Barbados Labour Party, Mr. Speaker. He is the moral compass of that rudderless party. He is also the centre of gravity of that party. I watch him carefully. He is first-rate, man, when it comes to being a Member of Parliament, so I am going to call him out.

When that plan was laid at Grantley Adams House last night on Roebuck Street, and the Leader said to you, "Honourable Member for the City, we are going to tell a deliberate lie on the Democratic Labour Party and the Members of the Government that the restoration is not a restoration but it is an increase," what did you say, Honourable Member for the City? I feel he should break loose from downstairs in the Opposition Office and come upstairs and say something. Break ranks with her, man, because she is misleading you; the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. They are all like sycophants walking behind her like the Pied Piper.

Aside.

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: That is right; there are only a few of them, because the vast majority of the Barbados Labour Party is not interested in these kinds of dramatic things and theatrics, or these nonsensical walkouts. I was away last week and managed to listen to the end of the Debate and heard some of the theatrics occurring in this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, if the Right Honourable Prime Minister at our Parliamentary Group meeting had said to us, "We are going into the House on Tuesday, and we are going to tell a deliberate lie on the Barbados Labour Party," I believe, to a man, we would say to the Prime Minister, "Mr. Prime Minister, you are a distinguished gentleman. We love you, we believe that you are the leader of this party, you are the leader, you are the Right Honourable Prime Minister, but we cannot agree with you."

I want to call out the Honourable Member for the City again. Come upstairs in this Honourable House this evening. It is now 25 minutes after five. Come upstairs and make a case for yourself. Mr. Speaker, I have said enough. I support this Resolution 100 per cent because I believe we are doing nothing wrong in this Honourable House this afternoon. This Resolution has my 100 per cent support. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. Yes, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am going to be very brief because I did not at the time, some 39 months ago, thought that when I agreed with the Prime Minister at Cabinet to surrender ten per cent of my salary in the cause of what I call the common good,

generally, that I would have been cutting a stick to cut myself. Sir, I did not and I would not give you the Barbadian vernacular in that context, but that is noted by those of us who live within the country. Maybe even if I knew that I was in fact cutting such a stick, I would have still gone ahead to say to the Prime Minister, "You have no dissent from me." Let me say I agree very much with my colleagues in relation to this matter, but this is possibly one of the saddest days of my life. I have had sad days; I would not want to deny that.

When in the midst of a given reality, in the midst of given facts, in the midst of truth, partisan politics again - particularly partisan politics as played and demonstrated by the Barbados Labour Party - could have found sustenance in this Honourable Chamber. When the Leader of the Opposition, in all of her avaricious quest to become the Prime Minister of Barbados, would seek to advance arguments to suggest that the Honourable Members on this side and Members of Cabinet would be seeking to raise their salaries. The Prime Minister has been very lucid on this, so I am not going to repeat this, but as a former trade unionist I understand all of the steps to arrive at a settlement, then bringing it to this House and laying it before this House, and debating the salary increases for all public servants in Barbados. Therefore, there has been no final settlement in the negotiations between the trade unions and those who negotiate on behalf of the Government and people of Barbados; and when that is done, first the Cabinet and then the House and then the public of Barbados would be made aware of this.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael Central is absolutely correct: We reduced or we surrendered ten per cent of our salaries but the demands still remain the same or more. There were people who took 100 per cent cut in relation to having been severed from their various jobs in either quasi-Governmental organisations or the direct Public Service, so I understand that. There was a bit of cushion to hold them, and I am fully aware that many of them are now back in the Civil Service, and I congratulate them and all of those who made that possible for them to return as vacancies occurred and as the ceilings were not increased by any significant numbers. I am assured that all citizens of Barbados have a right to work, to participate in the wider marketplace, to look after themselves and their children and their families; and to do that they must have some facility to earn a living.

It is dangerous, it is insidious to implant in the minds of both a discerning and undiscerning public that somehow, now in the midst of salary negotiations, the Government would first increase their salaries and then wait for the real increase. That is a deliberate sickness of mind and body for this to have been stated. All I would be receiving once this Resolution passes today is a restoration of my salary to what it was some 39 months previously. That is all it is. All

I would be getting is a restoration of my salary some 39 months back to what it was; not one cent more and, hopefully, not one cent less. Then again, we do not really print cents anymore, so it might be a cent less. The point is: Our democracy and decency within our democracy have to evolve. That democracy or that decency is not simply expressed in the four walls of this Honourable House or in the four walls of our homes or the headquarters of our political parties, that decency is expressed through us in our words and in our actions. When we bring tainted words and tainted actions to our behaviour, how then can we go before the public who are already suspicious of us and look them in the face and say I am a good and decent citizen, I am God-fearing, I go to church every Sunday, I get hands placed upon me and I am washed in the blood of the lamb as was stated earlier but then on one side of the mouth say one thing when a certain group is listening and on the other side of the mouth say something else when another group is listening. These levels of behaviour cannot endear us to the citizens to of Barbados and cannot endear us, I hope, to the voters of Barbados because the voters should be aware of the shenanigans, of the deceptions, of obfuscation and all of that. We can seek to represent people and still be decent. If you do not support it say that you simply do not support and finish but do not seek to create this grinding mill of falsehood as occurred some eight months ago when leaders of certain organisations in Barbados knowing the truth in relation to this matter still lined up - and I know the story of the Pipe Piper of Hamlin who led all of the rats, and I am just using it within this context, into the water and drown them all... I know that story well. It is a beautiful piece of work but you have to be able to understand what is currently happening.

I would want to say to the people of Barbados but more particularly to the constituents of Christ Church East Central who brought me to this Chamber on three occasions that I am not here to eke a loan, I am here to make it possible that all of us in this country will live and that all of us in this country can share in whatever this country provides. I heard of \$2 million and \$3 million and \$5 million being generated in legal fees, but I am not going to get into that, that has already been stated, but when the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central speaks he speaks the truth, he has knowledge that he can share with us in relation to these grandiose sums and there might still be some outstanding but nobody speaks of these large amounts of money that these people get whoever they are which sometimes they do not declare, but a few cents where there is no back pay, this this does not go back 39 months, this goes forward because it was freely given up...

The first time I will receive my restoration of 10 per cent hopefully would be of the pay day of February 2017, it will not be January or December going backwards some 39 months ago, and therefore I want all elected Members to demonstrate a level of behaviour which can only endear

our citizens to us. We already have so many challenges. We have social challenges that befuddled the mind and there are emotional and psychological issues affecting several of our people and in the midst of misstatements of falsehood for them then also to manoeuvre among these things is really a tragedy of immense proportions.

Today, I hope we can go pass this tragedy that has been visited on this House and on this nation and as people we will gird our loins, tighten and strengthen our backs and try to make this country a better place for all of us. I sing not for my supper, Sir. I simply sing that better can come from the Barbados Labour Party particularly those who seek to represent or who represent the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I support this Resolution. I thank you.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all Honourable Members for their contributions. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her contribution too because at least it allowed us to know exactly what the thinking, if we can call it that, of the Opposition is and how very far out of reasonableness, logic and plain ordinary Barbadian common-sense we are where they are concerned on this issue and other issues, but as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, the Honourable Prime Minister, has said they are into the silly season, we are not. We know that they have 'gymmed' themselves up for an election. In fact, they even have a campaign song by Lil Rick out already. Those of us who pay attention to these things have been able to get our hands on it or had somebody from inside the Barbados Labour Party share it with us. We will hear a lot more tomorrow and the day after.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central and other Honourable Members have mentioned this, I find that there is this in love now and out of love again approach by the Leader of the Opposition to the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados. We have sat in here and heard some of the most vicious and, I think, unfortunate attacks on both the character, the intelligence and the integrity of the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados in this very House. It really is without precedent what has taken place from Members of the Opposition relative to that very high public servant in Barbados, and it has worked to undermine the integrity of that institution. We have also seen some complete flips towards the very person they have abused when he was not saying what they felt he should say or do what they felt he should do from some of the same persons, including the Leader of the Opposition who again ran away from another debate in the House of Assembly, who have now come to praise and quote and talk about the advice of the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados, but we do

not have that problem because we are consistent in all that we do with our Central Bank.

The Central Bank of Barbados is a semi-autonomous entity with regulatory functions and advisory functions to the whole of Barbados not just the Government. We listen to and take their advice. The Prime Minister is always wont to make the point that the only place that there is absolute unanimity of thought is in a cemetery so we do not have to accept every piece of advice that comes out of the Central Bank of Barbados, but we hear it and we respect it for what it is because they are professionals and as professional ourselves in our various spheres of endeavour and then in our Ministries as Administrators we listen to the advice that is given but being elected officials our job at the end of the day, being elected to run the country for the time that we have been designated by the electors of the country make decisions that we think are in the best interest of Barbados and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I find particularly disturbing is when people take up articles, speeches, releases or whatever the case may be of professionals and try to parse the word that they are saying by taking out certain parts that suit them and give the impression that the person is proffering a particular viewpoint that they may not very well be proffering properly. In this case I heard the Leader of the Opposition

Quoting the Press Release of the Governor of the Central Bank. I am going to read it myself, that the Governor is suggesting that we cut wages, and that is not what the Governor of the Central Bank, certainly not what he said and definitely not what he means in that. We have all said that Government's wages bill, and this is not new, the last Administration asked a previous governor of the Central Bank to produce a report on the Barbados economy and how to contain public expenditure growth in Barbados, given the challenges that the country may very well face down the road. That report was very well conceived by the person who produced it, but very well conceived by the recipients of that report because nobody in Barbados apparently got hand of that publicly and I really feel that it should be released for the public to see what the thinking was. They were advised then that through a process of attrition over a period of time, starting from that time and working its way down over a 5 to 10 year period, that the Government of Barbados could reduce its wages bill. Not go and reduce wages because the same administration came in here and passed a constitutional amendment making it illegal for wages to be cut in way it which they were cut previously when the Democratic Labour Party was facing a crisis in the 1990s and had to resort to the tool. So as the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central said, we do not have that fiscal tool available to us anymore. We cannot cut anybody's salaries, but we know that through a process of attrition and reorganization in terms of how we

fill critical positions in Government once people come out on retirement, they leave the service for whatever reason it might be, some may pass on and so forth and so on, how we reorganize, that gains can be made to reduce both the level of the public sector in relation to its staffing, but also reduce the level of the wages bill without permanently compromising the integrity of the civil establishment and the public service in Barbados. This is what the Governor is really talking about. The Governor is not an ignorant person. He knows that the Government of Barbados cannot go and cut salaries and wages in the way that the Leader of the Opposition

Was proffering here this afternoon. He knows that and we all know it.

We also talked about subsidies and transfers. Do you know a lot of people do not know that under the current accounting system pensions are transfers too? A pension is a transfer and one of the fastest growing line item in the Government's expenditure budget other than interest rate payment or debt service payment is pension.

In 2015/2016 pensions increased by Barbados \$30 million on an annualized basis. I can tell you, Sir, already having done the Estimates from the Ministry of Finance, last week, in terms of the Estimates meetings in preparation for 2016/2017, I can tell that number is going to increase even higher than the \$30 million. So when people say to cut subsidies and transfers, I want them to understand the entire extent of what they are talking about, because you cannot cut pensions. You cannot cut statutorily agreed and by law enshrined gratuities, because that is what people are entitled to. I can also make the point, Sir, that even as public sector pension expenditure outlays increase year on year, I can also make the point that Barbados is one of the few countries in the world in which pensions are unfunded. Pensions in Barbados are unfunded. I am not talking about National Insurance pensions where there is deduction. Public sector pensions are unfunded in the sense that there are not contributed to by the employees. That is just simply a fact.

Asides.

Hon. C. SINCKLER: Parliamentarians contribute to their own pensions.

Asides.

Hon. C. SINCKLER: We get deductions every month but public servants who get a public servant pension other than an NIS pension do not contribute to the pension. There are unfunded pension. NIS pensions and statutory corporations that you see in statutory corporations, that the unions themselves come and say we want... because once you give one you have to give all of them. So they each

come up and say they want a pension plan for NCC, one for the Transport Board, one for Barbados Revenue Authority, none of those plans are contributed by the people. Central Government, if NCC has to pay pensions to people at NCC, the Government has to give a transfer to NCC to pay that pension as we would have to give a transfer to the Transport Board and the National Housing Corporation, the Child Care Board and all the other statutory corporations. So when people see transfers increasing and they feel that we just giving away free money to these statutory corporations to go and lick out, it is not true. I want people to understand the fundamentals of public finance because a lot of people who talk about public finance, who parade on their trotters or their hind legs about public finance do not understand one iota about how the public finance system operates.

I can tell you that there are a lot of economists -- I have had this discussion with the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences as I had it with the Governor of the Central Bank, as I have had it with Professor Frank Alleyne, who is the former Economic Advisor to the Government, on the National Advisory Council, that they need to do something with that course at the University of the West Indies in Public Finance because too many economists that I hear speaking both new and some who are supposed to be senior do not understand how the public sector is structured and what public finance is really about. A lot of them fly their trap but they do not understand this business. Some of them cannot even read a proper Estimates document. I can tell you that is simply a fact but they all go off and talk but they really do not know how these things are constituted. How to disaggregate them understand when you give a transfer to a statutory corporation what you are really talking about, most of which are service provision entities. Who if you say go and cut them, understand what you are cutting.

Sir, if you cut the Queen Elizabeth Hospital too deeply you are cutting the quality of public health care. If you cut the Sanitation Services Authority just like that without a proper strategic approach to cutting expenditure and how you are going to manage, the problem with garbage will continue, will escalate. If you cut NCC -- a lot of people have not taken the time to understand the things that NCC does and the responsibility that the National Conservation Commission has. They feel there are just a few people on the road weeding, or on the beach running down behind people who drop a plastic bag on the beach or a lifeguard in a hut with nothing to do. That is not true, and I want them to educate themselves about these services. It is not that we do not want to control our expenditure. It is not that we do not want to do the things to bring these things under control, but when we sit down; Ministers can tell you that when they sit down to plan their Estimates, when they come to Estimates meetings with the Ministry of Finance, when we sit down as a Cabinet, when all that is finished, and we all come with our red pens to cut this and

cut that, and when you start to go through it, you realise that the field for cutting is really not as significant as you might believe it is. That is not an excuse. It is just the reality of what you are dealing with.

Mr. Speaker, when I heard these points by the Leader of the Opposition, I smiled. I know the Leader of the Opposition is in a hurry. She has been promised since she was a child that she would be a Prime Minister of Barbados. She has lived by that credo. I do not know. I do not have control over these things. I cannot see into the future, and whatever may be may be, but we are the Government of Barbados now. Our responsibility is to our constituents, to the constituents of the Members over there and to the wider Barbados, to take decisions which we believe are in the best interests of the country. That is all we can do. Everything we put in place is not going to work. If that was the case, we would be the Government for the world and not just for Barbados. Some things will fail, we will relook at them, we will make adjustments, we will go back, and we will change and so on, because that is the nature of governance and Government. It is a dynamic enterprise, but one thing we will not do is try to assume from an intellectually arrogant position that we know everything and have every answer, because we do not. We do not want to have every answer and know everything, because we would be living in a very lonely world. That is why I know the Opposition Leader lives in a very lonely world, because she knows everything and has the answer to every problem. That must be a really lonely existence. Can you imagine living in a world where you do not need to ask anybody anything? You do not want to hear anything from anybody. You are not interested in what they have to say. You could deliver a speech and you have issued the edict on the economy and you are gone. You do not want to hear the response; to the extent where you could hold a press conference and say, "I want to hear from the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister". You deliver a speech repeating the same thing, and when the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance get up to speak, you are not around to listen to them. The truth is that you never really wanted to hear from them in the first place. It is all theatrics; that is all it is.

We know that they are in election mode. Somebody told them that after the Independence celebrations the Government was going to fly the trap and that it is Elections, so they went and got Li'l Rick to do a song. All of this is in preparation. People came down here, they took photographs, they took the candidates out in the field, dressed them up in red suits, walked around confusing people in constituencies, took pictures, and gave them action pictures of people in the field; all of that. Funders were lined up, people were brought into Barbados who you will hear about later, and meetings were held at the Hilton, at your hotel. I know all that is going on.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: The Nigerian fellow, I know about all of it, but do not worry. In time the public is going to know exactly who the Opposition is getting into bed with, and at which scenes of crime the Leader of the Opposition might have been or might not have been at, as the case may be.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: I know I watched a picture. There was a brilliant picture called 'Wall Street'. I believe it starred Michael Douglas, and he was making the point to an audience. This was based on a true story of a securities trader who was eventually charged and imprisoned for insider trading. I cannot remember the name. He was making the point that greed is good, and that the world is based on greed and that you must grab everything and destroy people if you have to in order to get what you want, because greed is good. When I think about the actions of the Leader of the Opposition, it draws me back to that picture repeatedly, to that movie, all the time. "I will do whatever I have to. I will destroy whoever I have to. I will step on whoever I have to. I will say whatever is convenient at the point in time because my greed for the Office of Prime Minister to lord over Barbados means more to me than any destruction that I can cause." He also said in that speech that if you lie down with dogs, you can only get up with fleas. I remember that distinctly.

I want to make the point that we have to be very careful what we are doing. We have one Barbados. It is only one little country. We have done as well as we could in the last 50 years. There is no political office in Barbados -- Minister of Finance, Prime Minister, Minister of Health or Governor General -- that is so important and so worth it that you would destroy an entire country just to get it. It is not worth it. If you are to become the Prime Minister, you will become the Prime Minister, but you do not have to destroy a country and destroy people in a country to get what you want. Those are the words I believe that are enough. The Members here, my colleagues, have made it very clear about this matter of politicians and how politicians are treated. Politicians are their own worst enemies, because what we saw today is a classic example of why people in the public have no respect for politicians. We get and we allow them to believe that there is something which we are getting special from anybody else in Barbados, and therefore politicians are not deserving of anything.

Mr. Speaker, in other countries in the Caribbean and other places which are not even as well off as Barbados, parliamentarians get cars, ministers get cars to drive around free, they have drivers -- you hear that? -- they get salaries which are sometimes twice what we receive, they get

health plans and all those things. In Barbados, to give a politician what any average worker at our level would receive in the private sector or even sometimes in the public sector -- people who work under our direction, who get more benefits than we get -- is seen as obscene, a crime, nasty, "lickerish", avaricious. That politician is seen as trying to skim something off the public of Barbados which he or she is not deserving of. When the time comes and they have to leave office, either voluntarily or by being voted out, then they are thrown on the dump heap of history and treated like nothing about here. Both sides over the years -- I am not only blaming the Labour Party -- have fed into that rubbish. That is why when the last Prime Minister from the Labour Party asked a then senior backbencher to undertake an exercise to look at the salaries and conditions of parliamentarians in Barbados under the last Administration, and he produced that, the people in the then Opposition Barbados Labour Party Government did not touch it. They did not have the intestinal or testicular fortitude to come to Parliament and say to the country, "Look," and that was when times were good and money was flowing.

6.00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 24, 2017

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: ...the Barbados Labour Party Government did not touch it because they did not had the intestinal or the testicular fortitude to come to Parliament and say to the country - and that is when times were good and money was flowing - look this is what we believe is the standard acceptable measure of remuneration and benefit that parliamentarians should get, so they abandoned it because they were seeking regime consolidation and popular favour with the public of Barbados. They were not men and women of courage but we do not have that problem over here because we are not looking for cheap popularity and cheap support because it does not last. They will praise you today and tomorrow they will lambaste you because that type of cheap popularity and popularism do not last at all, so with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER No. 15

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SENATE AND THE
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY (REMUNERATION AND
ALLOWANCES OF MEMBERS) ORDER,
2016

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, with that we have come to the end of Government Business for today and I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, February 07, 2017 at 10.00 a.m. in the morning.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, February 07, 2017 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

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BOYCE, Hon. J.D.E. (Christ Church South)
BRATHWAITE, Hon. A. D. (St. Philip South)
INNIS, Hon. D.O'N. (St. James South)
JONES, Hon. R.D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, Hon. D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Hon. S.A. (Christ Church West Central)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
PAUL, Mr. J. D. (St. Michael West Central)
SINCKLER, Hon. C.P. (St. Michael North West)
SINKLER, Hon. C. P.
STUART, Hon. F. J. (St. Michael South)
SUTHERLAND, Hon. Mr. D.G. (St. George South)
TOPPIN, Mr. R.St.C (St. Michael North)

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

Q2. Opening. The convening sentence begins ‘met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, January 24, 2017.’; the opening words (‘Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly ...’) appear to be missing. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Minutes. Mr. Speaker refers to the last meeting ‘held on Tuesday, January 14, 2017’; 14th January, 2017 fell on a Saturday. Printed as in the source.

Q4. PRESENT. Both Hon. Michael A. Lashley and Hon. John D. E. Boyce are described as ‘Minister of Transport and Works’, although Hon. J. D. E. Boyce is called to lay papers and pilots the Bill as Minister of Health. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Papers. Hon. D. O’N. Inniss’s words ‘Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:’ run on from Mr. Speaker’s call under the Speaker’s label. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Speech labels, passim. The Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs is labelled ‘Hon. C. P. SINKLER’ in the earlier part of the sitting and ‘Hon. C. P. SINCKLER’ or ‘Hon. C. SINCKLER’ later; the PRESENT list has SINCKLER. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Order No. 17. The Order heading reads ‘PROFFESIONAL AND TRADE IN BUSINESS (REGISTRATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2017’, while the notice, first reading and third reading give the Profession, Trade and Business Registration (Amendment) Bill, 2017. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Order No. 18. The Minister speaks of Barbados being asked to subscribe to ‘an additional 253 shares’ and then of purchasing ‘those additional 223 shares’. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 24th January, 2017 at 10.15 a.m., with His Honour Michael A.

Carrington, Speaker, in the Chair; prayers were taken by Reverend Mark Harewood. The Minutes were deferred, and Mr. Speaker welcomed Ms. Maria Fitzpatrick, a Member of the Legislative Assembly for Alberta, Canada. Papers laid included the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation Annual Report for 2014-2015 and the Health Services (Smoking) and (Packaging and Labeling of Tobacco Products) Regulations, 2017. Standing Orders were suspended.

Under Order No. 19, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce moved the Health Services (Amendment) Bill, 2017, bringing electronic cigarettes within the Health Services Act, Cap. 44, alongside graphic warnings on tobacco packaging under the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Mr. D. G. Sutherland said the Opposition had no difficulty with it. Hon. D. O’N. Inniss, Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, Mr. J. D. Paul, Hon. S. A. Lashley, the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. F. J. Stuart, and Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, who said she was trying to give up smoking, supported it. The Bill passed all stages, and the House was suspended until 2.30 p.m.

With Madam Deputy Speaker in the Chair, Hon. C. P. Sinckler moved the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (Membership of Barbados) (Amendment) Bill, 2017, so that Barbados could take up additional shares under the 2010 General Capital Increase; a share had risen from \$100 000 in 1973 to \$1 831 239.30. Hon. Miss Mottley, Leader of the Opposition, offered to second it and said credit downgrades mattered. The Bill passed. After a further suspension, the Profession, Trade and Business Registration (Amendment) Bill, 2017, reducing registration fees promised in the 2015 Budget, passed after Mr. R. St.C. Toppin said the Opposition would not oppose it but would not praise the Government.

Under Order No. 14, Hon. C. P. Sinckler moved the Resolution to approve the Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries (Remuneration and Allowances) Order, 2016, restoring the ten per cent salary reduction taken from December 2013 for 19 months. Hon. Miss Mottley said the Opposition would accept no restoration until public servants, without an increase for over seven years, were settled, cited the Central Bank Governor’s statement that afternoon, and announced that the Opposition would leave for the vote. Hon. D. St.E. Kellman and the Prime Minister replied that this was a restoration, not an increase; Hon. S. A. Lashley, the Attorney-General, Hon. S. D. Blackett and Hon. R. D. Jones followed. Remarks of the Member for Christ Church East Central were expunged, and Mr. Speaker cautioned Members on attacking persons outside the House. The Resolution was agreed to.

The Resolution to approve the Senate and the House of Assembly (Remuneration and Allowances of Members) Order, 2016 was agreed to without debate, and on the

motion of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce the House was adjourned until Tuesday, 7th February, 2017 at 10.00 a.m.

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