
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2018 – 2022

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, May 11, 2021

At a hybrid meeting of the House of Assembly at the Worthing Corporate Centre on Tuesday the 11th Day of May, 2021, at 10 a.m. pursuant to the Adjournment.

PRESENT

His Honour A.E. HOLDER, B.Sc. (Hons.), MSW, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Speaker)
His Honour NEIL J.H. ROWE, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)
Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Q.C.
Hon. R.St.C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of International Business and Industry)
Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P. (Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs)
Hon. D.D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs)
Mr. T.A. PRESCOD, J.P., B.A.
Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of Energy, Small Business and Entrepreneurship)
Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Education, Technological and Vocational Training, Leader of Government Business)
Mr. E.G. HINKSON, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., LL.M.
Hon. D.G. SUTHERLAND, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.B.A. (Dist.), (Minister of Youth, Sports and Community Development)
Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY, J.P., B.A., B.Sc., PgD. (Leader of the Opposition)
Dr. the Hon. W.F. DUGUID, J.P., B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S., F.D.R.C.S., M. Min. (Minister of Housing, Lands and Maintenance)
Hon. W.A. ABRAHAM, LL.B. (Hons.), (Minister of Home Affairs, Information and Public Affairs)
Hon. Ms. C.S.V. HUSBANDS, B.A. (Hons.), (Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

Mr. R.A. THORNE, Q.C., LL.B., L.E.C., Dip. Theology
Hon. I.A. WEIR, M.B.A. (Minister of Agriculture and Food Security)
Hon. A.R. FORDE, RPh. (Minister of the Environment and National Beautification)
Hon. C.E. JORDAN, B.Sc. (Hons.), (Minister of Labour and Social Partnership Relations)
Hon. K.D.M. HUMPHREY, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.P.A., (Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy)
Hon. R.R. STRAUGHN, B.Sc., M.Sc. (Minister in the Ministry of Finance)
Hon. Miss M.K-A. CADDLE, B.A., M.Sc. (Minister in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Investment)
Hon. C.McD. GRIFFITH (Minister in the Ministry of Water Resources)
Hon. P.R. PHILLIPS (Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security)
Hon. J.A. KING, BSS. (Minister in the Prime Minister's Office with responsibility for Culture and the National Development Commission)
Hon. Miss TONI N.S-A. MOORE, M.B.A.

ABSENT

Hon. Miss MIA A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment, Minister of National Security and the Civil Service)
Lt. Col. the Hon. J.D. BOSTIC, MVO, B.A. (Hons.), (Minister of Health and Wellness)
Hon. G.P.I. GOODING-EDGHILL (Minister of Transport, Works and Water Resources)
Dr. S.E. BROWNE, M.B.B.S. (Chairman of Committees)
Prayers were taken by the Reverend Father Mark Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is in Session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Minutes of the Meetings held on Monday, March 15, 2021, and Friday, April 23, 2021, to be confirmed.

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the aforementioned Minutes be confirmed.

Hon. J.A. KING: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Minutes of the Meetings of March 15, 2021 and April 23, 2021, be confirmed, was put and resolved in the affirmative, and the Minutes were confirmed as read.

Mr. SPEAKER: Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, May 4, 2021, are to be deferred.

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the aforementioned Minutes be deferred.

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Minutes of the Meeting of May 4, 2021, be deferred, was put and resolved in the affirmative.

PAPERS

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Proceeds and Instrumentalities of Crime (Value of Seizeable Listed Assets) Order, 2021.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of today's Sitting.

Hon. J.A. KING: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the mentioned Standing Orders be suspended was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and His Honour the Speaker suspended those Standing Orders for the remainder of the day's Sitting.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

ORDER NO. 1

To move the Second Reading of the Liquor Licences Bill, 2021.

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

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I come to your House this morning to pilot what really is a piece of legislation that, at first blush, takes on the appearance of a business facilitation initiative on the part of the Government of Barbados, but it is really much larger than that. Therefore, Sir, I come to your House to have a conversation with you on the matter of economic and social justice in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, I begin by trying to share with you a little bit of context around that which brings us here today. These files that I have before me reflect the difficulty that has been or had been confronted by successive Administrations surrounding this matter of the management and administration of liquor licences in Barbados. The fact of the matter is that it has been a bedevilling exercise, bedevilling successive Administrations in this country. In fact, the records of the files -- I have read the files cover to cover -- take us as far back as the Year 1991 when it was first mooted that there needed to have been some attention paid to a re-assessment of the way in which we dealt with this business of managing liquor licences and administering the issuance of liquor licences in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, what perhaps never happened before this current Administration of which we are a part is that there had never been the robust and unswerving commitment to deconstruct the existing legislation and then to reconstruct it in a way that allowed for us to have the kind of delivery which we wanted to be able to give to the people of Barbados by this legislation today. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we come to deconstruct and reconstruct the administration of liquor licences in Barbados and the system surrounding that, and at the very outset I feel it would be incumbent on me to begin by acknowledging the contribution made in the preparation of this piece of legislation by my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. George South. He would have assumed the responsibility for the Ministry of Commerce immediately after the last General Election, and obviously he would have had to lay the foundation for that which we now deliver today, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation -- if I can begin and if I may ask you to allow me to broaden the context -- allows us to have a framework within which there are three themes which the Government is striking. The first, Sir, is that of the ease of doing business and the facilitation of business in Barbados. Sir, I need not tell you -- because you have sat in this Chair now for two-and-a-half years -- that this Government, unlike many governments in the history of

this country, is completely and irrevocably unswervingly dedicated to the ease of doing business in this country, Mr. Speaker, Sir. The record is almost second to none in the space of two-and-a-half short years, Sir. No sooner had we taken our positions in Parliament after the last Election than we were, within a few weeks, having the discussion with this country on a new town planning piece of legislation, and certainly within six months that was a reality in Barbados, Mr. Speaker.

I myself have had the privilege of coming here and moving this Parliament to support me and to support the Government of Barbados as we placed no less than \$6.5 million at the disposal of micro enterprises in Barbados in our effort to deal with the unprecedented challenges and difficulties arising out of the COVID environment in this country. Mr. Speaker, search as one may -- and I was invited to do so as recently as last night by the head of Government -- I cannot find a programme of similar commitment in the Eastern Caribbean. I say that again: I cannot find a programme of similar commitment to easing the pain and plight of micro enterprises in the Eastern Caribbean.

Mr. Speaker Sir, beyond that we know that this Government has committed itself to rectify 20 years of neglect with regard to the pain felt by fisher folk in this country, those fishermen who have to fender their boats have to have jetties that are in a state of good repair. Mr. Speaker, all of that is part of the demonstration of this Government towards the facilitation of business in Barbados. Part of the difficulty that we face is that we recall and certainly I recall speaking to this theme while I was in Opposition and at that time obviously Parliament met at a different location, but business facilitation in Barbados at one point used to be seen in the light of how we can help a multimillion dollar deep pocketed investor who is looking to get a permission through Town and Country Planning or who is seeking to get Immigration Department to facilitate him or is looking at some other way of assisting his business. What we did not have a discussion on is how we facilitate business enterprises, not only at that large level, but as they come right down the line, the smaller businesses, the medium size businesses and the micro businesses because all business in Barbados must be treated in an even handed way and must be given the opportunity to benefit from the facilitative efforts and endeavours of the State. Mr. Speaker, this matter of liquor licences administration in this country as I say has bedevilled successive administrations. It has bedevilled these administrations because as I said before there was a need to deconstruct and reconstruct the legislation, but beyond that, there was a need to hearken to the concerns being raised by many stakeholders and again at all levels of Barbadian economy and society. Sir the consumer protection body in Barbados wrote into the Ministry of Commerce years ago expressing its concern, the Small

Business Association of Barbados had written into the Ministry of Commerce expressing their views and concerns, the Barbados Hotel Tourism Association expressed their concerns and frustration, the Chamber of Commerce of Barbados at levels, and why, because the issue of how we deal with liquor licences touches almost every level of the ladder so to speak of the business enterprises in Barbados. Sir, from the large ones like the hotels and restaurants and then to the very micro people, those people who for the benefit of those members who come from the parish of Christ Church, those persons who are operating Oistins, Bay Gardens every Friday and Saturday night.

Mr. Speaker the failure of us as a Parliament to be able to bring this difficult situation to a satisfactory conclusion does not reflect well upon this House. Hence, I am pleased today to be in a position that we can take this measure and advance this process that really has been the humbug of the people Barbados for nigh 30 years.

Mr. Speaker, the second broad thematic theme that I want to strike is the question of the need for us to advance legislative reform in this country. Now, it is a matter which is worthy of some significant discussion. Sir you would have seen it several times because you practice in the Courts of Barbados, but we have to recognise that we do not treat to one another very well in this country in terms of the legislative and justice system that we have. Therefore, we have to speak the language of reform at some point. Mr. Speaker, a lot of the reforms that we are speaking to, a need exist I think for us to redirect the focus of the legal and justice system away from the colonial approaches of justice and to recognise that the justice system that we inherited and certainly that this Administration inherited two and a half years ago was sullied. Mr. Speaker, it was sullied by an excessive focus on incarceration. That is not to speak ill of the Courts of Barbados, that is to speak ill of the law, and that is to say that the law needs reform. It is not to speak ill of a judicial officer at any level, be he Magistrate, Judge or Justice of Appeal. Mr. Speaker, it is to reflect on what you and I know because we have had to plead at the Bar and that the law of this land has an excessive focus on locking up people and locking up primarily the sons and daughters of working class people, because unfortunately there is also an economic linkage between that which takes place in the law and that which takes place in the society.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the children of underprivileged people have to be dealt a decent hand in this country. The ugly history we know well, I do not have to delay the House, and we had the discussion nationally a few weeks ago. A child may leave home because the circumstances of the household are oppressive, whereas somebody is interfering with that child, somebody is abusing that child. That child runs away and gets locked up because it is wondering. We had to do away with that. Mr.

Speaker, we know and you know because you have practiced in this land the wrenching agony of the victimless crimes and the way in which people get a jail sentence when they had two spliffs. This legislation that we seek to correct today Mr. Speaker that we will repeal and replace, is one which allow for people to be incarcerated because you had a man who was drunk in your shop. Can you imagine that Sir? Or, it allows for you to be incarcerated because you were drunk in the street or in the shop. That is the reality not of the economically better off, but it is the reality on a daily basis of those who do not have social reach in this country to lift receiver and say help me and my child, my nephew or whoever.

Mr. Speaker, the sons and daughters of working class Barbados have to be dealt a decent hand and as I reflect on this matter, those were the only things that were treated to when the Member for St. George South would have been trying to pull together the initial meetings to get this legislation up and running because these were the things that had humbugged us philosophically while we were in Opposition as you will recall and these are the things that we campaigned against. Mr. Speaker Sir, I need not remind you of the paradox, first of all the anesthetised language and sterile superficiality which surrounds white collar crime, which surrounds matters of corruption, the so called gentleman's offences. The anesthetise language as which we speak to them, the superficiality, sterile as it is with which we have historically treated to those offences, meanwhile, a little black boy somewhere in the Ivy would be arrested for some trivial offence and locked up. There has to be an even handed approach to the justice system, it has to work for all Mr. Speaker and unnecessary criminalisation of Barbadian people especially Barbadian working class people must come to an end.

Mr. Speaker, that brings me to the third broad thematic point that this legislation allows this Government to tackle. That is the use of technology to improve the quality and speed of delivery of high demands services in this country. There is no doubt that there are some services in Barbados which are in high demand and upon which the people of this country rely on a Government to facilitate them with and to be responsive to them because they need to access these services in order to deliver the commercial effort and enterprise that they are involved in. Mr. Speaker, we must not bury our light under a bushel. All too often we sit here and we endure the abuse, we endure the very unfortunate comments that come from some quarters.

The Leader of the Opposition distinguishes himself as a man who unprovoked would stand in the House of Assembly and say that this Government is a dictatorship. I heard that with my ears a few weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, and that is not to reflect on that debate. It is that I recall the statement coming from his lips. Sir, I say to myself....

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I would adjure you ask of him that he would retract that statement that I stood in here and called his Government a dictatorship, unless he can provide the proof that I did so. If he does not withdraw it, then I will have to ask that the record be brought to show that I said that in here. He has to take it back this time.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, let us not detain the House. If it would please the Honourable Member, I will withdraw the statement. I know and the Honourable Member knows that he used the language of dictatorship with a view to reflecting not on the Government as a whole, but on the Leader of the Government. Will you disagree with that too?

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I will absolutely have to ask of you, kindly, to have the Honourable Member for St. James Central withdraw those remarks. I did not say on my feet in here that the Government was a dictatorship or that the Leader of the Government was a dictator. If he wants to debate that we can but I have not said that in here. Unless he can prove that, I would have to ask that the statement be withdrawn unequivocally.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: I am in a very indulgent mood, Mr. Speaker, and I will withdraw that too. However, what I will never shy away from is that the Leader of the Opposition used the term "dictator" in here. I will say through you, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition is unfortunately starting to cast himself in the light of an ingrate because one cannot reflect on the administration of this country in any way, shape or form and collide with the language of dictatorship or dictators, and at the same time be the beneficiary as the Leader of the Opposition is.

He is the beneficiary of circumstances in which his constituents because of this Government and its commitment to the people that he represents can renew their drivers' licences online without having to present themselves at a civic centre in order to do so.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I will address you and not that Honourable Member who just sat down. He is misleading the House again. It cannot be in a proper parliamentary spirit or cannot be executed in any sense of decency or propriety that he seems to suggest, in fact, that he stated categorically that I cast myself in the style of an ingrate because Government provides services to the people of Barbados and St. Michael West. This is totally out of order, Mr. Speaker. I await your ruling.

Mr. SPEAKER: As to what, Honourable Member?

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Ingrate.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I thought I had the right to have an opinion in this place.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am awaiting your ruling.

Mr. SPEAKER: The point of order, Honourable Member, is that it is unparliamentary or misleading?

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Both, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Can you expand, Sir.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: It is unparliamentary. It is also untrue and misleading. For a Minister in today's Government to suggest that for the Government to provide services for any citizen of Barbados and that one stands to represent the interests of those people suggests that one styles himself in that manner is totally misleading. He should withdraw it, Mr. Speaker, or we can carry it further if you want to. However, we might be here all day.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, based on the definition, that is, in truth and in fact unparliamentary. It has suggested that the person is ungrateful and insulting. I would ask you to withdraw your remarks, Honourable Member.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, if that is your ruling, then I stand by it. I withdraw those remarks. Let the record reflect that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is enriched by virtue of the fact that he sits in a Parliament as he now does with a Government that has prioritized the well-being of his constituents, whether he has recognised that or not, Sir. Let the record reflect that the Honourable Member is even doubly enriched not only by virtue of the fact that this Parliament has made sure that they facilitate the ease of his constituents in terms of accessing drivers' licences. Therefore, they do not have to leave their places of business to physically appear at a civic centre to get those licences renewed and this has never been done before in the history of Barbados prior to this Administration that someone at some stage called a dictatorship.

Let the record reflect that the Leader of the Opposition is enriched by virtue of the fact that he and his constituents can apply online for a passport if they want to travel also, and have that passport delivered to their residences for a minor fee of \$15. Again, Sir, it was an initiative of this Administration led I believe by the Members for St. James North and Christ Church East.

LS-7

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order again. I still think the Honourable Member for St. James Central is misleading the House. He repeatedly used the term that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is enriched by his role as the representative of the people of St. Michael West. I am in no way enriched as used in the context of this debate. If the Honourable Member of St. James Central is enriched to any extent and degree by the opportunity of representing the people of St. James Central or by the performance of his position as Minister of Energy and Small Business, this Honourable Member over here is not enriched.

I may be edified, uplifted or satisfied at doing my duty to the extent that I am able but certainly not enriched as Barbadians understand the use of that term and as used in this thing. I know we are talking about rum and liquor licences. It seems to me that the

LS-8

Honourable Member for St. James Central may have indulged a little before he came here today.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the term "enriched" does not necessarily mean does not mean monetarily. The mere fact that you are being referred to as being enriched might be spiritually, emotionally, et cetera. Therefore, one cannot attribute the term "enriched" in a narrow sense but can utilize a broad perspective as term "enrich" could mean.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: I thank you. I am in full agreement with that, Mr. Speaker. I am simply trying to underscore the fact that I have not been enriched monetarily. If that is the case in St. James Central, it is not the case in St. Michael West. Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, he has not said that and one cannot, therefore, infer because the Honourable Member used the term "enrich" that it means enrich as it relates to money, et cetera. As I said, it ought to be given or it can be given a very broad perspective, Sir.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Sir, I am simply saying that I agree with you wholeheartedly. I am saying that my interpretation of his use of the term in this particular context had to do with some monetary value. I am saying for the record and quite clearly that I have not been so enriched by my duties to the people of St. Michael West. If that applies at St. James Central, it does not apply down in St. Michael West or St. Michael Central, I am sure.

Mr. SPEAKER: Continue, Honourable Member.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, as I listen to the Leader of the Opposition I am reminded of

Shakespeare's Observance that he says: "The lady doth protest too much, methinks."

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to the Leader of the Opposition for a chance to reflect even further because the benefits to a parliamentary representative spiritually, as you put it, Mr. Speaker, must also include the fact that in the constituency of the Leader of the Opposition because of this Government, that is what he wants to run away from, because of this Government that he himself ran away from, Mr. Speaker, we are able now to see his constituents, because of this Government, benefit from and opportunity to get Police Certificates of Character online thereby facilitating their own business efforts and opportunities for employment and we could go on and on because what it really has been about is that on every single step of the way for the last two and a half years, this Government has been committing and recommitting itself to a thrust in an unprecedented way in Barbados in terms of making business less static, in terms of making the business environment, employment and opportunities for work less unpredictable, Mr. Speaker. It is a thrust which is rooted in development and a commitment to transformation in this society and economy, Sir, and we campaigned on that, all of us in this Honourable House bar none and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition perhaps foreshadows what my concern is because he would well recall sharing the platforms ... I see he is getting agitated and so should he be. Were I him I would be agitated too because, Mr. Speaker, he recalls well when we would have gone to the public to ask them for their confidence and prior to receiving it, we would have committed that we would ask ourselves a few key questions in this business of Government if given the chance. The first would be: what would be the public interests that we would be seeking to protect? In this case, it is ease of doing business in Barbados and correcting certain social and economic ills, Mr. Speaker.

We also said to the public that we would ask ourselves what is the mischief that we would be seeking to correct and I am going to come to that mischief too because what we have sought to do by this piece of legislation is for the first time in Barbados' post-colonial history to protect the young people of this country insofar as access to drinking alcohol and the consumption of intoxicating liquor is concerned -- I am going to come to that -- and, Mr. Speaker, we are committed to the public to ask ourselves whether digitisation can be of assistance in this regard and the legislation clearly demonstrates that because we are moving this whole process online, but even most importantly, Sir, are there any special interests that we need to look after and I want to speak to that question of the special interests because the young people of Barbados are near and dear to the hearts, I hope, of all of us in this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, there are three broad purposes of this Bill, as I said. The first, therefore, is to be the administration and decriminalisation of stakeholders under the existing legislation and shift the responsibility for liquor licenses from the Magistrates' Court, Mr. Speaker, which we are doing by this legislation and to create a new civic structure for administering liquor licenses. We are going to take it, Sir, from the burdensome and oppressive long, frustrating and long delayed approach used in the Magistrates' Courts of Barbados under the supervision of the Royal Barbados Police Force (R.B.P.F.) and we are going to create a civic administration structure in which the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs will be the administrative entity for handling liquor license in this country. The aim, Mr. Speaker, as I have said is to better facilitate business in Barbados and I recall that liquor licenses regulate the sale and consumption of intoxicating beverages in this country. They are an important part of commerce at all levels in this country, Mr. Speaker, and I have outlined the fact already that whether you are talking about a shop, a bar, a snackette, an event promoter or an event producer or a hotel and even the wholesalers and exporters, Sir, they must have licenses to do that which they do. It is a critical component to industry in this country but the third purpose and those vulnerable categories that we must protect and that we do not shy away from protecting, Mr. Speaker, is the young people of Barbados. The third purpose of this Bill is correct a mischief. Well not just one mischief but a trilogy of mischiefs that have long humbugged serious onlookers in Barbadians society. Mr. Speaker, Clause 27 of the Bill treats to the appropriately and definitively to the sale and the supply of intoxicating beverages to our minors.

Sir, now I referred to a trilogy of mischiefs. The old legislation did not deal adequately, in our view, with the sale of intoxicating liquor to minors, nor, Mr. Speaker, did it deal adequately, in our view, with the issue of aiding and assisting a minor in obtaining or consuming intoxicating alcohol and then the third part of the trilogy of mischiefs is employing minors who are going to be involved in the business of the sale of alcohol and under the old legislation, what we seek to repeal today, at age 16 you could do all of those things. You can get a drink, you can go and buy it and walk out with it, you could be in a rum shop and a youngster come in and you help him to get the alcohol and equally, Mr. Speaker, you could employ him in the process of a business which is engaging in sale and consumption of intoxicating beverages.

Mr. Speaker, under this new legislation, let me make it clear, either of those three types of behaviour will result in the person who commits them being exposed to either a fine of up to \$10 000 or to a term of imprisonment for up to five years or to both. I have already said that the new legislation does not contemplate the constant criminalising of people so this piece of legislation will stand alone but

consequential on its passage, if it passes this Honourable House and passes the Other Place and consequential upon that, Mr. Speaker, will come about certain implications for the Minor Offences Act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that there is absolute clarity on this matter. The Minor Offences Act CAP 137 of the Laws of Barbados will be amended by inserting new sections at Section 3 so that offences relating to the sale and consumption of liquor would be inserted with respect to a person who sells or supplies liquor to a minor, with respect to a person who aids a minor in obtaining or consuming liquor and with respect to employing a minor in connection with the sale or supply of liquor. Mr. Speaker, as I said, those are the parts of the Act that will cause a person who is guilty of offences under that Section to be liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$10 000 or to imprisonment for 5 years or to both, and of course, Mr. Speaker, it shall be a defence to any charge brought in that nature for the person charged to be able to prove that he had reasonable grounds for believing that the minor was at 18 years of age or older, but we are, by this Act resetting the legal age for consuming intoxicating beverages in Barbados from age 16 where it now stands to age 18 where it shall be. I want this Honourable House to remember, Mr. Speaker, that under the existing legislation at Section 70(c) Subsection (6) the sale of intoxicating alcohol consumed on the licensed premises to any person under age 16 was the offense, so that now we go to age 18, but Mr. Speaker, Sir, why do we do this. We do this, Sir, because again when once you go through what the people who call themselves interest groups in Barbados, who call themselves stakeholders in Barbados, who call themselves part of our society with a social conscience, the child advocates, et cetera, the National Council of Substance Abuse, the insurance industry in Barbados who raised the real commercial concern about the frequency of accidents on the road and how at between age 16 and age 20-something - they are far, far than at the age you are at, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and indeed I, because the Honourable Leader of the Opposition does not want me to talk about him anymore he is up in his feelings right now so he does not want his name called - but the fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, these are people who have long written into the ministry, long expressed their concerns about the way in which the administration of liquor in this country and intoxicating beverages in this country has been conducted and in their concern it is abundantly clear that there is a desire in the best interest of our young people to have the age raise. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think in raising the age we also become consistent with parts of the international community but more importantly we are being true to the very clear challenges which are faced in the Barbadians society because we do know that there have been challenges with our young people being able to access not only intoxicating beverages but I believe it is true to say

access other substances which are injurious to their health and development.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I come to the other aspect of this debate which is very important. We are in the third decade of the 21st Century and I said to my colleagues in the parliamentary group that we cannot continue to relate to business in the way in which we related to it when we were a colonial backwater, we cannot. This legislation that we seek to repeal today is 64 years old. It was passed in colonial times in 1957, Mr. Speaker, Sir. It is in every way, shape and form part of the legislative colonial construct. In every way it reflects the thinking of that age and, Mr. Speaker, the architecture is aimed at repression and it is aimed at suppression. I would even go so far as to say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is an legislative architecture that facilitates oppression but I do not think, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that it in any way serves our interest in facilitating the expansion and the growth of enterprises which are allied to and aligned with the usage of intoxicating beverages and that is something that we have to correct.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the colonial thinkers would have, as I say, structured a piece of legislation which we have laboured under no doubt to the detriment of a number of constituents through the 60 long years. Mr. Speaker, Sir, and as you study the legislation it is pretty obvious to see that it is as I have indicated before routed in class discrimination in Barbados, it reflects the philosophical intent of the old colonial overlords, and Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a thought process which does not work well for uplifting the underprivileged people in this society.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to reject that approach to governance and I want to reject that approach because this Government takes the view, and we campaigned in the last election on the theme, that we would take the view that where there was reputable commercial activity in Barbados that was being frustrated that we will remove those obstacles so as to create an empowering impulse for the people that we want to represent, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that we will remove the obstacles that frustrate them, the obstacles that inhibit their investment the obstacles and the obstacles that make it harder for them to be entrepreneurial and to have self-employment. You cannot stand here and make idle comment about the need for entrepreneurship on one hand and then maintain a legislative architecture which frustrates the very same entrepreneurship that you want to develop. We see, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the business, for example, of shop-keeping or operating a kiosk in Oistins Bay Garden or if Patsy down by Holders Hill wants to sell a few bottles of Johnnie Walker Black, now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, she is doing that by way of entrepreneurship. Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is in fact historically one of the original outlets and opportunities for black business in Barbados to develop. If you study the legislation, Sir, you understand not only the context in which the old legislation was

created but you understand why it was created the way in which it was created because there was a reluctance in the Parliament of Barbados let us be frank - it is not the first time that I have had to speak in this House in these tones and in these terms - that in 1957 did not want any independence from the shackles of the plantation, did not want any independence from plantocratic patronage and that did not want there to be alternatives to the grim reality of labour in the City of Bridgetown experienced by working-class black people and therefore that Parliament made sure that this emerging business of small people starting their own enterprises and selling intoxicating beverages was humbugged and was stifled and was frustrated, that is what this Parliament did, and it is only meet, fitting and proper that in this 21st Century we undo those mischiefs of the past. Mr. Speaker, Sir, for what do I mean because I want to be fair to the House and to those within earshot of my voice both en cathedra and ex cathedra outside of the House of Assembly. Permit me if I could, Sir, to give you a snapshot of what we are talking about.

Sir, it is almost unimaginable at times especially for today's teenagers and today's young people to understand the language and to understand the circumstances of the time of the Moyne Commission in the 1930s. They look at life through a different lens, they see with their eyes a different set of sensibility than what would have existed nearly 100 years ago, but the fact of the matter is that when we are dealing with a piece of legislation such as this that itself carries a certain antiquity and it is rooted in considerations that began before 1964 it is important to grasp what the social economic circumstances were that led to the legislation that we got to correct because understand why we have to do what we have to do today and why we want even the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to support us in this journey is because to get there is to understand first of all why it is necessary for us to have the change, and a snapshot of the year 1957 is perhaps not adequate unless you connect it to what the circumstances were that existed a little bit prior to 1957 because remember in the 1930s we had the what the English euphemistically called the disturbances in the West Indies, we call them what they were riots, and after that World War II started, 1939-1945, so you got riots immediately followed by the World War and then you have the post war reality. Sir, if you go back to what the Moyne Commission and indeed the other Commission because you know there were two Commissions, and as we often do in Barbados we have paid great homage to Lord Moyne who came down from England, [but] we forget that in the constituency of St. George -- at that time it was just St. George -- there was a man whose name was George Campbell Deane, [who] was Barbadian born, [who] went on to become the Chief Justice of the Gold Coast of Africa. He, Sir, led a Commission as well, before Lord Moyne came here, and his findings were identical to that which Lord Moyne

subsequently found. In fact, he may have gone a little bit further in penetrating and analyzing Barbadian society.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when you read those Commissions, when you read, for example, the comments of Sir Theodore Brancker, a former Member I believe for the constituency of St. Lucy, who made the point reflecting on 1937 and 1938 that cane hole diggers in Barbados were working for nine cents per hundred holes and that the average day was 400 holes and so therefore you would work for thirty-six cents per day, and that a "forker" (a term that we no longer use but the Honourable Member for St. Philip West immortalized it in song -- "I don't want a fork to be nobody's "forker"). The Honourable Member for St. Michael West, in a different incarnation, immortalized that in song. Mr. Speaker, Sir, a "forker" would have been working for thirty-six cents a day as well, and these people, Sir, [were] tied to a plantation system where they had to rent rab land on the side of the plantation, so you were perpetually in a state of dependence. They wanted to free themselves from that and developed their own commercial instinct. And if you were not on the plantation, the only other option was to find work in Bridgetown, which was not much of an option. When you were in Bridgetown, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Commissions that did the analysis....

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would never forget, Lord Moyne Inquiry talked about bakers locking people in their bakeries from 5.00 p.m. until 10:00 the next morning, and the Swiss proprietor, the baker saying that he preferred that they stayed in as late as 10:00 the next morning because it was too much trouble [for him] to get out of his bed to let out the people so early on morning. Mr. Speaker, Sir, so that you had people working for 16 and 18 hours, and in worst-case scenario, according to the Deane Commission, 22 hours a day in some instances in Barbados. There was a natural instinct therefore, in circumstances where people in this country did not have any decency of pay, [did not have] any decent circumstances of employment. Mr. Speaker, Sir, all of that is what gave birth to the work of the Workers Union, to try to bring some degree of decency to industrial climate in Barbados; the natural instinct was to get away from that if they could, and become self-employed if they could, and one of the original outlets besides vending -and we are going to come to vending in a couple of weeks- was the business of selling liquor from inside a shop. And what then, Sir, was the reply of the Legislature? In this piece of legislation to which we now treat, the Legislature in 1957...

In fact, before I go there, just so that nobody believes for a moment that because the War ended in 1945 that things dramatically improved in Barbados by 1957. If you go back and look at what the Barbados Workers Union had to do in terms of industrial relations in this country, in 1955 they had to shut down this place for 12 days because of a problem on the Waterfront with working conditions and

pay -- unprecedented show of industrial strength, 1 153 workers on the Waterfront of Barbados, for 12 days, Sir, in 1955. Mr. Speaker, Sir, in 1956 there were 246 workers at the Barbados Advocate, a strike by the Barbados Water Authority again, [with] wage increases being the issue, [with] an eleven-day stoppage, which eventually emerged into 1 000 workers marching in Barbados, and an embargo at the Port on all goods other than food stuff. This is what the people of this country were enduring then, led by the Barbados Workers Union.

It is a matter, Sir, of fate being kind to us that we have today in the Parliament of Barbados the General Secretary of the Barbados Workers Union, [who is] also from St. George, so not only am I talking about the work that the Deane Commission did, which was led by a son of the St. George soil, but we have a “babe begun” by a member from St. George, and a workers union leader from St. George today as we correct the mischiefs. So let us not imagine for a moment that because the War finished in 1945 that those challenges facing this country had disappeared.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there was an impulse for the people of Barbados to emancipate themselves from those social and economic circumstances, those oppressive circumstances, and to be able to find self-employment. How then did this Parliament respond to that impulse? They responded, Mr. Speaker, Sir, with a Liquor Licenses Act that held shopkeepers liable to penalties of a criminal nature for permitting -- and this is the language of the Act -- and suffering on their premises or suffering their premises to be used in circumstances where there was drunkenness, and you pay a fine of \$2 500, or you are going to be imprisoned for three months.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, when people in the country are working for thirty-six cents a day and when the average wage, according to the historians, was \$5.83 per week, then how are you going to find \$2 500? Sir, the intention was cessation of business. The intention of the Parliament of Barbados was to shut down the business of the working-class people who were “upstarts”; these people who “forget themselves” and “forgot their place”, starting their own commercial enterprise, humbugging what was the established order in Barbados, they had to be repressed, suppressed, and oppressed. Yes, those people who dared to rise.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is the mischief that we come here to correct. It is rooted in legal formality but it is enforced by huge criminal penalties, and it is fortified, Mr. Speaker, Sir, by administrative frustration; willful, in some cases, administrative frustration. Mr. Speaker, Sir, those hardships have been experienced across the general administrative structure of the liquor licensing system. I speak, first of all, to the expensive bureaucracy and

formality. If you want a liquor license in Barbados, [then] you have to apply in quadruplicate form: one form goes to the Royal Barbados Police Force; another goes to the Ministry of Public Health; a third one goes to the Ministry of the Environment. Mr. Speaker, Sir, then once the Police and the Ministry of Public Health did not have any problem with you, then you appear physically before the magistrate, in the jurisdiction at which you want to have the event or where your business is operating.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, now even the fact -- and I need not tell you because you have practised in this country, and for those like my friend the Honourable Member for Christ Church East who have practised in Barbados, we know well because we have seen it firsthand, day after painful day, Mr. Speaker, Sir. After your formal appearance (and I am going to come back to the formal appearance itself) but after the formal appearance you have to wait for four to five weeks in order to get your paperwork, so you cannot be seriously talking about helping people to do business in 2021, when everything is real time, the things that we witnessed a gentleman jumping up in here about and become agitated, simple things like making sure a driver's license is accessible (in real time); that you can get a passport application online (in real time); that a Police Certificate of Character can be done online (in real time). What on earth should make any right-thinking human being rise up, gets agitated and trembles and ask for things to be withdrawn, blah, blah, blah, because Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are some people still amongst us who have a mindset that is rooted in the old colonial architecture, the old colonial way of thinking, that black people, humble black people must “know their place”, must “keep their place”. The rich man at his castle, the poor man at his gate. God made them high and lowly, and ordered their estate. Do not subscribe to the view, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that because you were born into underprivileged circumstances, that you cannot emancipate yourself or be assisted in the emancipation of yourself from those circumstances, Mr. Speaker.

Asides.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I say that even worse than the wait for five weeks to get paperwork is the experience that we subject people to in the Magistrates' Courts of this country when it comes to liquor licences, Sir. If you go there today for your liquor licence and something happens where, for example, the magistrate may have taken ill.

Aside.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Indeed, or if there is Test cricket playing in Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are speaking about certain courts, Honourable Member.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Yes, Sir, not all, not across the board, but we know it has been known to happen. The court, if it meets, will meet for a very, very short time or it may not meet at all. This is a reality of which I speak, and then what happens to the person who went there to deal with his or her business, his or her liquor licence, Sir? He or she may want to have that licence in place for when the Test cricket is done and the One-Day cricket starts. Mr. Speaker, Sir, if you want to come back you have to wait for a date to come back, and do not think your date is going to be tomorrow. Do not hold your breath or hope your date is next week, Sir. Do not hope that the date is a fortnight from now. Very often you will wait a while before you get back in there. That is how we conduct or have conducted the people's business since the Year 1957 in this country. It has to change.

Equally, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the court appearance requires a wait because you go there and you are part of a crowd. Indeed, Sir, you may be part of a crowd that on average -- these files reflect studies done -- is between 65 and 85 people a day in a court waiting for a liquor licence, and they are standing, Sir, not seated as we are inside here in an air-conditioned room. They are standing up outside in the sun or in the rain, waiting on their turn, or for some police officer to come to the doorstep calling, "Arthur Holder! Arthur Holder! Arthur Holder!" Then, Sir, your turn comes and you do what you have to do. There have been times, Sir, when the line was as long as over 100 people, which tells you that in all likelihood you may have to come back on another day because you may not get through today. That was what we were subjecting people to and have been subjecting them to since 1957.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the grim reality of that is that when we came to Government -- two months after we came to Government, actually -- the figures for Holetown Magistrate's Court, in my constituency and in terms of liquor licences that were awaiting processing, were 1 000 licences waiting to be processed. One thousand in Holetown. Mr. Speaker, I must tell you now as a parliamentary representative for the parish of St. James and for people who had to go to Holetown to get their licences, it is a disgrace. It has to be a frustration and a humbug to ordinary Barbadians doing their ordinary course of business, Sir, to say to me that I have to wait in a line of 1 000 people in a process like the one I just described, which demonstrates absolutely no capacity to accelerate and make sure I am able to do the business which I am trying to do.

Sir, these are the things that we have been correcting. I do not expect that somebody who is taking it as their vested interest to criticise or stand in opposition to the Government of Barbados to praise us for these things,

but I do expect that the people of Barbados will understand the substantial transformation and the positive efforts made by this Government, because prior to this Administration, nobody was doing these things in Barbados to help the people of Barbados get through a little better.

Asides.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Nobody, Sir. Mr. Speaker, perhaps among the most offensive of the experiences was this thing they call occasional licences. Sir, if you were not a retailer and if you were not a hotelier or had a restaurant, then your only option -- I use the example again of Patsy in Holder's Hill and I can use the example of the folks in Oistins Bay Garden -- would be an occasional liquor licence which would be necessary because that which they did had to be licensed. If you were going to sell alcohol, you had to have a licence but there was no category of licence to capture these micro enterprises. Why was there no category of licences to capture those micro enterprises? The Parliament in 1957 did not view this as something desirable. In fact, they viewed it in the exact opposite way. Sir, it was something to be rejected, not promoted and facilitated. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we are again today correcting a mischief that is long rooted in long and deep history.

Sir, every single week, therefore, we have people who will leave Oistins or leave Holder's Hill or leave Fitts Village and go to a magistrate's court and they are going to apply for a fresh licence and go through that process week after week, 52 weeks a year, Sir, to get an occasional liquor licence to do that which they have to do. Sir, the solution that we find in this legislation is the creation of an entertainment licence. We are correcting a policy construct that, beyond being antiquated, has been a disincentive to entertainment-related business activity, but with an entertainment licence now you can have a place from which you operate and that place is licensed properly. Gone now, hopefully forever, will be the days of people having to go and renew a licence week after week after week in order to be able to earn a living honestly in the land of their birth.

Asides.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this legislation that we have corrected has also been a disincentive to event promotion in Barbados. It boggles the mind, Sir, how a country that has made so many millions of dollars...? In fact, 34 per cent of our country's gross domestic product (GDP) in the Year 2019 when I would have been Minister of Tourism came from tourism; 34 per cent of the GDP, Sir. Mr. Speaker, how does a country that relies so heavily on tourism and, therefore, by extension relies so heavily on its national festivals as part of the tourism product -- the Crop Over Festival, Reggae Festival,

et cetera -- how then do you have the people who give life to the entertainment within those festivals, in particular the event promoters, dealing with a serious business, how then do you have them in a situation where they have to go from magistrate's district to magistrate's district for every event which they wish to put on?

Sir, let me give you an example. You, Sir, I believe I have seen you at 'Bliss'. I was going to say, 'Fire De Work' but you have never fired the work, Sir, so I would not say that. You may go to a Crop Over fete -- I just gave an example of two of them -- but the reality is that you are dealing with a business, Sir. Yes, it is a fete experience but for the person organising it, it is a business. That businessperson, if he or she has his or her head screwed on properly, would want to make sure that they can do their event as often as possible because they want to raise as much money as possible during the season. Therefore, it is quite logical that if I can do my fete or my activity four or six times in the season, I will do so, but what would be humbugging me?

Do you know what the main humbug is, Mr. Speaker? The main humbug is that if I want to have my activity and I am selling some liquor, and I want to have one on the East Coast of Barbados, I have to find the magistrate's court for St. Andrew. If I want to have one on the South Coast up Oistins side, I have to find the magistrate's court for Oistins. If I want to have one in town, Mr. Speaker, I have to go to the magistrate's court for District 'A'. If I want to go on the West Coast, I have to go to the magistrate's court down in Holetown. Mr. Speaker, Sir, every time I go to the magistrate's court, I go back through that same laborious, long-winded, nauseating and frustrating process that I just outlined to this Honourable House a few minutes ago. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we say no, that multiple events in various locations should be facilitated and it should not mean multiple applications to multiple magistrates in multiple jurisdictions and therefore we create a seasonal licence and that seasonal licence will be available for the sum of \$500 and it last for three months maximum. Therefore, we begin a process that is much needed in Barbados, where if you an event promoter you have some certainty, you can do what you have to do, if you want a licence for two weeks take it for two weeks, if you want a licence for two months take it for two months, if you want a licence for two days get it for two days. You have access under the season to a licence for the whole season up until the period of three months. If we think about it critically, we will understand the wisdom of the Prime Minister when she made the point and indeed I believe the Minister responsible for culture, the Member of Parliament for St. Philip West, who would have said repeatedly that this now must take us to the point where we get the one stop shop that you should be able not only to have your seasonal licence but every other type of permission you need so that you go to one place with your

seasonal licence and with that you will then generate all the other assistance that you need so that you can go about the business of advancing the economic activity that the season is there to generate. Sir, if we do that, we unleash the creative abilities of the people of Barbados. Sir, if we do that we stop this thing where people feel stymied and stifled, they feel they have to go to old Uncle Joe and say Uncle Joe I want a job. Mr. Speaker Sir, what we want to say is no, we want to say you stand on your own two feet, facilitate a man with the opportunity to fish, let him feed his whole family, season after season. Mr. Speaker, not only do we do that, but we recognised the humbug that the bureaucracy associated with this has had on all levels of business. Sir, I say to you that the Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Association and the BHTA as I mentioned before have had to share their views very pointedly with the Ministry, not only when we invite them to come and talk, but when they are frustrated for years going back three decades this has been their concern.

Mr. Speaker, we have now introduced for the first time again, multiyear licences, up to three years, so that the fee on the licence reduces for every successive year. It is an incentive therefore for the business operator to get a licence for three years or even for two years because at the end of the day you will spend less money than if you get an annual licence. However, what is it does, is to remove the backlog and it removes the annual requirement of having to go back and get a licence, so it is another effort at easing the process administratively.

With regard to hotels, obviously you have to factor in those smaller hotels, that group which would call themselves of be defined as intimate hotels of Barbados will pay \$1 500 for a one year licence, instead of paying \$3 000 for a two year licence they will pay \$2 850 and for a three year licence instead of paying \$4 500, they will pay \$4 050. For the larger hotels, for example, those with 100 bedrooms, for a one year licence they will be paying \$7 500, instead of paying \$15 000 for a two year licence they will pay \$14 250 and for a three year licence, instead of paying \$22 500 they will pay \$20 250.

Mr. Speaker, the administration of this Act is also vitally important. As I indicated, we are moving from the very formal structures administered in the Magistrate's Court of Barbados under the Superintendent of the Royal Barbados Police Force who is civic and perhaps I should also say a civil structure. The authority which will govern this process will be the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and the Director of the authority, or the authority will be led by a person whose title will be directed and that person will be the Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, Clause 4 (1) to (3) of the Bill outlines what is conceptualised with regard to the structure of the

Authority and if I can share that with you it would be as Clause 4 “(2) The Authority shall consist of a chief officer, to be known as the Director, and such officers to assist the Director as the Minister thinks necessary.

“The Authority shall be responsible for

(a) administering this Act; (b) issuing licences in accordance with this Act; (c) supervising licensees and the operation of licensed premises; (d) and the general enforcement of this Act.”

Mr. Speaker, there are going to be several classes of licence and those several classes are outlined at Clause 7 of the Legislation, where it states,

“The following classes of licences may be issued under this Act:

(a) an export licence applies where liquor is to be exported; (b) a wholesale licence applies where liquor is to be sold on a wholesale basis; (c) a retail licence applies where liquor is to be sold on a retail basis whether or not the liquor is in a sealed container; (d) a hotel licence applies where liquor is to be sold at a hotel; (e) a restaurant licence applies where liquor is to be sold at a restaurant; (f) a seasonal licence applies where liquor is to be sold at events occurring over a period not exceeding 3 months; (g) special occasion licence applies where liquor is to be sold at an event over a period not exceeding 24 hours; (h) an entertainment licence applies where liquor is to be sold at any place of entertainment; (i) a members’ club licence applies where liquor is to be sold at a club to members of the club or to any other person.”

Let me say to you Mr. Speaker is that we are also going to be very strict with the definitions because the definition of the hotel is outlined in the definition section and the reason why there has had to be that approach so that you align now with the definition of a hotel as is found under the Barbados Tourism Product Authority Act, is because people do a lot of fancy footwork and they are those people who say the restaurant is in the hotel but the restaurant really is a private contractor, we have leased out and it is not all restaurant, it is a private contractor doing that so therefore the licence for the restaurant is going to be at a different price and that obviously is a lower price to that which the hotel will pay and therefore that is how they get around that or had gotten around it in the past. We correct that mischief as well and again it is important to recognise that one of the real benefits to this legislation is that we are doing a lot of general cleaning up of some of the legislative missteps that have been identified along the way, and one of the commitments that we make as a Government is that wherever we find these legislative problems and deficiencies we will move with alacrity to correct them.

Sir, the application for the Liquor Licences are made to the Liquor Licensing Authority. With regard to new application for a retail licence or entertainment licence because obviously the retail licence will be for example what a shopkeeper would have and have already outlined what an entertainment licence will be about. These things may take place in a vicinity where you may have some persons who may feel themselves to be prejudice in terms of their interest, in terms of the activity that is taking place in the immediate neighbourhood where they are. Once received by the Liquor Licensing Authority, the fact that there is an application for the licence must be notified to the public via notice and that will be on the Ministry’s website first of all and then in any other manner that is approved by the Director and obviously on the promulgation of the legislation and I will come to that after because when once we have passed Parliament there still has to be a period of discussion with people so that we settle the way in which we do the promulgation of the legislation and give people who are accustomed to one system an opportunity to prepare themselves for the other.

Notices of the concerns or objections to grant a new retail or entertainment licence as proposed are to be lodged with the authority in relation to the application that is made. Mr. Speaker, if you feel that you may have an interest that is prejudiced as a result of my application for a retail licence, then you have a right to lodge your objection with the authority. First of all, the authority must notify the public of the objection. Second, it must notify the Commissioner of Police of the objection and this must be done in a period of three days. Those steps must be taken within a period of 72 hours.

Why are we holding the process to such tight time frames, Mr. Speaker? Again, it is about business facilitation. It is about trying to make sure that we get pass this perennial humbug of the thing or process taken so long that it puts the business in a position where it starts to suffer as a result of the administrative bureaucracy impeding it and its interests. If I am going to make my objection, I have a period of seven days within which to make the objection. The fact that the application published to the world, I have seven days within which to make my objection stating the grounds and reasons why I object. Where the authority has received an objection to grant the new retail or entertainment licence, it has to hear and determine that objection again within seven days of receipt.

The applicant for the licence, the Commissioner of Police and the person objecting all have a right to appear at the hearing. If you cannot appear personally, you have the right appear via an Attorney-at-law acting on your behalf. It is not a barrier to the proceedings taking place if you cannot get there Monday morning because you are entitled to brief counsel who can appear for you. As we well know,

Mr. Speaker, in these matters you brief counsel, a spokesperson or friend.

Mr. Speaker, where an applicant for a licence other than a retail or entertainment licence or a special occasion licence has complied with all of the requirements, the authority has to issue that licence within five days of the application if there is no objection arising. The four or five-week period at minimum is now replaced with a five-day period at maximum. The Enforcement and Compliance Procedures are set down in Clauses 33 (1) of the Bill. It is important to recognize that a Member of the Liquor Licence Authority on production of his or her identification may at any time enter and inspect licensed premises with a view to ascertaining whether the Act is being complied with or whether there are infringements of the Act that are taking place.

The licensees of the premises must comply and they shall not obstruct or instruct their employees to obstruct the business of the authority. Equally, the members of the authority while they are entitled to request production of the licence for the establishment, they have power which if the Director feels is necessary can be exercised so that in the interest of public safety or if there is a breach of the peace, once you have a police officer at the rank of Sergeant or above signing off on it require a premises to be vacated for not in excess of 24 hours. If there is a matter taking place, a fray arises on a premises and you feel that it is necessary to vacate the premises in order for heads and tempers to cool, then the place can be closed down for a period not exceeding 24 hours.

Under the old legislation, the solution was to lock up or fine the shopkeeper and persons involved. In circumstances of complaints by residence living within the area, the authority has to hear the complaint and has a number of options at its disposal. It may impose conditions on the licence, so that if your behavior in the place of business is a matter of concern to the authority, it can put certain conditions on the licence. For example, you are not entitled to sell alcohol after whatever hour of the night.

Equally, Mr. Speaker, if the circumstances warrant it may suspend the licence or alternatively revoke it. However, in any of those circumstances before that action is taken there is a requirement that the licensee have the benefit of written notice that this is what the Director of the authority intends to do and, therefore, gives the licensee the benefit of having a right of response. What you and I have come to know, love and plead before the courts is that a person must have the benefit of natural justice; the right of response. *Audi alteram partem*; let both sides be heard. This is entrenched within the process.

Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that I have a right of response, I may still not like or disagree with the directives

of the authority. What do I do then? The legislation empowers me to appeal to the Liquor Licensing Tribunal. The Liquor Licensing Tribunal can hear appeals from the decisions of the authority, especially those decisions which relate to revocation or suspension of the licence as a result of an infringement.

There are other matters. For example, at Clause 31 of the Bill it reads as follows:

No person shall:

(a) mix or permit any liquor to be mixed with any ingredient or substance so as to render the liquor injurious to health; or

LS-7

(b) sell, supply or expose for sale any liquor referred to in paragraph (a).

In circumstances where that happens and the Director takes action against your licence for allowing that to happen, you have a right to appeal to the tribunal.

Therefore, in a broad way the tribunal does three things. First, it deals with appeals in circumstances where you have failed to comply with the conditions of your licence. Second, it deals with appeals in circumstances where there has been a breach of any statutory duty or obligations imposed under this piece of legislation. Third, where the Act has been breached or there has been a failure to comply with the directives of the Director. I had indicated to you before that the principles of natural justice apply at every step and, therefore, the Director cannot act in your detriment without giving you written notice and opportunity to show cause why the action he proposes to take should not be taken except in the occasion where for interest of threats to the public's well-being the premises in question may be vacated for a period not exceeding 24 hours.

This is the only time that the Director is able to act unilaterally, so to speak. Mr. Speaker, the power of the tribunal is that it too can impose administrative penalties and those penalties do not exceed in any circumstance \$10 000. If you have a grievance with the administrative penalty, then you have a further right of appeal to the High Court of Barbados on a point of law. Mr. Speaker, I think that that pretty much carries me through the substance of what the Bill now seeks to do. It is really, as I said, part of the transformative agenda of Government.

It seeks to modernise the criminal justice legislation in this country. It seeks, Sir, in part also to make sure that we do not continue or insult as we modernise the criminalise justice legislation, let me put it that way. It

seeks to make sure that we do not continue this wonton practice of treating to every infringement of a criminal nature in a manner that results in imprisonment or risk of imprisonment and it is important. Why is it important? Those people who have spent time to study this thing, Sir, make the point that you send a person to prison even if it is only for three months, there are implications, Sir, not only for reputation, but there are implications to that person's family. There are implications to that person's employment. There are implications to that person, even in this world nowadays, for an opportunity to travel abroad and secure a Visa so to do. Sir, there are some serious implications that we have to begin to take seriously with regards to this matter. Again, Mr. Speaker, it deals decisively with the age of drinking which, as I said, has not been properly dealt with since we were a colony and it has been a source of great concern to a number of child advocates in this country as well as social advocates and even those persons who are involved in industry such as the insurance enterprises and so on.

Mr. Speaker, last, but not least, it creates a civic structure for the administration of liquor licenses in a way that has never been done before and as we do that we move the law out of the Victorian Era in which it existed, to use the Prime Minister's term, and we bring us smack dab straight into the middle of the 21st century where we are looking at matters of empowerment, we are looking at matters of facilitation of business, we are looking at matters of ease of access to opportunity, we are looking at matters, Mr. Speaker, of equality of opportunity and that is an important thing because it makes no sense having a business structure in which at some level, some players have better opportunity to access the benefits that the system provides in terms of licencing and administration and so on and then in other circumstances, you do not have that same level of opportunity. I think, Mr. Speaker, that this House would do well to, not only reflect on this Bill, but I urge the Honourable House to give it its support because it takes us another step in the journey of the modernisation and the transformation of the Barbadian society and Barbados economy and I want to commend it to your attention.

With those words, Sir, I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time. I am obliged.

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

Hon. Miss M. K. CADDLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought you were giving away something there.

Sir, I rise to strenuously support the Bill that is before this Honourable House. There are some people who focus very much on doing and there are some people who focus very much on talking about what they will do. I am

pleased to be able to associate myself, Sir, with a Barbados Labour Party (B.L.P.) Government that perhaps has focused so much on the doing that we have not quite done all of the work of talking about what we have done and it not to congratulate ourselves but it based on a simple principle, Sir, and that is the principle of accountability. Accountability is something in which I believe very much. I think there has to be a way and there has to be a system by which you say what you hope to achieve, what you commit to achieve in the name of the people how have asked you to help govern, but then you also have to show that you have done it and the best evidence for showing that you have done it is people's experience of it because often you find that if you have to protest too much that you have done something, it means that people are not feeling or experiencing it. Someone stopped on me the street and said to me a couple days ago, "Ma'am, you know that I was able to get my Police Certificate of Character in two hours?" Sir, I do not really care for congratulations or accolades or any of that but what really shows me that we are in here doing something, that we are in the Cabinet of Barbados doing something, is when somebody is able to say, this is the way in which this has impacted my life.

Sir, we talk a lot about the doing business agenda and sometimes it sounds like fanciful language. Sometimes it sounds like you have a matrix, you have a table and it has in a bunch of targets and those targets have a bunch of indicators and you have all of these different things that you are trying to get done and at the end you get a score. Sir, we are not in here because we are trying to get a score, those things are important because they create the investment narrative for a country so your ranking, your score is important, but I will tell you one of the first things I said to my colleagues when I was asked to convene and work with colleagues in the Ministry on this Doing Business Sub-committee of Cabinet and on this Doing Business Private Sector Committee. I said that we thank the World Bank and our partners for coming up with this reform note and telling us what we should do in order to improve these scores but the people of St. Michael South Central did not send me here just to do what an external agency has asked to do. The people of St. Michael South Central sent me here to help make their lives easier so that whether it appears in a report or not, if it is something that is aggravating them we have a responsibility to analyse it and address it and so while we took and we are taking, as part of the work of the Doing Business Sub-committee of the Cabinet of Barbados which will meet again before the end of the month to again take stock of where we are and we will be so happy to be able to reflect and report with the will of this Chamber, this legislation being passed in this Honourable Chamber and in the Other Place, but not only did we take the things that were outlined in that report, but we also had to have a conversation with ourselves to ask what is it that people are really experiencing. Somebody in one of those meetings asked we could talk about how easy

it is to get electricity when you set up a business or when you build a new brick and mortar business, but have we talked about how easy it is to get water as in the water connections? It was not in any report, but we had to sit down and have an honest conversation with ourselves about what are the things that are really humbugging Barbadians on the ground every day and that was one of them and so it was not in anybody's report; the issue of water connectivity, but we had a conversation with the then Minister of Water Resources who agreed with us that it was something that we should monitor because we realised that at the time it was taking too long for new businesses, for new buildings to get their water connection and and so to be able to operate, so it is not just about what comes up in a report, it is about what are the material ways in which we can make people's lives better.

The Honourable Member who introduced this Bill in this Chamber this morning said something in his opening remarks that is something that is for me at the foundation of why I believe that we are all here and it is that we talk a lot about foreign direct investment, foreign direct investment is important, being able to match foreign direct investment and capital with local ideas is for me even more important but the reason that we concern ourselves with all of this ease of doing business work is not just, and I would dare say not primarily, to be able to facilitate big business because here is the thing larger companies tend to have the wherewithal, the resources, the time and the energy to navigate complex systems. They are able to hire lawyers and they are able to hire people simply just to go and do the busy work but a man who is trying to run or a shop a woman who is starting a painting business as one of the constituents just advised me she was doing, she is a painter, she is establishing herself as a painter so she can hire other people and grow a company, have fewer resources to run all about the place to try to navigate systems that are too complicated and so the real value in being able to do this work and deliver on something like a new Liquor Licence Bill that is going to simplify things is to be able to give clarity and predictability to regular Barbadians, to people who live and work here, to people from Carrington's Village, Flagstaff, Clapham, Brittons Hill and Flint Hall, that is the magic in it. Yes, we know that by doing this work, by doing all of the doing business work and by doing all of these reforms we are going to attract more investments from external sources but having shown that the kind of growth that we need to see in this economy is growth that is driven by the small business sector, growth that is driven by start-ups and by people who if they start a company they are going to start to hire the people in the gap with them or the people in the gap over that they know are looking for work, that they know have the capacity, and so our economy is going to grow in that way. That is the purpose of what we have come here to do.

Mr. Speaker, what really thrills me is to be part of a team, to be part of a Government, that can look honestly at what exists and listen honestly to what people are experiencing and say, listen the people that we know are at a disadvantage in the current system. The people that we know do not have the wherewithal to do all of these fancy things that we are asking them to do but I will tell you something else. Mr. Speaker, you know we very glibly say that time is money but it is absolutely true and the fact is that those among us who have fewer resources in terms of money also have less time. You would find that people with fewer resources, people with not a lot of money people, who do not work for a lot of money, spend more time trying to provide for their families, whether it is being on a bus trying to get their children to school and they are on the bus with the children and if the bus comes late that is less time that they have to put into productive activity that is going to get them money, whether it is having to go and line up in a court system to see if money is put on to get a payment from what we call the non-custodial parent, so the parent who is not necessarily living in the household, to the custodial parent takes time and when somebody is doing that they are not doing all kinds of other things that could in fact be earning them money. Do you see the perversity of it, Sir? That is why the National Digital Identification Card that is also being introduced and is being rolled out in the next couple of weeks, the reregistration of the population that is also part of our doing business agenda, is so important because it has the capacity to be able to facilitate those kinds of payment transfers State-legislated or State-ordained transfers between individuals so that people do not have to go and line up somewhere so that those people who would normally be going and lining up could now have more hours of work or could now be spending time writing applications for the next job that they want or doing one of the thousands of Coursera courses through the national transformation initiative to be able to improve their chances of earning a higher income. This is what we want. Sir, this is an ecosystem of opportunity that we are creating. It is an ecosystem of opportunity because the time that it saves because you can now apply online for a passport, a Police Certificate of Character or a liquor licence means that you can now put that time into so many other productive things that you once did not have the opportunity to do.

I know, Sir, that this Bill is going to make a tremendous difference for so many people in our communities. The Honourable Member who introduced the Bill spoke earlier about the culture sector and about the numbers of young people who are promoters for whom the culture of Barbados is so critical not just to be able to earn. There is a group of young people for whom our spouge, our calypso, our heritage, our tuk band and our pan, our tradition of storytelling and all of the things that make us enjoy being Barbadian and being Caribbean who are not just doing this work to earn, and it is important to be able

to earn as you do it, but they also have taken such pleasure in being able to bring their creative pursuits and the results of their creative pursuits to the people of Barbados and to be able to plan events and to be able to execute events without quite frankly, Sir, feeling persecuted because there used to be a climate in this country, and the Honourable Member made reference to it, where it was almost as if you wanted to hold a fete you are up to no good. The kind of marginalisation, and perhaps I take it personally because anybody who knows me well knows that summer is my favourite time of the year for two reasons, Sir: It is Crop Over and it is mango season, and those two things happily collide. I believe in the experience of that part of our culture, not just because people may like to party but because historically that represents for us a freedom and a creativity that absolutely should not be repressed or suppressed among people who want to realise their creative talents. Sir, this legislation creates a whole new set of possibilities for a whole new set of people.

Sir, I remember that there was a party that started many years ago. A handful of young men who started out in a little gap -- I do not want to call the name -- and even though I do not indulge in that particular pursuit, because I do not eat meat, they started roasting a pig and it was a lime, Sir, and you would know well what I am talking about. It was a lime, a handful of fellows getting together on a particular night and roasting a whole pig on a spit. Normally, the Leader of Government Business and I would not partake, but it attracted a certain energy. It started out very small, with about 20 people, 40 people, eventually it got to 100 people, and then the thing mushroomed! They started hiring other people and started having their parties in other countries, such as Trinidad and St. Lucia and all over the place.

My mother has a habit of saying, "When you hear de shout", and sometimes my mother's colloquialisms creep in. When you hear de shout, they were at Kensington Oval, because nowhere else in Barbados could hold them! Do you know why these youngsters and their enterprise, their initiative, was so important to me? It was because they started doing it since they, as young people, did not want to lose their handle on the things that make us Barbadian. There is a group of young people who are so desperately holding on to make sure that those parts of our culture do not disappear that we have to be able to facilitate their creative pursuits. I am very happy that this Bill is able to do that.

In June 2018 we did start this reform work with the planning legislation, and Sir, I will tell you because I only know how to shoot straight; I will tell you that none of this has been easy because you are talking in many cases about the fundamental ways in which people expect to engage with Government and then the fundamental ways in which the Government expects to engage with the people. These

are things -- as you work on the legislative changes and as you work on the regulatory changes -- which you have to work the entire country through. Therefore, it is a process but again, I am always happy to be able to hear from people who say, "I was able to get my day nursery established because of how much easier it was to have a conversation about what was required for me to get the planning through. When we said that we were going to have a predisposition to "yes", planning, just like any other Government regulatory agency, was not there to say "no" but to say "how"; not there to say "no" but to say "how can this be done?"

The way that you bring it to us may not be the way we can take it, but the commitment which I have made and the commitment which this Government has made is that we will always look honestly at what is presented to us and tell you, "This one cannot fly but according to the legislation, if you frame it in this way this can fly," and we want to facilitate your being able to do this. The reason that the young woman and her day nursery were so important to me was that it was not just an opportunity for economic enfranchisement. I will tell you why else it is important. When the children in those communities have a daycare centre, then their parents are going to work. Their parents are going to work feeling comfortable that their children are in a safe place, and they are going to be productive. That is why I talk about an ecosystem of opportunity, because these things do not exist in isolation but it is a work in progress. I think that when we come to this Honourable Place or we go anywhere else and talk about what we have been able to do or are able to do, it is not to say that we are reforming everything at once. I wish we could do it all at once. We are doing several things at once but not all things, because regrettably we found several things that needed to be fixed and we started the work of fixing them.

There are therefore times when the people will experience a service in a way that they do not want to experience it, and in a way which we do not certainly want them to experience it. What we do in those circumstances is to deconstruct the reason why this thing is such a nuisance. A friend of mine who works in another country says that in his work they established something called a "nuisance committee", which is the same thing. What are all of the nuisances of doing business that people experience and how can we get rid of them? That is all we are doing here. Irritants.

Asides.

Hon. Miss. M.K-A. CADDLE: There can be more than nuisances and irritants. They can actually, really and fundamentally erode a person's capacity to enjoy their lives in a productive way. They can remove opportunities. While for us it may seem like it is just a long line, the reason we

need to get rid of that long line -- and we are committed to getting rid of those lines -- is because they remove opportunities from people's lives. Sir, what I do want to say is that the work which we have to do and we are doing across every single Ministry and department in this Government is the work of looking at what the purpose of this thing is. Why do we do it? What do we do it for? It is a simple four-question system that we apply to policymaking: What is the public purpose? What is the public mischief that we are trying to avoid? How does technology add value to this? How does technology help us to do this more easily? The fourth and final question, which is my favourite question, is: Are there any groups of people that would be disadvantaged by this measure, or are there any groups of people for whom this measure provides an opportunity to create a chance at further economic enfranchisement?

Four simple questions, and I will tell you, Sir, that is the business of deconstructing the things which we do and looking at what the first-principle approach is. Sir, let us go step-by-step, and I will tell you that I walked into the Town Planning Office and I was only sorry that I did not have an application. I am not in that position where I can apply to build anything at the moment, Sir, but I went in and the team would tell you that I walked straight through the process from the fact that at the time there were only chairs so that if more than two people are there in the lobby the rest of people have to stand. I then asked, if I am here for a little while and I want some water, where I would get water from. It might seem very simple, but that is the deconstruction in which we are engaged. Put yourself in the shoes of somebody who is walking into that office. I go to the front desk, I go left, or I go right. Who is the lady over there dealing with, I do not see a sign. I do not know, someone please direct me because when you do not direct me that is time that I am late to pick up my child from school, that is an extra hour I have to pay the Day Nursery, that is money that I do not have. Sir this is the simple process, it is not anything that is any big fancy analytical framework that is not what is required here, that is not the work that was done by the Member for St. George South and now the Member for St. James Central. It was the simple work of listening to people, talking to stakeholders, going through the process and removing the extra nonsense that was making people's lives difficult.

Sir, I have two final thoughts I want to share before I take my seat. One is that we do have work to do, completing this reform agenda, it is so thorough, deep, broad and wide and that is why every Ministry is engaged in it at the same time for all of the regulatory issues. However, I am going to say something that might be slight controversial, I am known to do it from time to time so why stop now. It is that you know how I would know that I have seen some measure of success in what I have tried to do in service of the people of St. Michael South Central

and Barbados. I will know that we have seen some measure of success when the need is removed for people to call me and say see what you can do because I did not get through. It is perhaps something that we do not like to say and it is perhaps that we not like to confront, but when people do not feel so disempowered, disenfranchised and excluded that they think that the only way they can get through is if they call somebody that they feel can help them, that is when we have work to do. Hence, Sir I can only speak for myself in which I would feel that I have reached some measure of success when the systems work and when they do not depend on the benevolence of somebody sitting down behind a desk, when they are sufficiently transparent, predictable, and simple is what makes people's lives easier, where people do not feel I am not going to get through unless I make a call, that people can go with confidence to any office, wearing the clothes that they have and it is not to say that people do not make the effort to be what we would call decent. However, do not tell me that all I have is a pair of jeans that have in one or two holes and a shirt without sleeves, and you tell me that I cannot come in and ask for help, so how am I going to get help. If I cannot wear the clothes that I have to go and ask for help how am I going to get help? If you want to tell me that I am a man and I have in an earring as small as speck, take it out and put it in your pocket before you come in here. How did we get so aloof in doing the people's business? Sir I will know that we have seen some measure of success when we prioritise the outcomes for people over the form, the pod and the nonsense.

Sir, the last thing I want to say is that this work requires partnership and one of the reasons that I will always tout in which sometimes the conversations are difficult but life is about difficult conversations, but I will always tout the success of the governance system of the social partnership, because it allowed us to be able to do so many difficult things without having to be disagreeable, to sometimes disagreeing without having to be disagreeable. It allowed us to use the solidarity principle and to apply solidarity into a lot of what we had to do. One of those things is the National Payment System. The National Payment System is something that we passed and that we were able to conceptualise along with the banking system knowing full well that in act what it does is it loosens in many ways the grip that banks had on payments in this country to be able to democratise it so that anybody with a new payment technology that met certain criteria can participate. The purpose for that is to be able to reduce the cost of payments. That is how we will know that it is succeeding. However, we were able to do that along with the banks, we had to, because there was no way, just like the Honourable Member for St. James Central had to partner with Barbados Light and Power to be able to democratise the energy space. These are partnerships that we have to engage in.

The last thing I want to say is that the Government of Barbados is driving the legislative and regulatory reforms, but in order for us to give real transformation to people, we have to do it in partnership with everyone like the telecommunication companies, other utility companies, banking sector, schools and with everybody who is a stakeholder in this transformation. Hence, this work is a process and there are going to be times when we have to pause and listen to what is not working and we commit to doing it to listen to what is not working, to deconstruct the process and to make the changes. However, I am proud today to be able to lend my voice to this debate for this piece of transformational legislation that is going to make such a difference in the lives of so many and with those words Sir I am obliged to you.

SUSPENSION

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.45 p.m.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 1.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Bishop J. S. S. ATHERLEY: Thank you, Mr. speaker, for giving me the opportunity to address just after the lunchbreak the Chamber. I promise not to be long or to the attack the Honourable Member for St. James Central. If he is to find importance in this life, he will not find that by means of my focusing attention on him, I assure you. I will not be attacking him today. I am going to support the Bill with reference to liquor licences, the arrangements and the context to be established anew around which those licences, et cetera, are to be issued and maintained.

I am not given to strong drink. I am the son of a father who was much given to strong drink. He drank regularly for all the years that I could remember him and every day apparently. I have never seen him drunk to the point that he was falling, staggering or any such thing. It gave a bit of fluidity to his tongue, his expressions could become a bit colourful from time to time and harsh could be his comment. I would say that I have never seen him sick a day in his life until a few weeks before his death. I think that is to be attributed to something totally apart from the consumption of alcohol.

I am not promoting it. I am just making an observation because conversely, I know persons as young as I am and younger who if they were to give themselves liberally to one or two drinks, immediately become so inebriated that they do not know light from dark. The contrast is there but I want to support the Bill because I see the intent as being to expedite an area of economic activity which is important to Barbados and to facilitate access to licensing which in the context of our legislative platform traditionally and historically has been rather a strenuous exercise and

impediments in place which prohibited people from getting the access with the dispatch they desired to licences for wholesaling, retailing and serving alcoholic beverages.

I want to underscore that I am not promoting its use and not giving it to myself. I am speaking with reference to what the Bill is intending to do with reference to facilitating business and opportunities for business for Barbadians and investors. This was promised according to the previous Minister prior to my Honourable friend from St. James Central. It was promised in a few weeks since 2019. We are well into 2021 presently. If I may take liberty of giving an interpretation and understanding of what I heard escape the lips of the incumbent Minister, he did give credit to his predecessor for the little he did in advancing this cause to the extent that he was able to stand upon that platform of the little done by the previous Minister and move us to a point since 2019 having been promised this in three weeks then to bring us to this point today, I supposed is to be commended.

I am commending the Honourable Member for St. James Central for the work he did in turning the little effort of his predecessor into something substantial and substantive as is presented to us here today. There have been other known promises....

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not think that I ever used the word "little". While that might be an interpretation that is put on this matter by the Leader of the Opposition, certainly it never fell from my lips. I think it is misleading to the House. I would want to clarify, Sir, that what I said was that I wanted to thank the Honourable Member for St. George South for the work that he had done.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I do not think that that can be misleading. I do not know where the Honourable Leader of the Opposition got the word "little" from either. I did not hear it in your speech.

Bishop J. S. S. ATHERLEY: I would want to apologise by all means, Mr. Speaker, if the word "little" was not used but I sought to suggest that what was represented by the Honourable Member was that there was

lack of substantive effort put into the cause by the previous Minister, and that he substantially has worked to bring it to this point.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, with the greatest of respect you cannot infer from a speech made by the Honourable Member for St. James Central those things. You are not a court of law, Sir, that can make those inferences. You cannot do that.

Bishop J. S. S. ATHERLEY: With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, I disagree with you most strenuously but since you have ruled like that I will not go there. I will simply speak with reference to the fact that the Honourable Member for St. James Central commended himself highly with respect to the effort he had made to bring this Bill to this place in comparison to that which the previous Minister had done having promised us this in a few weeks since 2019. I hope we are alright with that? The record will stand to say that the Honourable Member for St. James Central, and I promised I am not attacking him but commending him, did very well in bringing this here after a promise of almost three years.

There have been other known promises made by this Administration and that is to swiftly bring Integrity legislation and have it passed through the Houses of Parliament of Barbados. To date, we still wait for the Integrity legislation to be passed by both Houses of this Parliament within the context of which the Administration commands majority numbers. We are past three years and the country is crying out for proper Integrity legislation to be attached to the conduct of public affairs in Barbados. This Government has spoken loudly about it and promised it. I know of some of the promises which they have made but to date that legislation stands not passed in the Houses of Parliament.

Therefore, the records would suggest that we are without Integrity legislation having been promised such and notwithstanding the large numbers which now attends the Government's presence in both this House and in the Upper Chamber. We have that. My Honourable friend from St. Michael South is not in his seat and I mean not to cause him any....

Aside.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South is not in his seat and I am not reflecting negatively on that reality, it happens. For reasons we have to be out of the Honourable Chamber. There are several Honourable Members who are not now here present in their seats because of the Covid-19 situation and because of other business of Government, legitimate business that demands their attention. I am not reflecting negatively on that. I am simply attempting to say that I

would have preferred to say this in his presence but he is not now here and that is, I stood to my feet in this Honourable Chamber almost perhaps a year ago, certainly several months ago, and I expressed concern over the potential and possible damage done to the coral reef structures in our coastal marine environment due to the fact that we had a number of ships berthed in the waters of ... What does this have to do with liquor licences? I can try to make it clear to you what it does to liquor, but you are not going to stop me from saying it. Here is what it has to do with liquor licenses. The previous Honourable Minister promised us this in a few weeks almost three years ago. It is only now because of the strenuous effort of this correct Minister to which he himself have spoken and to which he himself has applauded his own person. It is only as a result of that that this legislation is now here and I am saying, Mr. Speaker, in that context, that is not the first time that the mouth of this Government has promised us important measures to be brought and passed in this Parliament and I refer to the integrity legislation as an example and just to remind this Government that it has promised that to the people of Barbados and let it therefore not be another three years before that legislation sees the light of day.

I am saying similarly, that I stood to my feet here almost a year ago and I spoke with reference to the damage to the coral reefs off Barbados by ships that were anchored in our waters during the Covid-19 crisis and I and this Honourable House were promised then by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, and I am not being critical, I am just reminding him, that this Honourable House would be made to benefit of a report on such and it has not yet come. Now there are reports from credible sources in circulation out there that the coral reefs of Barbados have suffered millions upon millions of dollars in damage as a result of that activity and I am not going to speak to it here today, Mr. Speaker, because I want to talk about liquor licenses, but it was trading that and I am saying to my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South that I am giving him the chance, as the Minister, sincerely to speak to the issue before I raise it. That is all I am saying.

Mr. Speaker, there are some negative considerations to be taken on board with respect to the liquor industry in Barbados. There are many positives, but there are also some negative considerations. Barbados, it may surprise you to hear, Mr. Speaker, I do not know, but I went to check. Barbados is credited with the fourth highest level of consumption of alcohol in the Caribbean and Latin America. I think that probably would surprise a lot of people. I say that to state a fact, I say that to set a context for my brief contribution to today's debate. If a country that has the Non-Communicable Diseases (N.C.Ds.) profile that Barbados now has and when the opinions; the voices of medical professionals suggest that with this kind of a profile the incidence of alcohol use becomes a dynamic but creates the potential for an even worse situation, an even

reality among our people with respect to heart attack and stroke and some of the other ills that plague our national community, then one pauses to think of the reality that we are the fourth highest consumer of alcohol in Latin America, not only the Caribbean and that is not only the wider Caribbean, Latin America and the Caribbean. I think we fall behind Guatemala, Argentina, St. Lucia and Barbados is number four now with our N.C.D. profile then that becomes an area and an issue for serious consideration. Voices in here have been loudly raised with respect to the issue of domestic abuse as a phenomenon in Barbadian behaviour which is highly undesirable and on the increase. Domestic abuse, primarily so male on female and, perhaps, some incidents of female on male and I would not dear to go into any other relationship formations existing in Barbados which other people seek to promote, but certainly domestic abuse is a problem and I wonder if any consideration, any proper attempt to study, to do the research as to the extent to which alcohol consumption, bearing in mind we are the fourth highest consumer, the impact on our domestic relationship situation in Barbados family life, therefore, Mr. Speaker, with respect to alcoholic use. It is certainly a phenomenon of importance, one worthy of mention, one worthy of focus, one worthy of study and one worthy of address. Then there is the issue of workplace productivity, Mr. Speaker, no mention of any of these things in the presentation so far today as I recall it. I am simply seeking to broaden the perspective and to attempt to place on the table some alternative considerations or some additional, perhaps better said considerations, but we worry about the level of productivity in the workplace and the marketplace of Barbados. It has been a bug bearer with reference to the performance of the Barbados economy, the level of productivity and how therefore, has that been impacted by the dynamic of alcohol consumption. I have heard it mentioned with reference to this August Chamber, Mr. Speaker, and I do not mean to suggest in negative terms and I am not commenting on that, but I have heard stories which perhaps are legend of one or two people of note who have been Honourable Members of this Honourable Chamber who would not dear to enter these Halls and stand to their feet to give a speech unless they first imbibe of a drink or two. I think those stories are known to some of us. I do not know if it is true of any of the current honourable crop. I am not saying that of this current honourable crop but certainly our predecessors here. One or two or three of whom were contemporaries of mine in my first stint in this august Chamber and would not come here to speak unless they lost a bit of their inhibition by means of taking a drink or two before coming to the Floor. We have known and we have witnessed this outside of this Chamber that people sort of bolster themselves or calm themselves or energise themselves or excite themselves by use of an alcoholic beverage or two before they have to do whatever it is they have to do.

Mr. Speaker, on a very serious note the matter of productivity in Barbados must be a concern when we speak with reference to the degree of alcoholic consumption among Barbadians. A question of productivity is a question of safety. As a Member of Parliament and as a Pastor I have had to deal with people who have been exposed to injury as a result of persons on the job who were under the influence while on the job. There are stories as well which are almost myriad certainly multitude of people in the Public Service reporting to their job under the influence. Now, I am simply saying if we stand to consider the matter of the award of liquor licences, updating the legislation to facilitate business all of this may be good but there are some other issues which come to the table importantly so as part of that discussion and has to do with the impact or the effect of alcoholism on the workforce whether it be the Public Service or the world of private enterprise and certainly on our health profile and on our family life situation. Now if these are not matters worthy of consideration, Mr. Speaker, you simply have to take my seat and I will take my seat but I put them there for consideration.

Mr. Speaker, I have a particular concern with reference to the influence of alcohol upon the behaviour of our student population. I believe that this is a very serious thing. I do not make light of this in any way neither do I attack the Honourable Minister of Education, Technological and Vocational Training on this in any way but I simply ask the Government of Barbados if you are considering today facilitating businesses for access to licences, facilitating individuals for access for licences, putting in place a framework that raises the age of majority with reference to this from 16 to 18, if you are doing these things, if you are increasing punitive measures attaching to breaches, then one of the things I believe needs to be seriously referenced is the matter of how the use of alcohol is impacting our school children. I tried to see if I could find some legitimate documents in the bosom of Government agencies anywhere that speak to this matter and I did find some information with respect to the impact on our student population. There are some things that say to Government very readily, hey give some attention to us and there are some things Government gets preoccupied with, get in engaged in, involved with, obvious and necessary things that work to the betterment of the society and the national community in the interest of people, sectors, groups, et cetera, and there are some things which are very important and sometimes they do not get the attention that the demand required, they do not get the attention that is necessary because they are not immediately obvious as an area in need of redress because of the political support, the votes support, the popularity dynamic attaching to them. The question is: How is alcohol consumption affecting our student population and what has this Administration done or what has any Administration in

Barbados done to significantly address what perhaps is a significant problem?

Now, I tried to look at some research coming out of the National Council on Substance Abuse, et cetera. They did a report in 2006 which is a long time ago and then they did a report in 2013 which suggested that the problem was getting worse and in the context of Barbados and in the absence of more up-to-date reports one would have to conclude with all of the cultural norms which we now embrace, with the expansion of the economy and the social activity in which we are now engaged as a country that perhaps the problem has become even more exacerbated. There was a high use, Mr. Speaker, among school children in the 2006 Report if I may make reference to that. One in every two students at Class 3 and at Class 4 in our secondary schools had experiences with alcohol. The 2013 Report said things have become worse now, we are down to about seven out of every ten reporting alcohol use. In the previous Report the average age for first consumption was 10 years old and in the second instance of 2013 it was nine years old, the average age of starting out.

Mr. Speaker, I noted in the presentation the Honourable Member for St. James Central is somewhat of a bit of punitive approach being taken to this thing. You do not sell alcohol to persons under 18 now as opposed to 16, you do not employ young people to serve alcohol, et cetera, but that is just the provision of a penalty. We need in my view to be more proactive and more robust in the efforts we mount whether it is the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training or whether it is one of the other social agencies related ministries, whatever it is, to treat to the problem of growing alcoholism among our student population. A dynamic which impacts that, from the Reports, was the parental issue in the absence of a father, poor parenting. Those young people of the ages indicated most given to the use of alcohol were said to be persons coming from homes where there was a poor parenting dynamic in play.

Then, of course, the implications for teacher-student relationship in our schools. There is a growing tension between not only student to student but student to teacher in our schools. To what extent therefore, if any, does alcohol drive that and affect that. There is also the issue of truancy. Truancy in today's reality does not have as much to do with the absence of a bus service or even the inability of parents to provide in terms of moneys for children. There are other dynamics which are contributing to the level of truancy and the Report suggested that the use of alcohol was one such.

The point I am making here, Mr. Speaker, is that while we facilitate business, and we must do that and we should do that and we should provide for easier access to licences both for locals and investors from abroad who

have operations here, there are other things that we have to address as well. In relation to the matter of the widespread availability and consumption of alcohol, our health profile, our family relationships, workplace productivity and safety, and other public service-related issues, and particularly so today I am concerned about the impact upon our schools and our student population. We now know that we are at a place where our students now -- our young people, let me say -- are not only using alcohol but they are using other drugs and they are using combinations of drugs and strange cocktails with which the Honourable Member for Christ West Central would be more familiar than I am, because I hear him talking about all kinds of things that I did not even know were going on in Barbados, frankly. I wish that he would address this matter here in this debate today, because I am concerned as to the extent to which our youth population -- the Barbados of tomorrow -- is being destroyed by reference to use of illicit drugs, the more nefarious, what we would describe as the uglier ones, but also the more apparently innocent ones such as alcohol in various forms.

Sir, I read this thing before and I read it today while the Honourable Member for St. James Central was speaking, and in Clause 29 (30) on Pages 21 and 22 it speaks about refusing to admit to the premises any person who is drunk or violent or disorderly, and ordering a person to leave the premises where that person's conduct is disorderly. Thirdly, it speaks about not permitting disorderly conduct where "a licensee or person in charge of an establishment shall not permit drunkenness", and so on. I guess we know what disorderly behaviour is but I do not know, in the context of a document which peaks to a legal frame, that we have sufficiently explained what it means to be drunk. There is no definition in this document for the term "drunk" or "drunkenness" but it says that you can refuse to serve a person who is drunk if you are a licensee or you can put out of your premises or your facility a person who is drunk. I do not see any definition for the term "drunk", and I hope we are not therefore setting up anybody to get themselves in trouble for their action because they are acting without a basis in law.

Sir, on Page 24 at Clauses 36 and 37, this one is interesting because, to me, it creates a context for conflict when one makes reference to our culture. Clause 37 at verse 24 says:

"A person residing within 300 metres of any licensed premises may make a complaint to the Liquor Licensing Authority against a licensee in respect of the frequent drunkenness of patrons."

Mr. Speaker, you represent areas like Bush Hall and Waterford, and the Honourable Leader of Government represents a place like Bush Hall Yard Gap. We know I

represent people down in Westbury Road and Barbarees Hill.

Mr. SPEAKER: And Rotten Town.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Yes. People get together, legitimately so, to socialise and to have a good time, and sometimes conversation can be loud and behaviour can become what people describe as raucous and it can annoy persons living in close proximity. This legislation speaks of living 300 metres and people causing you problems in respect to drunkenness. Now they may be talking loudly and may be using colourful language but it does not mean necessarily that they are drunk. The legislation also speaks about the disorderly conduct of patrons and so on. It goes on to talk about dealing with those situations and the perils to the holders of licences in a context like that if the Liquor Licensing Authority finds that your patrons are drunk and disorderly and so on. Now, you are dealing with Barbadian culture, Mr. Speaker, and I know how easy it would be for some to get caught up in this. It may be very easy for some Members of Parliament who frequent those places for the purpose of drinking who may get caught up in this, because I am sure all of us frequent those places; some to say hi, to buy a Coke, to say howdy, to exchange greetings and conversations and stories, and some to drink, but it is a serious situation because there is no definition.

You are now bringing this legislation into a culture. I do not say that lightly, Sir. I lead a church and that church is right in the heart of a community, it is surrounded by dwelling houses, behind, beside, before, all around, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes the loudness of the noise of worship and celebration can be offensive to people, and we know it can offend but what do you do? The church was there before some. Some were there before the church. I am simply pointing to a cultural reality, and therefore when you translate this thing there, you bring this legislation into that kind of cultural context. I imagine you can cause some conflict in The Pine and across in The Ivy, so you need to make sure that you do not create a mess because of the way the legislation is worded and framed. Three hundred metres is some distance away, but it is anything within 300 metres, so you can imagine the boys up by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East having a good time and drinking at the expense of that Honourable Member, but they become a little loud and some people consider them to be disorderly while others extrapolate that to drunkenness. Before you know it, the licensee is in trouble and the Honourable Member for St. Michael East who is known to the police is before the law courts.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Who is known to the police?

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: He is known to the court, he is known to the police, and I do not apologise for saying that he is known to the police. We have to look at that because it is an important issue, in my view. There are thousands of people employed around this industry, so the Minister is quite right that what you do is significant because the welfare, the wellbeing, the financial position and comfort of some people is impacted by this. There are thousands of folks employed in and around this industry. I was reading that the global market for rum in revenue generation terms is about \$32 billion. That is a lot of money, and Barbados, being one of the earliest rum producers in the world, would want to be the beneficiary of that. We have come out of a history of sugarcane production and molasses production, and therefore rum production is a solidly established industry with heavy market spaces in places like the United States, which is one of the biggest consumers of rum in the world. Thirty-two billion dollars is a big industry with projected growth over the next five years of seven per cent, so it is a growing industry.

Therefore, we cannot see the legislation only in terms of what it does to allow a fellow who wants to hold a fete to get a licence, but we have to see it in terms of the thriving, the advancement and the expansion of the industry and Barbados' ability to penetrate the market and to command its space. Barbados in terms of rum and I am not talking about liquor but in terms of rum certainly is a net owner of revenue from the manufacture and export of rum. I think that is much as \$72 million on the gains side for Barbados, so we export \$73 million and we import about \$1.5 million. Hence, it is the net owner is of good money from rum and that is the reality with which we have to score.

The Minister needs to consider it and he did not say in here today but I am sure it is very much a part of his approach to the work in the Ministry that will lift the efforts to a higher level as compared to the past as was intimated by him. The question would be, how does he plan to help the players, producers and to exporters in the industry to deal with any challenges which they face. Barbados needs to earn foreign exchange, it needs to grow its economy, it needs to depart from its one legged dependence on a singular industry, especially now the evidence is clear and any platform that works for us that which is legitimate, we need to make sure that it is strengthened. Hence, how does the Minister plan to help producers and exporters deal with the challenges? I know in the past, I do not know the extent to which these challenges now still obtain, but there is a decreasing availability of molasses from which you can produce the rum, a decreasing availability of regional molasses from which you produce rum. If that is the case, how do we address that, how does Government facilitate the redress of that also knowing that in terms of US policy there were

challenges emanating from their tax policy, policy in granting of subsidies to rum producers and rum exporters in Puerto Rico, and US Virgin Islands? These are competitors of Barbados especially in the US market and therefore the issue of refunds, subsidies and tax policy which presented at some stage significant challenge for rum producers in this part of the Caribbean. How does Government intend to facilitate that aspect of the industry and how does Government help to extend or expand market penetration for private interest especially private domestic interest whose business it is to see what they can export to the World to earn not only for their companies but to earn for Barbados?

Mr. Speaker, I did not plan to be that long, but I was mandated to speak for as long as I can so that others may have the chance to be back here to speak and I think they are here now and I have done my duty. I thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Honourable Member for St. Michael East giving way to his sister from the South.

Asides.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Liquor Licence Bill. Let me say at the outset that given that I have had the fortune of actually running in an establishment selling liquor to the public. I believe I am in a privileged position to speak from a position of authority about the impact that this particular piece of legislation

Asides.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Indeed you have the Honourable Leader of the Opposition you have visited indeed. Therefore, having had the opportunity to not only serve but also to manage a family business, Braddies Bar in Bath Village, Dover, I believe I can speak on behalf of several other operators of certainly these similar establishments, rum shops, persons selling liquor to simply say that this is certainly a welcome change to all entrepreneurs across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I hear the Honourable Member for St. James Central mentioned some of the challenges in which I await a little bit more detail because I feel it is necessary for person to understand the true context in which the framework of applying for these licences would take place. Mr. Speaker you would have to obtain I think it was four applications forms and duplicates, not carbon copies of the applications. You would have to have these application

forms completed and you would then have to take them to the Ministry of Health which in our case was in Oistins for them to sign. We would have to obviously return the remaining copies to get your appointment usually in the Christmas period which for most people would be the busiest time of the year for shopkeepers, and therefore having to take time out of the schedule of running the business in order to have to go down to the Court in order to have the application code. It was often quite frustrating.

The other challenge that you had is that if you had to wait long for the Magistrate to be sitting and whether he or she had turned up on time and Sir you well know how the Court system is, so you could be there early in the hours of the morning waiting to have your appointment to have the hearing before the Magistrate only to find that the process have been delayed considerably and people would spend quite a number of hours waiting to have the application heard and obviously again enduring lots of frustration. Sir, not to mention that in preparation for these applications, you obviously had to make sure you had all of the other licences in place, you had make sure that all of your staff were in a position to have their health certificates as well, so it required a lot running around, going to the police station, making sure that various stamps were placed on the various forms. As the Honourable Member for St. James Central has indicated, for most shopkeepers across this country, it is was a very tedious process that one would have to endure. Not to mention if you were playing music, which most of these businesses do, that was another complicated process as it relates to the permission that then had to be granted by the police in order to give you permission to play the loud music. That in itself created its own issues in terms of neighbours sometimes having some challenges with noise or in some cases even the same police having challenges with persons playing the music into the wee hours of the morning.

Sir, in many cases, what often frustrated a number of shopkeepers as well and indeed at my own establishment at the time, was that sometimes the paperwork may not always have been in place at the Royal Barbados Police Force and certainly not at the Magistrate's Court, you would often get a visit sometimes from two or three officers just when the establishment was kicking, when the place was full, talking just outside of the establishment with a view checking to see whether your licence was in order. Mr. Speaker, all of the paperwork was in place, but many times I begged the question of officers whether they did not have other things to do in terms of dealing with the issues of crime, because it seemed that this was a process that was relatively straightforward and one which did not need to engage the officers in pretty much just trying to find out whether someone had a licence or whether they did not have the appropriate licence. I am therefore thankful both the Honourable Member for St. George South who I know had put in considerable work in this particular piece

of legislation, a draft legislation, and also the current Minister, the Member for St. James Central, for the work that has been put in to bring this to fruition.

Let me just say, I recall when I was sitting in the other place in the other House of Parliament the then Member for St. James South who was the Minister of Industry and Commerce indicating to the country probably in 2016 that it was the Government's intention to change the way in which liquor and entertainment licence applications were actually addressed. They met with stakeholders as well. Obviously, they wanted to bring it out of the Magistrate's Court similar to our views on it. The truth is that even with all the best efforts then because this has been on the cards for such a long time for making these major changes, that Minister at the time was unable to accomplish what the Honourable Minister and this Administration today has been able to accomplish.

Albeit, that it does not meet the satisfaction of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition in terms of its timing but the truth is that we have put in the effort. We have met with all of the stakeholders. We have listened to all of the various views because I am sure that in coming to the position that we have here today, we had to take into account the views of numerous stakeholders' interest in order to arrive at this position. I will also mention the fact that even after sometimes going down to the court, you may have to go back for one reason or the other to collect the licence. Therefore, the process of dealing with this continue to frustrate the very people with whom we have a responsibility to empower.

Over the last few months, this Administration no doubt recognizing that with the impact of COVID-19 pandemic it would have been made extremely difficult for business owners who were engaged in the sale of liquor to ply their trade and to certainly be able to generate the necessary revenue from what they were doing. A significant investment was therefore made in helping to support those families who depend on not just the sale of liquor, but certainly shops and small businesses in this country, Sir. I think when you understand the origins in many cases of these businesses and how they emerged, you would perhaps appreciate more why this Government certainly saw it fit and necessary to provide that assistance to many of those small business owners.

When we speak sometimes about, for instance, rum shops across the country and I know the Honourable Leader of the Opposition will smile at this, there is a saying that, "There are just as many churches as there are rum shop establishments." He made the point earlier in relation to noise that sometimes some persons could be offended by the loud noises emanating from churches, just as they may have concerns relating to noise emanating from other establishments selling liquor. However, I want to speak to a

practical issue in relation to this because I do not see much difference in terms of this legislation and what the practice was before.

For the most part, if persons living near an establishment had a challenge with persons being drunk and in particular, it just was not people drinking liquor as the Honourable Member would like us to believe. We are talking about situations where persons because they were intoxicated often times trespassed onto other people's premises, sometimes vandalized their premises and damaged their property. As a consequence, obviously those persons then suffered a grave loss. I think those are the types of scenarios that we are talking about within this legislation which are already captured, so this is not creating any new example or challenge for the general public. These are situations where people loiter onto premises and in many cases create havoc for people living in the surrounding areas.

There is the process of obviously reporting it and indicating to the police officers exactly what is happening. Certainly, an investigation is usually done and a determination made as it relates to the particular licence being issued. I recall my mother had a way when she operated the bar that anyone who was so intoxicated and they should not drive home, there was a general culture within Barbados that you would try to get the person a taxi. You would try to make sure that the person did not have to traverse the roads by driving their own vehicle.

I think that is the culture of Barbadian society. Therefore, when we speak in the legislation to the responsibility of licensees, in many instances I could speak again from firsthand experience that many people will not if they know, will not allow persons to leave the premises so intoxicated that they traverse the roads. Shopkeepers cannot be everywhere, Sir, so obviously if persons drink alcohol when they are in the car or have extra alcohol, then that is a different matter. However, for the most part I think most shopkeepers understand their responsibility not only to the persons who are consuming the alcohol but also that their responsibility extends to the persons who may be travelling on the road as well.

There is no benefit that any shopkeeper or any person who has an entertainment event can gather from certainly creating such an environment that people then bring harm either to themselves or certainly onto others. I heard the Honourable Leader of the Opposition indicate concern for our young people and this legislation does in fact take into account increasing the legal age limit for young people to consume alcohol and raising it to the age of 18 years. He mentioned that there were two reports previously done and perhaps, if he done a bit more research he would have recognized that there was also 2020 survey that was also released. When he asked the question as to

whether or not this Administration had taken the young people into account, I smile, Sir, because on coming to office I was told by the NCSA that they had some challenges under the previous Administration in relation to their access into the school plants and being able to interview our young people to really ascertain exactly the level of substance abuse in the country.

Therefore, I would urge the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to perhaps get a copy of the report which was published in 2020 and called the Barbados National Primary Schools Survey for 2020. Certainly, I had concern that there was such a large gap between the last report and us coming to office. The report is titled, "Drug Use and Related Issues among the Primary School Population." The survey was only done in relation to primary schools; Classes Three and Four at the primary school which is how all of the other studies were done. If the Honourable Member had taken the time to read the reports in full, he would have perhaps recognised that....

Asides.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, my dear Honourable friend must not mislead the House. I tried my best to get what I could out of the Government agencies. Obviously, if you are not on the Government's side you do not get the ready access that Members that Members on the Government's side do. I try my best up until this day to see if I could get the most recent information. I am glad to hear that there is more up-to-date information. I am very happy if the House could be told as to what the report suggests and if the situation is getting better or worse. If it is getting worse, then it reinforces my point.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, she is making references, so it has to be made a document of the House.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I was going there but the Honourable Member is trying to anticipate what I am going to say.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: I would like to hear her speak to it.

Hon Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: I believe that I have to share this information with the Honourable Member and with the country because the reality is that this Government does not do anything lightly and the reason why the limit would have been increased in terms of the drinking age was also because of concerns expressed in the same Report and our own observations as Members of Parliament, not only in your constituency, Honourable Member, through you, Mr. Speaker, but certainly across the rest of Barbados because we are all part of the wider community where we not only see how our young people are being exposed to alcohol, but we are also well aware

that there are also exposed to other substances that have crept into the society as well so the Report, Mr. Speaker, and I would make the document a document of the House, has indicated that just over 56.2 per cent of all students reported the use of any drug during their lifetime. Of the substances investigated alcohol was, in fact, the most popular followed by energy drinks and then inhalants as well. Notably fewer students reported lifetime use of tobacco cigarettes, fanta and marijuana and the average age of first for all of the foregoing was between the age of 7 and 8. The statistics have shown what this Administration has been well aware of in terms of our own findings on the ground, but it further re-enforced what, perhaps, are some cultural that have been long standing and which, perhaps, have been re-enforced over the years, but it has also lead us to take into account the high rate and also to recognise that we had to do something and we had to respond. "Thank you" to the various stakeholders who would obviously have introduced a number of these things into the conversation as well and certainly to the National Council of Substance Abuse (N.C.S.A) at the time for approaching the Ministry of Education with a view to having these studies actually done.

Sir, it does not end there because while we can say that young people are not supposed to work in the shops and in the places for selling alcohol or while we can say that we are not to be able to sell the alcohol to persons until they have passed the age of 18, the truth is that the concern for this has to start from the youngest age. I have shared with the Honourable Leader of the Opposition his concerns as well in relation to the public education that has to be out there whether in the form of parenting programmes, whether within our schools. We have a very strong health and family life programme within the schools with, as a result of this, has had to be strengthen to ensure that our young people, especially during this pandemic, are exposed to the dangers of substance abuse and as I said, we may think it is only alcohol but our young people have become even more creative and a lot of the behaviours that we are seeing acted out may be as a result of the use of alcohol, but in many cases it is a combination of drugs that is causing a lot of the challenges in our society. That is the direction that we have tried to push National Council of Substance Abuse (N.C.S.A) to also look into as well because it is no longer the traditional drugs that we have to be looking at. It is no longer just alcohol, it is no longer just marijuana and it is no longer just cigarettes or even the inhalants because now they have found even more creative ways to mix drugs for their own purposes, therefore, a number of our approaches have had to become very school-based in terms of prevention and obviously that has to be buttress by working certainly with the Ministry of Community Development on a number of the community-based activities as well because we have to meet our young people where they are.

I do not think that it needs to be said, but perhaps it should be, that again persons do not wilfully set about the sell alcohol to young people, but the truth is for those who engage in that practice then, I think as a society, we certainly must denounce that behaviour because we know the dangers especially on our young people that result from the use of substances certainly at a young age. I wanted to just address that point from the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. I know he was being mischievous when he raised it, but I do not think he expected that there was, in fact, a 2020 Report so I am glad to have enlightened him.

Asides.

Hon Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Sir, I also want to say that while I support this Bill, I support it against the background as well that this Administration has been working tirelessly to try to reform a number of the pieces of legislation that have become quite outdated and this is, but another example of the efforts that are being made. The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that we have been doing so many things that I am of the believe that will not truly see the benefit of what we have all been doing across ministries, perhaps for another three to five years, but a lot of the ground work is being done and a lot of the transformational things, Mr. Speaker, are in motion. Sometimes you meet hurdles along the way but the truth is regardless of however many ministers there are involved in a ministry, the truth is that we try to deconstruct and to reconstruct ways of doing things as we know them and we do that, Sir, because we understand that in order to transform this economy and to make our society and certainly our citizens more globally relevant, we have to ease the way and the pressure upon which many of our business people feel when they have to do business in this country.

Early on in this Administration we would have made changes to the Planning and Development Bill, we would have brought a Planning and Development Bill, to bring an ease as well in relation to persons who are seeking to development properties and to construct properties across Barbados. We have also seen the introduction of the passports being able to be applied for online. We have had the changes to the road traffic legislation, we have been able to make it easier for persons to be able to apply to pay to their land taxes and their Value Added Tax (VAT) and other taxes online and we have not stopped there. We moved to be able to have even the Barbados identification cards becoming in a digital form. All of this, Sir, again may sometimes seem like it is too much happening for some people all at the same time, but again I will say, I honestly believe that the true effect and the impact of a lot of what we are doing will certainly be felt over a period of time.

Legislative reform is not something that is an easy process because it also requires a change in culture and I speak, Sir, from a position where even in relation to things

like whether it is things like corporal punishment, whether it is in relation to the abolition of the Common Entrance Examination, or any of the vending legislation that we have tried to look at and tried to make changes to, it is never easy to make the change especially when people have become accustomed to a particular way of dealing with things and so when we talk about issues of domestic abuse and how alcohol may be linked to domestic abuse, we accept that is a fact within our society. Sir, obviously it means that related agencies have a responsibility to ensure that the public education is out there, but also that the social care agencies are there to support persons who find themselves in abusive relationships because persons may drink too much alcohol and come home and basically take it out on their women or indeed sometimes their men. These are the realities of our society. This Administration has not created those realities. Those realities have been there from the beginning of time. There was always alcohol, there was always abuse and there were all of these things. What we have a responsibility to do is to make the changes to the old legislation, certainly, to make things a little easier for people to access the court system or to change the structure so that it makes it easier for people to do business across the country, so this piece of legislation, I know, will be welcomed by all of the stakeholders who have been deeply frustrated over the years. I know that things are now not where they should be in terms economic activity, but it certainly lays the foundation for when things are better, for people who want to now apply to come into the marketplace to be shopkeepers or persons holding events, the process has now been made a lot easier and simplified to give them the opportunity to do things that perhaps they would not ordinarily have done, and therefore, I want to place on record my support to encourage the Honourable Minister to not just do what sometimes happens, which is, that we pass legislation but sometimes we do not keep a keen eye on its effectiveness and its implementation. My main concern in this would be making sure that even though we have taken the teeth away from the Magistrates' Court and we placed it in the Barbados Licensing Authority that we ensure that it is properly staffed, that it has the correct complement of persons and the trained persons to be able to turn around these applications quickly because all of the efforts that has been made here today to get this to This Place would come to nothing if the people who are put in the positions to deal with the administration and the application of these licences are not either properly trained or they do not understand the importance of being to respond within the very ambitious timelines but certainly timelines that are necessary if people are to plan their events, plan their activities and plan their business effectively. Sir, I therefore would want to encourage the Honourable Minister to reflect on that and to ensure that this legislation is given the necessary teeth that is required in order to make it effective.

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

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

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, thanks very much for engaging me at this time. This legislation is fundamental. It is fundamental because it is not just reform but is a radical transformation as simple as it looks because with the legislation of the 1950s, obviously there was some latent psychological damage done to black business at that time. The people of the mind-set of the 1950s would have been very concerned with the growth in that first half of the 20th Century of black businesses coming into existence. We just come out of the agriculture and this ownership of rum shops was a major breakthrough for the mobility of blacks. I am going to deal with it in the same manner in which my friend the Honourable Leader of the Opposition have dealt with it. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition probably would look at it from a more moral perspective and compare it with what he calls drugs and so on but I am going to look at it in terms of economic empowerment of our people in the 1950s.

Sir, in that environment with black people bringing back home money from the Panama Canal and the effort to purchase lands in this country which they were denied and which we tried in a very small way to address in the later part of the 20th Century by the introduction of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, I feel more passionate about that aspect of a people who were landless, a people who people thought and who deliberately distort truth by saying that these people have no business qualities, they did not have those kinds of endowments at all so people had us relegated to cutting and growing sugarcane and felt that we could only plant potatoes and yams, and I want to make that point over and over and over and over again, black people could not run anything, so we had to make some major decisions in that first half of the 20th Century including revolt.

I could just imagine, Sir, how a man like James Tudor would feel because he was always aware of the evolutionary changes over the years. He was a black shopkeeper selling groceries and some rum too. Sir, apart from criminalising this establishment, rum shops, and forcing people to take a snap of rum down in the dark in something called a bar because you had to have the structures in place to accommodate the type of people that used to drink snaps... I am not talking about nobody that is going into any hotel or no special room and talking about special brands of whiskies, these were small men owning these enterprises and consumers, smaller men, consuming a few grams of liquor and here it is in order for you to get a licence you had to go before the Police first. Do you just understand the mind-set of the time and the psychological liberation that this legislation is about to bring, whether it is

conscious or subconscious. Do you understand what it is when a man had to hide in a corner and drink this thing and the children who benefitted from this thing were angry with their fathers and mothers even for running the shop itself? I want to praise both Ministers who are known to be part and parcel of the putting together of this important type of legislation.

Sir, we had to make some special decisions in that period. Sir, not only does James Tudor comes to mind. I am going to talk to that some more because it was a sense of consciousness that made James Tudor understand the importance of helping blacks to have shops all over Barbados. He was not just a supplier, he was also a retailer but many of the shops that were set up in those time James Tudor was the man who worked hard. There were other shopkeepers who emerged as well but always with the assistance of James Tudor or other wholesalers in the country who probably might not be conscious of what they were doing, creating this grand opening for black people to be elevated into a central position. Sir, all of these children, probably some of them in here now, whose grandfather and grandmother had shops never wanted to work in the shop. They did not even want people to know that their family owns rum shops. Sir, out of probably what they might perceived an evil came a good because most of them became professionals and that kind of black business started to struggle over the years. Everybody wanted to be a doctor and everybody wanted to be a lawyer, but you could not understand what was happening in the society around you because the sociological interpretation of the day was not as rich among the broad masses of people as it is today but although they can understand it better they did not participate in trying to sustain that kind of business.

Sir, at that period there were all kinds of dynamics and you had people fighting for political liberties too and democratic growth as well. You had people fighting for opportunities in education, in economic activity and in opportunities all around and that is where the philosophy or the ideological thoughts of a man like Kwame Nkrumah when he was the President of Ghana came when said at that specific time: "Seek ye first the political kingdom" because he felt then that the emphasis of achievement for the breakthrough had to be in politics, but there were other forces out there saying, "This is now a conflict between your effort to achieve governance and our effort to preserve the economy and continue to dominate the economy". They wanted to dominate the economy always, and the entry of black people into business. You cannot cut yourself away from the period of time, because some still had to remain in the cane fields but the work in the cane fields was so hard and inhumane that they had to numb their consciences in the evenings at the rum shops. Some prayed. Do you know the hardship we went through? Some prayed, so you had the churches, but some went to the rum shops after probably 12 hours of work, working from six until six.

Some hummed Negro spirituals. Capture the period then if you really want to fully appreciate what the Minister of Small Business is doing today, Sir, and capture the period now. You have to admire the Ministers who decided that this must become part of the new forms of legislation that are so badly needed.

Sir, a few years ago this Government decided that we had all of these tenancies and most of the people living on them did not have as much as \$100 on the bank. That is why you will hear me asking from time to time: Where are we going? I feel good today because I think we are back on track. This is one of the greatest and most progressive pieces of legislation. Do not mind how certain people will look through it quickly and note some minor adjustments. Do you know how it is when a man wants a liquor licence and he has to go down on his knees at a police station, and sometimes the police dismiss people when they get there, turning you around and around? Then you have to dress up and go down in the magistrate's court down by the steps, below the steps sometimes, and wait until you hear your name called. Psychologically you feel as though you are a real criminal, and you are only going for an instrument that allows you to be legitimate to sell rum. To sell rum! Do you understand the liberty that you have actually given to the minds of people by allowing people to not have to go down?

I know you spoke about if it is in the jurisdiction of St. Peter you have to go to whatever district court you may have down there, and if it is in the one near to Boarded Hall you have to go to that one. I understand that too, but it should have never happened among civilised people where a black man, or even any kind of man, should have had to go down in a magistrate's court or go to a police officer to plead. He has no basis for denying you, he did not go anywhere and he does not even know where the location is sometimes, but he has to approve. He carries you around in circles, and then you have to come back now and go to the magistrate's courts; all kinds of unnecessary confusion we had to go through as a people. Sir, in the meantime, our people were fighting in that period just coming out of the adult franchise.

Sir, I am saying that, to me, when I look back to see the struggle we went through, there were not just the kinds of encumbrances being put in the way but you went and worked hard in Panama -- because you could not get any work here. More than half of the people who went and worked in Panama died prematurely in Panama. Then you came back to Barbados, you sent back your money to Barbados, you bought land, and somebody discovered that you were buying too much land. Sometimes you only had a few acres but then legislation came again, because these people were still in control of the Separation of Powers in the State. Then when even a black face came, in order to survive you still had to be dependent because they had the

economic power in the circumstances. The Master and Servant Act came into play, so they held us back even when we broke through with the adult franchise. Now we are here in 2021.

Sir, lots of things probably happened in the last Election because of some act of divine guidance of the hearts of the people of Barbados. Some of these things we are doing now.... If you are telling me that we were against the approach since 1991 -- that is at the level of the legislature and Government -- do you understand that black people who were trying to get licences, who had no power in this country, were against it since the 1950s? It has now come to this level where mature men and women are saying, "This cannot happen anymore. It must not happen anymore." This battle for us is not just wrestling with these issues in a unilateral way. The reality is that we are dealing with so many complexities all at the same time -- economic adjustments, legislative adjustments, trying to interpret for other people who are actually now new-born slaves because you have new-born slaves, anti-black Blacks and all kinds of different human beings in this society -- that you now have to tell the people of Barbados what this means in terms of transformation; that this is a form of affirmative action.

There were obstacles and denials and negations that we had to face over the last decades or so, and what we are now doing is trying to create an opportunity for the empowerment of our own people. When you speak this way, I only speak and use "black" and "white" because some people pretend that they cannot understand. When I talk about working class people in Barbados, I am not living in Europe. Working class is synonymous in Barbados with who is black; it has nothing to do with racism and not liking this body or anything like that. When we make these adjustments we know who the culprits were at the time who wanted to continue to monopolise in perpetuity, and we had to work hard. People talk about our people not preserving businesses, but that was a difficult thing because when your mother or your father decided that they wanted the children to achieve something, very few people wanted to go back to cutting canes. You can call people anything -- horticulturalists, agronomists, all kinds of things -- but we know you are going back into the mud and pushing your hands in the mud, and that the society continues to look at you as an inferior.

It happened in Haiti in the Revolution when we broke the barriers of slavery. When the black governments came into place, the people did not want to go back into any cane ground. The people in Haiti did not want to be dealing with any eddoes and any cassava. They fought the Revolution and they were of the opinion that that was slavery itself, so we did not want to go back to Bulkeley and Neil's and Lower Estate and The Belle and those places; we did not want to go back there, to Appleyhaite's

and none of those places. We are not going back there, so the Minister of Agriculture has a lot of work to do, and there is a transformation that has to occur psychologically first and that is what we are doing in this legislation because that means you are making it easy to do business. I had a superficial way of defining the significance of this amendment or this new piece of legislation. It cannot be to new business, we liberating the mind at subconscious obstacle that is there. If we had to confess, they are only two men in here that own rum shop, but hardly any of them

Asides.

Hon. T. A. PRESCOD: When you leave here in Parliament you might get charge you might go and drink out the rum shop. That is the nature of these people. You come here with all the good intentions and then you get some body blows in and out. Sir I have seen good people come in here and many days the venture into the Membership Room and no one wants sandwiches, when they get there they go straight for the bottle. I think I heard the Honourable Leader of the Opposition talked about how many people at least find themselves there and he would understand the importance of what you would say that you are spiritually blessed.

Sir, I am serious, this is transformative action. It is transformative action because it is a new consciousness among Parliamentarians and it is also political. It is a new consciousness that we can debate this and do not bonged down with the morality of it. The reality is that in many cases when we try to look at issues of this kind, when we look at marijuana and when we begin to look at alcohol, sometimes when we begin to look at vendors, everybody pulls out and say, vendors should not be on the Highway. Vendors cannot be on Broad Street because the legislation would have to have a frame of mind to recognise that Broad Street is also suitable place vending. However, you preserve Broad Street because they feel that Broad Street must have certain esthetics so that when people go down town you must be able to look through the window and it must be unblemished whereas nobody should touch the glass so you must be able to see the clothing in there in that looks attractive. Then you have a blonde woman in the window and she can put on anything she feels like, she does not have to pay the price for indecency. You have that, but you have lots of black people walking all down through there looking at mock things that do not even look like them and everybody wants to buy that. They did not call for alcohol to do that, it is your mind that allows you to do that and help through the day with great comfort. It is your mind that takes you into a church and hear how you are made in the image of Jesus Christ and when you look up there you see a funny looking man and every Sunday you go in church that was discriminating from the time the Christians come here, push your mother in the back crew,

your father going in and you come and go and sit down in your place down in the back. I went to a church called St. Cyprian's at one time with these people and if I turned to go up to the few seats in the front, my aunt turned the flesh and say come here boy, go there, and push me down in the back. She was dealing with me up here at that time because I really belonged to the back row. That is why I am saying to the Minister that this is not superficial approach to legislation. We have to take into consideration as to how do we transform the lives of our people economically, socially, politically, psychologically and everything, in every facet of life we have to be a conscious people of what it is we want to achieve. I am here with these people who every minute want to prove that they are more efficient. I keep saying it all the time that they have people that comes in here and waste people time boasting about how efficient they are in comparison to other people, who had a system that is faulty and you trying to correct or make a faulty system more efficient than somebody else. Sir, I do not know they are right here but you have to more competent than them. This is a faulty system, you cannot tell me that you want to make it efficient. We are here to transform and to do things differently. Although some people may call it the Rum Shop Act rather than Liquor License Act, you understand the hard work that mainly the Barbados Workers' Union have to put in in working in collaboration with the political powers then in bringing about these changes. We understand that these people never had no mercy. I saw a woman passing by my house and had on six dresses going to work. The dresses heavier than the body in the body that carrying it, in pumps and barefooted, working in cane grounds every day. Hence, you have to be able to take a legislation of this kind and strip it naked to fully appreciate how transformative and progressive this is. Whatever we can do as we go forward, and all of this thing about small business, I want to hear some of the people who were in small businesses in the 1980s and 1990s. I would love to hear, even some of them do not appreciate it because some of them like to talk a lot of foolishness about they are not racist. Some of the same people that will benefit from a clear understanding coming from the people House of Assembly very clear have vision for the future. If this Government has a vision for the future, then we have sometimes to talk people through this to let them better appreciate these changes that we are bringing into being. We cannot get it right, I do not want to say principle, but for people who probably of Christian orientation, we might not be so well Christianised to fully appreciate that as a fundamental in a matter of this kind. As you heard before, some of us are the offspring of people who consumes it. You cannot condemn it on the basis of morality. What is it that is so different if a man drinks whiskey at home and consumes more than a human being should try to consume than a man who only have a couple dollars in his pocket will go around the corner? Sir I live next to a rum shop and there is another rum shop but is presently closed, but it

really produced some brilliant minds. These people went as far as tertiary education but the father owned the rumshop.

On morning when you wake up looking for breakfast, there were men up there looking for breakfast too. Those men lived and worked hard. They lived long as well. I believe that what is what the Honourable Member from St. Micahel West was trying to understand. How it is that men consume so much rum and live longer than other people who were guided by all kind of health products, et cetera.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I noticed that when you are speaking, you are emphasizing the term “rum”. I understand because in those days it was just rum. There was no finery. You are speaking about Pretty Girl, Stays, et cetera. I am talking about working class people. We do not even know the other exotic titles, Sir. It is something that you have to spend time in a special school dealing with hospitality to become very au fait with the kind of language and the jargon that describes the kind of drinks that you are having. I am a liquor man or a “lick up man” as you have rightfully said. I am not liqueur. I am talking about liquor!

When you hear a man say that he wants liquor, you understand clearly what he wants. When you hear a man say that he wants rum, you understand. I did it from as far back as the days when you had Pretty Girl. Let me tell you that the consumption level is extremely high. Barbados boasts a lot about the sugar industry, rum industry and things of that nature. Sometimes, they distort the conversation by talking about the morality, what is wrong and right in terms of the consumption of this special beverage. Sir, it is clear that the Minister understood quite well how important is this legislation.

Hopefully, some of the other things that we need to address would not take us so long. This took us a lot of years before we got here and rum was around before 1957. From back in the days of a gentleman who I am going to make an address about later this evening, hopefully after 5 o’ clock, I am going to speak to people in the Parliament of Britain about a man called Sir James Drax. They know the value of rum and I want us to understand the value of the rum as well. Therefore, I am telling you that we are making major inroads. In my position, I speak this way because as I said to the press this morning on a matter regarding Rastafarians situated behind Ministry of Transport and Works, I am here as Special Envoy. I did not even know what the term meant before but I am here as Special Envoy on matters of reparation and economic enfranchisement.

I think that this instrument that is before the House today is really an instrument that I can fit neatly into the package of economic enfranchisement and reparations. I can also see it as some form of justice for our people. A

long struggle has been imposed upon us and now we are in a position to put these wrong things right. It is what this Parliament should be doing. I do not like to hear an apologist. If I hear an apologist talk too long, I walk out of this Chamber and leave because these are problems that we have had. We do not hate anybody. We do not have to go against anybody in terms of trying to push them out of the economic market but we need people to get into the economic market too.

If it means anything and we respect anything coming out of the 1950s, then we have to respect the opportunity that those people born before the 1950s have given to us to do what we are even doing now because those people could not even vote. They could not even vote but when they got the right to vote in the 1950s, they expected a difference in the behavior if they were any kind of obstacles in terms of their opportunities for growth and the expansion of education. When we came here in the 1950s, only a few people spoke about secondary education because they believed we were now trying to cover the three “R”s.

We had to cover secondary education between 1950s and 1960s and nobody even dreamt about tertiary education. It is Black Government that recognized the denial, opportunities and stigmatization of the things that we were involved in. In terms of economic empowerment, it is that Black Government that was given the authority to change things. Who do not like that in Barbados and do not want to hear the word “black”, they have some people as I said before and it is probably more graphically explained that people black like barber-greene in Barbados do not want us to talk about black people. The very black people in Barbados are so obsessed that they even go and get a prescription to change the colour of their skin.

They go to the pharmacy and mix up all kind of concoctions. A woman or man that you see in October 2019, when next you see him he is a white man overnight. This is what we are dealing with. We are still struggling with it. I heard Minister Louis Farrakhan say, “If you want to become a millionaire overnight, you just have to import three or four containers of wigs.” With a few bank holidays coming, all of the wigs would be sold. They could be blue hair, red hair, green hair or long hair. People with a bald head like mine wear these wigs that go to the bottom of their feet.

All of this is what this legislation is trying to address if you cannot see it. Sir, I heard you talking about what is inferred. Well, look and see what is inferred in the legislation. It is a transformation of the life of the people in a very meaningful way. This is what it is all about. You are talking about saying, “This is who we are.” It must not be word that is made up of a void. It must have meaning. In order for you to know who you are, you have to know all of these things that I am speaking to you about now in this

Chamber, Sir. In order to appreciate the adjustments, you had to understand the work of the trade union movement that fought alongside a political party for changes in the labour market, better working conditions, increments, and a shorter work week for people who had no limitations.

At least, you just made them understand through force. You had the Workmen's Compensation Act. You had all of these changes, Sir. Put this legislation in the same category of all of those progressive forms of legislation. Sir, I am extremely proud to be here today and even though I do not normally speak like this, I really am proud of what the Minister has done.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to really have to stop the Honourable Member for St. George South in his strides but I think he is misleading the Honourable Chamber somewhat if I am hearing him correctly and he is saying that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West when he spoke in this debate criticised him and spoke of his having done little in office, he is certainly wrong. I was simply saying that his colleague from St. James Central said that, so if he thinks that that must be dealt with he must deal with his honourable friend from St. James Central. I was simply saying that the Honourable Member for St. James Central applauded himself while putting down his colleague from St. George South. I did not say that myself, so if he wants to deal with that matter let him deal directly with the Honourable Member for St. James Central. Come on be a man.

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

Hon. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker, I understand how the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is feeling in 2021. I think he wants to return to the fold and we will welcome him into the fold but at the end of the day if the Honourable Member sits there and wants me to criticise my esteem Honourable Member for St. James Central then I will not engage in such criticism on this Honourable Floor.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, again the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I am not sitting here wanting him to criticise his honourable colleague from St. James Central. The Honourable Member for St. George South told me: "Mr. Man, speak for at least an hour, I want to get back here to deal with Kerrie Symmonds". Be a man.

Hon. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker, those words never came from my mouth.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would figure that. We are in this Honourable Chamber...

Hon. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SPEAKER: Could I speak Sir. Honourable Member I am speaking. I believe that when I am speaking that the Chamber must listen. I think we are here to debate the Liquor Licence Bill, let us stick to that and exhibit all decorum that this Honourable Chamber deserves. Continue Honourable Member for St. George South.

Hon. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker, when I spoke to the Honourable Member I had to leave the Chamber and I said to the Honourable Member to take some time on the Floor because we do not want to wrap up the debate and I needed some time to speak in this Chamber with the work that I have done.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: On a point of order. I apologise sincerely for the interruptions persistently, Mr. Speaker, but the Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member would never get me to facilitate him in anything again. He said: "Speak for one hour Joe, I want the opportunity to speak in this debate, I have to get at Kerrie Symmonds, he is of the view that I did nothing about this". Be a man boy.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members let us set the record straight. I do not in all honesty believe that this Chamber should be in here at such a critical juncture debating what an Honourable Member might have said outside this Honourable Chamber. I do not think that that ought to be brought into discussion in any debate that is being held in this Honourable Chamber so I would suggest that we refrain from any talk that might have occurred between Honourable Members outside the precincts in relation to this debate. I do not think it is necessary and appreciated in relation to what we are debating in this Honourable Chamber. If it was said in jest, et cetera, there is no need to bring it here in the discussion before this Chamber, and that is my ruling.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, I apologise for my part in that exercise but I felt honestly I had to set the record straight, and I apologise to you as the Chair. Never again.

Hon. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue.

Hon. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to apologise to this Chamber for and I will move on. The Honourable Member as always seeks to divide

what we have united as an institution but he will get no support from the 29 Honourable Members on this side of the House. The Honourable Member is welcome to come back, and if he misinterprets our discussion then I am sorry.

Mr. Speaker, the strategy for transformation has been laid by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, the Honourable Prime Minister. Mr. Speaker, while I was interrupted by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, we have taken several aspects of our business sector and we have infused technology within the aspects of the business sector through legislation, through policies and through procedures with a view to empower our people. This piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, will take our people from the informal business sector to the formal business sector and that is one of the strategies for transformation. We intend to create creditworthy businesses through this piece of legislation. I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, that Ms. Greenidge and Mrs. Best if they were alive would be part of this transformation process. These were persons who did not go to any secondary school, so this piece of legislation intends not to leave any person behind.

This piece of legislation that is here before us that we worked on, both the Honourable Member for St. James Central and myself, sought to deconstruct and reconstruct outmoded policies and procedures to promote the ease of doing business, and that is what this Government is about. We looked at not only the liquor licence legislation, the Police Certificate of Character, the Honourable Member mentioned those, but at the whole aspect of applying for passports online. Mr. Speaker, what this piece of legislation has done is to allow us the opportunity not to close our small businesses, continuity of business operations within those villages whether urban or rural Barbados and to apply for a liquor licence. When we started this journey, Mr. Speaker, statistics will show, we had some 1 000 odd liquor licences awaiting approval, that was in 2019, as a result of the bureaucratic nature, going to the health authorities, going to the Magistrates' Court and four different forms. This piece of legislation that we are seeking to bring to you the people through this Lower Chamber will modernise and allow those small businesses to indeed run their businesses and ply their trade and to employ people because when you have to shut your doors to go into Bridgetown or to the jurisdiction in which you are applying for this license, you are losing business. But what I think has been the benefit of this change is the digitisation process. Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have worked assiduously to ensure that the financial literacy aspect of small businesses becomes a reality, that we as a Government place tremendous emphasis on those small businesses, on those working-class people who are seeking to own their own businesses, who are seeking to sell wines, et cetera. Sir, it is not just about rum, I keep hearing the talk about rum. My mother does not drink rum. I do not think rum is served in the Anglican Church but we serve

wine with some form of percentage of alcohol, and that is constituted as liquor. So when we speak about the Liquor Licence Act, it is not only about rum or wine. I do not want to get into the heavy stuff, but at the end of the day we have transformed and we will transform through the modernisation of this Liquor Licence regime to ensure that not only businesses but also industries are well regulated and that the regulation is undertaken in the most efficient and effective manner, [thus] promoting growth and sustainability across all classes. It is not just about selling rum, it is about making sure that when you as a wholesaler, retailer or manufacturer get into the sale of liquor, that it is done on an efficient and effective platform and that you can utilise technology and that as a result we will bring some of the small businesses into the formal business sector, because they will be recognised as plying a trade and of course, this whole aspect of paying will be dealt with as well because gone are the days when we had over 1 000 licences sitting down in a magistrate's court and we do not know who owes from who does not, then there is the whole bureaucratic nature of sorting and analyzing. Sir, with the press of one button you would see who are the persons who are overdue by 60, 90 or 120 days. This is indeed what I call transformation and deconstructing and reconstructing outmoded policies and procedures to ensure that business is indeed thriving as we seek to develop and bring this country to a first-world status.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the whole aspect of seasonal licence is important. Sporting clubs who would want to sell liquor over a two- or three-month's period, those persons who would also go around to Karaoke and set up shop, now have the opportunity to pay (I think) \$500 and have a seasonal licence, without seeking to have to travel from one jurisdiction of the Magistrate's Court to the next, that is cumbersome, so that two-, three- or five-month's process has now been contracted and reduced to five days. So my club, Malvern Sports Club, will have the opportunity now to apply for their liquor licence and they can ply their trade in very short period of time. So that closing your door is no longer an option as you seek to wait on a liquor licence.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have had several examples of several cases and situations where several persons have telephoned me on many occasions, asking when this piece of legislation will be ready in Parliament. Sir, I know those persons who are listening, not only from the constituency I represent. It is said that St. George has the most rum shops in the country. I think the Honourable Member for St. Joseph may want to debate that, but St. George has many rum shops, or I should say, many facilities that sell liquor. At the end of the day, when not only can we deal with those persons who are active right now, but persons who want to set up a business, who frowned upon setting up their business as a result of the challenges in getting a liquor licence, they will now feel empowered to set up a little one-door shop whereby they can ply their trade. So

this is one of the stimulus that we will use to enhance small businesses in this country for the sale of liquor, and with liquor -- I keep saying liquor -- comes other fruits and vegetables.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is not about getting drunk because the National Council on Substance Abuse has spent many a day discussing this legislation and I want to compliment them because they have done work with many rum shops in this country to ensure that minors... And we have addressed that issue of minors, persons being 16 years old and being able either to buy or sell liquor. I think the Minors Act speaks to persons being under 21 years of age. But we now have brought it to a minimum of 18 years old, from 16. The National Council on Substance Abuse has done a lot of work with the Ministry of Small Business, Entrepreneurship and Commerce and I want to congratulate them at this stage of my presentation. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I know that this legislation is not a piece of legislation that people would abuse. I know that the National Council on Substance Abuse has committed to working with shops throughout Barbados to ensure that the sale of liquor is formal and that it complies with the regulations that we have set here and the legislation that will be passed in this Lower Chamber. So I am not at all worried about the use of alcohol among certain groups or classes, we have a duty as a Government and as Minister of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment, to ensure that our young people stay away from drugs, inclusive of alcohol, because when we look at the whole role of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment, those persons who aspire to become successful sportsmen and sportswomen, elite sportsmen and sportswomen, world-class sportsmen and sportswomen will understand that the use of alcohol should be minimal. So while I am here supporting this piece of legislation I will not advocate for our young people within this country or any other place to abuse the use of alcohol or drugs. We have a challenge in this country, and I would urge our shopkeepers to act responsibly because we have a challenge in this country. We know some persons will want to abuse it, but I urge you that as we make business less cumbersome for you shopkeepers to join forces with the Government to ensure that our young people, especially, and citizens on the whole, do not abuse this piece of legislation and see it as saying that the Government of Barbados has approved the use of alcohol or the over-use of alcohol but see that this piece of legislation is a piece of legislation to enhance and improve the ease of doing business and to allow our small working class people and small businesses in this country to operate a business without the stress they would have endured prior to now.

Sir, we started on this piece of legislation way back in 1991, and I have iterations of Cabinet papers from 1999, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, but this is what we have done as a Government in less than three years; less than

three years. We came to office to stop the bleeding first and then with a transformation agenda, and this was part of that agenda. Page 33 of our Manifesto speaks to the ease of doing business and utilising technology, and within less than three years we are at this stage as a Government. If you want to tell me that is slow progress, then something is wrong. Among other things, since 1991 we tried to do this, to amend this anachronistic piece of legislation for the betterment of our people, and you want to tell me that between 2018 and now we can be criticised for being slow? If we are slow, I do not know what is fast. Again, I want to thank the members of the Ministry of Energy, Small Business and Entrepreneurship, formerly the Ministry of Small Business, Entrepreneurship and Commerce. I think I got it right, Honourable Member for St. James Central? Despite the change of guard in terms of passing the baton, they stuck to their task but we are forgetting a key aspect of this piece of legislation: The Chief Parliamentary Counsel.

Many a day we journeyed to the Attorney General's Office to discuss this piece of legislation, and he, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, made sure, with the hawk's eye that he has, that this piece of legislation which we have brought to this Chamber and which the Honourable Member for St. James Central worked on assiduously and tirelessly, was free of errors. I want to thank the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and the Attorney General's Office for the cooperation that they gave to me as the former Minister of Small Business, Entrepreneurship and Commerce, because indeed to amend a piece of legislation persons may think it is a pie-in-the-sky approach, but that is not it. It calls for detail, focusing on the fine details within the aspects of the legislation; whether it is the Liquor Licensing Authority and how that would be administered, whether it is the civil penalties, whether it is the administrative penalties which the legislation speaks to. It calls for a legal mind to sit daily and nightly to address those issues.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy that the sporting community, the small businesses, the entertainers, those persons who will from June to August during the Crop Over season be moving around Barbados selling their liquor, their wines, their spirits and their beers, are indeed happy. It only takes one application now that will be returned to you in five days for you to have a seasonal licence during the Crop Over season. Likewise for the cricket season and the football and netball seasons; those small businesses are happy to know that you can apply for one licence now as opposed to a daily licence as you move from St. George to St. Philip. You had to change the magistrates' jurisdictions; you do not have to do that anymore. You just go to the Ministry of Commerce, the Director, and you apply online. You do not even have to leave home. You apply online on an e-service platform, and within five days once there are no objections, you have your seasonal licence with which you can move around

Barbados from parish to parish without having to worry about the magistrate and the police.

Sir, I want to caution those persons who may want to use this as a means of circumventing the role of the police. We are not an irresponsible Government. We will not say to you that if you break the law, your licence will not be revoked. There are clauses in this legislation that the Honourable Member for St. James Central spoke about. If you break the law and you involve yourself in illegal drug trafficking and any form of illegal activity, the police has the right to shut you down. While we have divorced this piece of legislation from the magistrates' jurisdiction to the Ministry of Energy, Small Business and Entrepreneurship, we still have the police to oversee some of the activities which we will condemn if we have to. There is a role for the police, so let us respect the law and let us execute our duties and conduct our business in a wholesome and legal way, because what we have done is to give small businesses an opportunity to earn a living and put bread on their table.

This piece of legislation, when combined with the Financial Literacy Bureau which I know the Honourable Member for St. James Central is working on also....

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two minutes.

Hon. D.G. SUTHERLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are aiming to empower a class of people, some persons who never went to secondary school, who do not know anything about financial literacy. They are good with their books. They are good, as would say, in adding on the back of a cigarette packet how much money you owe them, and that was used when we were going to school. That was how Miss Greenidge and Miss Best used to add up how much we owed them in the village, but technology has pushed us now so that we as a people, no matter how old you are, can learn financial literacy free-of-cost. That is what this Government is doing; going around to our communities to enhance this piece of legislation through financial literacy. Mr. Speaker, this is what we call transformation. This is what we call empowering our people. This is what we call leaving nobody behind. Last but by no means least, this is utilising a digital platform to transform the lives of our people in this country. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak on this very important piece of legislation. I am obliged to you.

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

Hon. A. R. FORDE: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I certainly would not be as exultant as my esteem colleague from St. George South. I do not intend to be this Honourable Chamber too long this evening either.

However, I want to say to the Member of Parliament of St. James Central, I want to give you my unbridled support in bringing this legislation to this Honourable and August Chamber. I also want to say to you that you have done service, you and the Member of Parliament for St. George South to get this Bill here in record time. What was not done in 30 years you have done two and a half years as a Government and I want to applaud you for that diligent hard work.

However, I want to locate my conversation of course to Clause 27, which specifically speaks to the sale of intoxicated liquor to minors and it sets about a series of measures that we as a responsible Government will be undertaking to ensure that we not only protect the children of this country but that we protect the society as a whole. The reality is that we have a duty as legislators to protect our children and to ensure that our moral test is passed at the end of our tenure. Mr. Speaker, to past that moral and its test we have to treat categories of people in a special way the elderly, the disabled community and last by no means least those in the dawn of their lives the children. We have a duty to ensure that our children are protected and every series of legislation brought before this August Chamber must have at the core the lives and livelihood of our children at the centre of the discussions or not we are spinning top and mud as it relates to the future of this country and the growth and development and the sustainable development of this country.

I want to say that if I speak specifically at Clause 27, where the sale of intoxicated liquor would be curtailed as it relates to persons under the age of 18 years old that there will be a charge of \$10 000 or up to five years imprisonment for persons who aid in ascertaining alcoholic beverages for persons under 18 years old. Those who employ minors so that they can be involved in the sale or the trade of alcoholic beverages that person could be subject to a fine of \$10 000 or five years imprisonment. What do we have before us? We have legislation which seeks to protect children from themselves because that is the duty of each and every one of us who enters this August Chamber. It is our duty to protect our children and I not only say that mindful of the fact that I was the Minister of Youth for the better part of two years but in a previous life as a pharmacist. Today I want to speak in that capacity.

Alcohol is consumed by a large population of our youth in the World as I speak. At least 70 per cent of persons under the age of 12 years old had their first exposure to alcoholic beverages. The average age in Barbados for alcoholic exposure is 10 years old. Now, if these figures are not troublesome I do not know what is. Then, it is not only the alcohol that we sell to our minors that is a problem for me, but it is the other drugs that young persons can find themselves in whilst using alcohol. Alcohol is a primary gateway drug and when I say that I

say that in the context of the fact that alcohol is used prior in 80 per cent of cocaine users prior to the persons using cocaine. In over 70 per cent of heroin users alcohol was used prior to that person using heroin. The figures are there and when I say alcohol is a gateway drug in Barbados as I speak there is an issue of purple drank and lean in Barbados with our young people, where we are having maladaptive patterns behavior in Barbados. This is not a whimsical discussion I am having, this is reality. Hence, I have a Minister who is bringing legislation to ensure that we protect our children, to ensure that this maladaptive pattern of behavior and the associated drug use is curtailed among our young people, I want to applaud him, because it is a real phenomenon in Barbados. I do not need to go into the cocktail hotel persons what is happening, but I am saying it today in Parliament so that parents, guardians and the adults can see and identify certain things happening around the household with their children and take note. That is why I am speaking today. Hence, when I talk about purple drank and I am speaking to the parents today, when you see your child who does not have a cough, with certain cough mixtures at home I want you to take stock, because it are those combinations used along with alcohol that is causing a lot of problems in Barbados. This is what we call the purple drank or the lean. When parents see these things at home they must recognise that there is a problem on the horizon. When you see jolly ranchers in the children's pockets or at home or on the shelf in great numbers, again there is a concern and the red flag should be raised along with alcohol. Then, the combination in cocktail you have ecstasy or methamphetamine thrown into the whole pot. These are the problems we are faced with in Barbados. Hence, when I have a Member of Parliament and Minister who understands that this is a problem and we must control and we have a duty to protect our young people to say to those who are selling and buying and having a social beverage that to leave our young people out of it. You must applaud him because I have worked over 21 years having to deal with it as a pharmacist.

When you in order for a young person to fill a prescription, he has to be 16 years old or more and that is a prescribed drug. It is a drug that has been prescribed by a doctor who makes a diagnosis and puts it on a prescription. Alcohol meets the category of a drug because it alters the body and is psychoactive drug since it can alter the psyche also. If you are saying that a drug prescribed by a doctor as a trained practitioner could only be collected by a person over 16 years old, then I have to support and ditto each thing that the Member of Parliament for St. James

Central said related to the aspect of this legislation that speaks to the fact that alcohol should not be given persons under 18 years old.

It is common sense although in the last 10 years they could not even find five cents or 10 cents, but it is common

sense. I am saying today that if we do not put measures in place to protect our children, then we are lost as a society. This measure that is brought before this august Chamber is to protect the children from maladaptive practices or behaviours associated with alcohol use. Mr. Speaker, I am sure because you are a man on the streets and ground that you saw on social media a few months ago a young man in a bathroom took off all of his clothing after using the purple drink; the lean and mixed with alcohol. He was 15 years old and his father in the bathroom asking, "Son, what you do?"

You saw it. The whole of Barbados saw it. It went viral. Do you know that that is one of the side-effects of the methamphetamines mixed with the purple drink and alcohol? Endothermy or heat in the body causes persons to remove their clothes, lose their psyche and the next day not able to say if it is day or night. This is the problem that we are faced with and the Attorney General then has to deal with the wanton behaviour and reckless activities in this society. However, when you recognize the source of the problem and what I called before the maladaptive practices of behaviour, we realize that a lot of the time it starts from combinational drug use or what we call in medicine, cocktails. This is the problem and I am speaking in this Chamber very real today because I dealt with it for 23 years.

I can tell you about the episodes that I have encountered. When your body is developing at that young age which includes your liver developing, there are certain aspects of your anatomy that is not quite ready for this level of drug use. I am saying again that this legislation seeks to protect young people from themselves and allow them to have a normal developed life in society, so I have to give it my support. You hear about the psychological problem associated with drug use. You hear about it each day. There is the loss of interest in school work. There are the problems at home with families.

Teachers complain about the problems and that is the psychological aspect of it, but then there is the anatomical aspect of it as it relates to damage of the liver, kidneys and all of the other vital organs of our young people as we know them. A lot of times you see these problems emanating and you want to know what is the source of it. We have a duty as legislators not only to ensure that there is a sustainable economic development but there is sustainable development of our people because at the core of sustainable development I always say that there must be people and partnerships. The planet must be involved because I am the Minister of the Environment. You cannot leave out the planet. There must be prosperity. Last but by no means least, there must be peace.

All of them must be intertwined. This is the only way. Every piece of legislation that is brought before this

Chamber must recognize the importance of protecting our young people and to ensure that they have a tangible stake in this country. They are the future of this country and ultimately we have a responsibility to ensure that the future is protected. It is what this legislation does. It takes into account that there are young, impressionable and vulnerable people in this society that needs our protection and needs protection from themselves. I have already spoken about the different indicators and active principles that parents should examine at home because the signs are there. In a previous setting, I have already spoken about the anti-social behaviours associated with drug use and combination drug use.

I said before that the alcohol could be used as a gateway, a drug to enhance other drugs or in combination with other drugs and that is a problem we are faced with. I am appealing to young people, parents, guardians, teachers, members of the church and society today to look after our young people. They are the future of this country and we have a responsibility to ensure that our legislation protects them, and any person who steps out of boundaries as it relates to this legislation will feel the weight of the law.

Clause 27 speaks specifically to \$10 000 fine or five years' imprisonment. This is the deterrent because we have to be serious. We have to be serious about how we protect our young people from the vagaries of drug usage. Do not fool your foot, alcohol is high in the category of a drug that is not only addictive but it follows all the tenets of dependency. There is tolerance which means that after the first exposure, you need more and more of the same drug to try to get back the first euphoric effect or excited effect. This is what it means. Also, it has withdrawal as the sister because after you stop taking it, there are a whole set of symptoms associated with the cessation.

There is restlessness, insomnia, nausea; you name it. There are the psychological effects also. For our young people I am saying, the legislation is there but there is a reason for the legislation being there. I want parents to recognize that when you see young people with jello and you think it is plain jello bought from the supermarket, mixed and put in the fridge, you have to taste it because there may be a different story behind it. There are alcoholic jello shots now. I have been telling parents these things and teachers. There is candy now laced with alcohol, there are all types of methods that children are using to ensure that their drinks and their products are infused with alcohol so you have to be aware. You have to have the visual acuity to understand and see things around your home to protect your children. That is your duty as a parent to do every single thing in your power to protect your charge. Simple. Now you have the legislation to ensure that if that does not happen you will face the consequences. The young people are the future of this country, they are the bedrock and if we do not protect our young people and we lose them then

we lose an entire country and that is what this Government is not here to let happen. We came with a mantra of caring, we came with a mantra of empowerment, which this legislation seeks to do, we came with a mantra of enfranchisement, again that is what this legislation is going to do. We say that there must be economic and social reform, again, that is what this legislation is doing. That is what we said as a Government and we said, as a Government, that we will move in record time to correct all the melees from the lost decade -- that is what we said -- and in record time. What did not happen in 30 years, I am saying today, today is a good day. "This is the day that the Lord has made and we should rejoice and be glad in it," that is what I am saying. Today is a good day and a great day for the Honourable Member for St. James Central because he has done, and I do not know if he practiced sorcery, but he has done what many before him tried and did not do. I try, I persevere, I do great things every day. That is a little maxim I learnt when I was 10 years old and I did not get exposed to my first drink at 10 years old although that is the average age in Barbados. What I am saying is these things that we have to give our children to hold on to so when or if -- and I am appealing to the shopkeepers now -- they come to the shop and says, "I want a shot of brandy or whiskey" the duty of the shopkeeper is to ask, "Where is your ID card?" because I have a duty to protect you from yourself. That is what the shopkeeper must say, not to look at the bottom dollar but to say I am protecting you from yourself. Then you can have the conversation because a lot of times we in this society do not talk to our young people. Let them know there is a better way. This is a better way to do things because that is what society was made of in my day of being a young man in the society, an impressionable one at that. You had to be a part of a society that was governed by each and every single adult in the society. There is a saying a village can raise a child but I will go a little further. A village cannot only raise a child, but mostly importantly, a family can and shopkeepers are an integral part of the village family so they could help raise the children in the right way and that is all we are saying in this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words and I know that for politicians few means forever words, that is the acronym, but with those few words I want to say that the young seeds in this country must be the future trees that will grow and protect the society and bear fruit for the society and ensure the longevity of the society. The only way that is going to happen is if we provide nutrients for these seeds in a metaphorical way. We are able to protect them, we are able to provide care, love and empathy at times and do everything in our power to ensure their survival. I am sure if you put alcohol on the seeds they will wither so figuratively speaking we have to be able to nurture our young people. Sir, I want to say to the Honourable Member for St. James Central, I give you my

sober, abstinent and teetotal support to your legislation. With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

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

Hon. J. A. KING: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It would be remiss of me not to contribute to this particular discussion. I am not going to be very long, but there are a couple of things that I think are worthwhile mentioning at this particular point in time.

First let me congratulate both ministers who have been dealing with this issue for some while for being able to bring it to fruition at this particular point in time. There are two sections of it which stick out for a person like myself having 30 plus years being involved in the entertainment industry and equally, 30 plus years in being able to deal with young people in social work, the two measures that stick out for me are both the ease of doing business for those entrepreneurs within what we call the creative economy and their ability to get these licences and to be able to do a lot more within a season or within the year than they have done previously. We have removed a lot of the red tape and I would not have to go over all of it. I think the Honourable Minister responsible made the point that this is really transformational for that sector in terms of being able to do their business at ease but one of the things that a lot of people seem not to grasp or oftentimes miss is that this alcohol that oftentimes get a bad reputation from many, many people is responsible for what we in the entertainment industry call the night-time economy and without that alcohol, a lot of the spinoff things that an economy benefits from would not happen. People oftentimes do not give the alcohol itself some credit where credit is due so let us take a simple look. We can talk a lot about alcoholism and the abuse of alcohol but I am a very practical man and I also do not pull any punches when I have to speak. Alcohol does not come off of the shelf and anybody, never yet. People abuse alcohol, alcohol does not abuse people therefore when we are having these discussions and oftentimes, I think, when we are talking about alcohol and especially when it comes to rum which is something that this country is responsible for inventing in 1703, we speak of it in such, I do not even know what term to use, but we put it on a lower bracket than, let us say, if we talk about wine or if we talk about champagne or we talk about all the other things that are foreign to us we give them these glorified approaches but then when you talk about a rum shop, then all of a sudden you begin to create pictures of lowly people, bad behaved, cursing, carrying on and all of these things, but yet if you tell me that we are going to a wine tasting, you expect me to dress a certain way, have biscuits and stuff and it is a wonderful experience. I think that as the Minister responsible for culture it would be completely remiss of me not to remind people that the very alcohol that sometimes we are so quick

to denigrate, that rum was created in this country and so therefore when we speak about these things, yes, I am not unaware of the problems. I am very much aware of the problems that the abuse of alcohol brings but that is a human condition that calls for another type of intervention and so even though I am happy that we have been able to move the age to 18 the truth is unless we as a people begin to take the simple word which is called responsibility... It appears to me that a lot of people living in Barbados today do not want to have anything to do with this word 'responsibility'. It is the responsibility of parents to deal with their children with these matters of abuse of anything be it alcohol, be it drugs or be it getting involved in violence. That is what parenting is about.

It is the responsibility of Governments yes to provide additional help where parenting fails but at the end of the day there is also a responsibility on the individual, it is called ethics. Mr. Speaker, you will hear me speak on this particular word time and time again in this Chamber because without ethics all of the other problems that arrived around these things arrived, so I get a little bit annoyed sometimes when I find people trying to find scapegoats for their own misconduct or their own misgivings, so if it from the devil, the devil made me do it, then it becomes alcohol make me do something, this thing make me do this. Every time it is negative it is somebody else except yourself. Mr. Speaker, I oftentimes have to tell people if they want to see the devil in full glare to look into the mirror because that is where the devil will be. You have control over how you behave, how you think and how you act to each other.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad therefore that we have the legislation but I have to speak directly to those persons who would encourage young people to abuse and do these kinds of things. With alcohol or any other substances you have to look in the mirror and ask yourself is my conduct productive or counterproductive to the betterment of the child, to the betterment of myself, to the betterment of community and by extension the betterment of the country. Mr. Speaker, on that note I have enough said where that is concerned. In fact, I will use one simple Bible quote Minister, "Those who have ears to hear let them hear". I will say no more where that is concerned because I think oftentimes we fool ourselves into thinking that legislation can do enough to change behaviour but I have lived long enough to know that since time immemorial we put legislation after legislation after legislation to stop people from committing murder and doing all kinds of things and they are still doing it and they will continue to do it until the end of time, but if you do not deal with the real problem which starts at how people view themselves and how they see their interaction with other human beings then we are going to be coming into this Chamber and having to bring legislation after legislation after legislation to deal with

things that are really and truly are in the realm of some simple things like common-sense.

On a note of the night-time economy that I began to speak about, having been involved in entertainment for 30-plus years it is important that those persons who are in promotions, those people who run shops, those people who run clubs and those people who run hotels have that ease of being able to get these types of transactions done quickly and efficiently and to have it now where we are going to be doing these things online is really, as mentioned earlier, the first step. The ideal situation would be to have a one-stop shop at some point in time where those persons who operate specifically within the festivals arena can get all of the licences that they need at any particular point in time in one go, and I really to applaud the ministry for giving us that very first step because it is crucial to business going forward.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at what that night-time economy does, I do not think I have to spell it out for everybody but I think I will take this opportunity to talk about it because oftentimes like I said earlier we stress and stress so much on the negative side of when we look at alcohol and these things, but let us just draw a simple example for human beings. Having worked in let us say St. Lawrence Gap for a number of years, that alcohol gives you mixologists, bartenders and waiters, it creates jobs for persons who after the night is finished have to clean up and do things and you have people who have to drive trucks to deliver. I mean it is a part of an ecosystem that the circle goes wider and wider and wider. The truth is when we come out of this pandemic one of the things that is going to help as some sort of stimuli for the economy is going to be entertainment, the ability of people to get out and mingle and drink and socialise and musicians get to work, dancers get to do things and promoters get to do things. This is as crucial as it gets when we think about post COVID-19 how we are going to recover.

As it relates to the tourism industry in itself, once people come back into the island, we have sitting in our hands that product that is called rum. I listened very carefully to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition when he spoke about the percentages, in fact two things: (1) the amount of money that is generated by rum so to speak within the world market, and it is says to me that we have a lot of work to do to being able to ensure that our products are part and parcel of that pie.

I also did not want us to lose sight of another piece of information that was put in this Chamber today when we were talking about Barbados being the fourth highest consumer of liquor in the Latin America and the Caribbean. Now, let us get real for a minute because sometimes I feel as if I am an alien sometimes when I hear people talking. How can you live in a territory that is responsible for the

creation of an alcohol beverage, a country that from the time I know myself as a child wherever you find a church you would find rum shops... There are just as many rum shops as there are churches across every parish. In every nook and cranny you would find it. We are tourism-based which means that people come onto the island and also consume alcohol. If you look at it per capita, if we work it out because sometimes people use these figures to paint a picture of gloom and doom, nowhere did he say that these people were abusing alcohol, he said it was the use of alcohol. Mr. Speaker, we are a tourist country, could Lord, we create rum and we are small, 280 000 maybe 300 000 if we get everybody counted, I mean what else would you expect? What you do not want is for people to be abusing alcohol, but I am not going to be one of these persons who are going to come and stand here and try to make alcohol look as if it is this great demon in a bottle. I have to move or speak from the wisdom of older people, and my grandmother, bless her in her grave, would always say to me, "John, everything in moderation." That is the moral of all things. If you eat too much you will be overweight, if you drink too much it will cause you problems. Everything in moderation, but I say that to say this: This piece of legislation, again, is going to be transformational. I would love to beat my chest and sing hallelujah that we have finally gotten it done, but having been a person who has a reputation of not being very patient, it is again one of these things that I would question; not in relation to any particular party or any particular government, but a quick calculation tells me 64 years that this has been a problem for people. We have to do better than that. We have got to.

I listened to some of the other Members. At the same time, it may have taken us two-plus years to get it sorted out. Like I said, I put my hands up. I am not the greatest person when it comes to having patience. I know my shortcomings and that is probably one of them, but the truth is these are among things we have to seriously look at in terms of getting these niggling problems out of the way. As was mentioned earlier, in 1957 these laws were put in place and they certainly were not put in place to help people like you and me or to empower us. They were put there from a colonial standpoint, and that is what they served: the purpose of that particular point in time. However, as we move on and as we progress, it is important that not only this but all other pieces of legislation which we find as we go along that have been niggling and anti-progress, we need to move them.

Mr. Speaker, again I just want to simply say how happy I am that we are at this juncture. I will be even happier when we move towards the next step, which I am hoping will be that one-stop shop for all of those persons within the entertainment industry, and I would also be even happier if we can get not only the agencies of Government but also civil society, the parents, the Church and everybody to help with being able to stem the concern of

minors becoming alcoholics. Not just the minors, but we want to start there to ensure that this does not become too great a problem or should not be a problem at all. We also need help for those persons who find themselves in a position where they are still abusing alcohol and things like that at this particular point in time.

Like I said, I am a firm believer in everything in moderation but I think it will take a monumental effort to deal with some of the problems that were raised in here today, but certainly legislation is not going to cut it in terms of solving those problems. It is, in the words of a song by a fellow called Johnny Ma Boy, "all hands on deck". Thank you, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will make a short intervention here in support of this Bill which has been a long time in coming 64 years after the Act which it is repealing today. This Bill is part of the transformational mandate that this Government has embarked upon, and I am very happy to be a part of it today. Sir, I, in fact, would have been born 60 years ago in a rumshop in the heart of the country, in a village very little known in St. Joseph: Coconut Grove. My grandmother was the owner of a village shop which she would have financed, I believe, partly by monies, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael East referred to, from Panama. Her husband, my grandfather, would have been one of those 40 000-odd Barbadians who worked in Panama on the Panama Canal in the early part of the last century, and in my first year-and-a-half I lived in that village and then when I came back from England I lived there as well. I am fully aware of the dynamics and the personality of a rum shop and all the references that we have heard today that are part of the culture of Barbados.

Sir, we know that laws were set up, certainly in pre-colonial times, to hinder black business and to make it as difficult as possible for black people to earn a living as self-employed people. Hence these laws, Sir, which we are tackling one by one. The law against vending, Sir, is one of them, and I look forward to the Honourable Minister who has presented this Bill today bringing the legislation to decriminalise vending and to, in fact, expunge the criminal records of those previously found guilty of vending. Simple acts of vending have been criminalised in this country since the 18th Century, Sir; historical criminalisation of a simple process whereby people are trying to enhance their circumstances and their economic wellbeing and that of their families. All of this is part of the facilitation of the working class in doing business, and the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto, 2018, at Page 33, of course, undertook

that it would use the technology to improve the quality and speed of delivering high-demand services, and this is one of them, Sir, such as applying for and obtaining the liquor licences and public entertainment licences.

Sir, I am in support of the vast majority of what has been said today so I am not going to go over that. Sir, I note that the Minister has the authority, as is normal under the Bill, to make regulations, and we look forward to those regulations being made. As is normally the case with these types of Bills, they will be laid by negative resolution in this Parliament. Sir, the issue of the age of majority being raised from 16 to 18 -- on the issue of being able to buy liquor and drink liquor -- is significant. Of course, as a former Minister of Home Affairs under which the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) falls, we give credit to the NCSA today, as other speakers have done. Clearly, this is an issue which addresses the mind of that council and this is important like so anything in overindulgence is not good. Yes, we are a culture that engage in liquor and we are a country that has become famous not only because of cricket and music but because of our production and manufacture of rum. However, we urge here today and I follow and join with other Members urging the youth to be moderate in their participation of alcohol. We are into the age of social media and we all have seen photos within recent times, even during lockdown periods and pauses, of young people drinking whole bottles of whiskey and other forms of alcohol and naturally consequentially drunk as tail, falling down and almost unconscious and having the Queen Elizabeth Hospital under tremendous pressure over the last 14 months, whereas having to take invaluable resources like the attendants in COVID suits having to go and pick them up to take them to the hospital. Sir, this is foolishness that some of our young people indulge in for bet to show that they are big for their ego and being encouraged by others also. This has to stop, because our health and social services cannot be taking up time on these instances when they are already stretched to the boiler in which millions and millions of dollars that we have had to spend which we did not plan to spend over the last 14 months in dealing with this global pandemic.

Therefore, I am in full support of the raising the drinking age from 16 to 18 years as the recognised age that you can vote. That is the age you can get married without your parents' consent and this Bill speaks towards that and is in line with that whole issue.

Sir, the administrative penalty of \$10 000 again is in keeping with the whole thrust of this Administration to decriminalise certain acts and not allow a criminal record to be placed on an individual for something where there is perhaps nonviolence, there is no victim other than the person who is harming himself or themselves. I am therefore also in support of that, in fact it is described in there as an administrative penalty not exceeding \$10 000.

Sir, this is important in this country as they have spoken about and certainly as I have spoken about in this Parliament on many occasions where persons with criminal records find it extremely difficult to get a job because I think it is about 85 per cent of businesses require a criminal record on an application or a free criminal record, a clean Police Certificate of Character on an application for a job.

However, one issue that I wish to focus on this Bill which is before Your Honourable Chambers, is the issue of the Liquor Licencing Tribunal and the Liquor Licencing Authority. As the Honourable Minister, Member for St. James Central said in his presentation of the Bill, the Director of Consumer Affairs and Commerce is the Director of the Authority. Sir, when you examine the Bill, this Authority has pretty extensive powers which we certainly as Parliamentarians hope will be used with reasonableness, because they can suspend, revoke, or recall a licence and so we hope that there is no arbitrariness in this that principles of natural justice will be used, the right to be heard and etcetera. All of these administrative principles which as you well know as a practicing Attorney-at-Law have come into focus especially in the last quarter century or so. This is because we cannot afford for the tax payers to have to be spending money on arbitrary decisions by bureaucrats and therefore I would trust that these powers in a way vast as it appears to me Sir, given to the Liquor Licencing Authority and to the Director will be used with reasonableness.

The other issue in which I wish to speak before I take my seat is that the Liquor Licencing Tribunal which of course oversees the decisions on appeal of the Authority. That Tribunal will consist of no less than five persons as is normal in a lot of these Tribunals like the Employment Rights Tribunal, Severance Payment Tribunal, Tribunals under the National Insurance Board. The Chairman of the Tribunal will be an Attorney-at-Law of at least 10 years standing, but what I was wondering is that the Act says that no decision on a point of law should be made by the Tribunal taking into account the opinion of those who are not Attorneys-at-Law. I am not so sure that I agree with that provision Sir, because in a lot of cases those who are not constrained by legal knowledge and qualifications exercise greater commonsense than those qualified in law when it comes to points of law. For example, there is not that provision in the Employments Rights Act in relation to the Tribunal, therefore I do not know if the Honourable Minister in his wrap up would want to give the reason why that is so, why you are limiting decision making authority on points of law falling within the purview of the Liquor Licence Tribunal to be decided only by those Tribunal members who are qualified Attorneys-at-Law. Sir, I also say that within in the context of the following provision in the Bill, which I agree with, that the Tribunal may act without regard to technicalities and legal form and shall not be bound to follow the rules of evidence as stipulated by

the Evidence Act. I certainly agree with that in that Tribunals such as the Liquor Licence Tribunal should not tie itself up in legal format and technicalities on issues such as these that should look within other aspects of society to come to its decision. Sir, all of this within the whole context that the decision of the Tribunal is appealable to the High Court, not only on issues of law but also on issues of fact and law.

Sir, I again reiterate I am in full support of this Bill which we expect to become part of the law of Barbados. For too long persons who sought to be entrepreneurs and small business people were fettered by previous Parliaments in making it difficult to do business in this country. The fact that people that even now have to stand up in the hot sun by a Magistrate's court and wait for a Magistrate to come who may or may not arrive before 10:30 a.m. The magistrate may not work for more than 30 minutes or one hour. In some cases, you have to do that every week to get a licence to sell liquor on a Saturday night. It baffles the mind that we have continued with this archaic system for so long. Therefore, the platform in this legislation whereby you can apply for and obtain a seasonal licence for three months is innovative, noble and has to be commended.

The entire thrust of the legislation that you can apply online rather than have to go to different Magistrate's Courts to apply for a licence because you want to have a fete or an event down Bathesheba, followed by another in Weston and Christ Church which may cause you to have to go to three different courts to apply for the licence is time wasting. The Government at the end of this term would have taken credit for doing numerous things in terms of transformation of this society but if it was one thing, Mr. Speaker, that this Government must take credit for it is to make the lives of ordinary Barbadians easier in terms of living and doing business, and being able to operate because it was just too difficult to exist in this country.

Especially under the last Government, it was just too difficult to exist in this country whereby Barbados fell from being the 72nd country in the world among 190 in January 2008 to 139th out of the same 190 countries in terms of ease of doing business. Life was too difficult in terms of applying for passports which can be done online. I am happy to be a part of that process. You can now apply for Police Certificate of Character online which under the last Government in 2017 took an entire seven weeks or near two months to obtain. By that time, the job applied for was gone. In real time, one can now apply for it and receive it the same day, again under the Ministry of Home Affairs when I was Minister part of that initial process.

One can pay for your driver's licence online now, Sir, as I did last year rather than have to stand in the hot sun at the Licensing Authority for two or three hours as

was done before to pay \$50 to renew the licence. Paying taxes, whether income tax, VAT or land tax, can be all done online as I did last year with my land taxes. This is part of what governance ought to be about; making life for people who reside in your country easier. Therefore, Sir, this is a proud day for this Lower House in debating this Bill and certainly we expect this Bill passed today in this Lower House and the other place in a very short while thereafter.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to wrap up this debate, I want thank first of all of the Honourable Members who would have shared their views on this very important piece of legislation. It is trite I suppose to thank Honourable Members for speaking. It happens always; almost monotonously. However, Mr. Speaker, I genuinely and sincerely do value the contributions that were made. For example, the Honourable Member who just took his seat raised a matter that is very real. We know from our past experience that very often at all levels of the administrative structure in Government, whether it be at the level of the politician himself or indeed at the level of persons who work in Ministries of Government and the statutory departments as well, there are some cases of overreach.

Sometimes, people behave in an excessive manner and that is why we created the Administrative Justice Act in Barbados, so as to rein in excesses of a public administrative nature. I think that that piece of legislation really is what will probably be the best guardian and watchdog over any possible excesses that might take place with regard to the authority and tribunal under this legislation. Obviously as Minister, I would want to pay a very watchful eye in the embryonic and initial stages of the way in which this is rolled out. As you well know, Mr. Speaker, with the best wishes in the world you or I will not hold office that we now hold indefinitely.

Ministers come and they must go. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, you know Speakers come and they must go. It is just the nature of this business, so that what do we have left? We have the Administrative Justice Act of Barbados and that creates the appropriate architecture for us to superintend any possible excess or even abuse of authority. However, I think in a mature democracy the Honourable Member for St. James North has raised a vital and valid point. In a mature democracy, we must be prepared now as we shift responsibilities away from places where it ought not properly to rely or be placed, like the Magistrate's Court in this instance or in the Police Force in some other instances. We want to have more of a civic type of establishment as is consistent with mature democracies around the world.

We have to start to trust out people to behave towards each other in a manner that is civic and responsible, and to see themselves as performing a role collaboratively with Government which allows for this society to treat to its members in a way that is developmental, facilitates opportunity for growth, economic activity and for all the positive things that need to happen. This really is what democracy as it evolves is really all about. I promised you at the beginning, Mr. Speaker, and I do not think that I have broken my promise that we would have in this House today a social, economic and justice conversation. I think that that is what we have had, Sir.

The debate has really been about legislative assistance to facilitate business, as opposed to what the previous Act was which was really a method used by the colonial Parliament of Barbados in 1957 to obstruct a class of business person who that colonial establishment did not feel should be given opportunity in the economic framework of this country. The Leader of the Opposition, Sir, obviously, contributed to the debate and I am indebted to him for his observation about the high level of chronic non-communicable diseases (N.C.Ds.) and the potential that alcohol can play in that regard, the need for us to continue to play close attention to the issue of productivity, he also raised, and again, Mr. Speaker, I think it is a legitimate and valid point, but the solution to both of those things lies more in the context or within the realm of ongoing public education, in my respectful and humble submission, Sir, and it lies more within the realm of ensuring that we continue to make people aware of the risk associated with overindulgence of intoxicating beverages and indeed with any other substances, Mr. Speaker, but the fact of the matter is that is not what this debate was about, that is not what this legislation was about. Mr. Speaker, this legislation was about facilitating business in Barbados and removing the obstructions that existed in the way of entrepreneurs in this country who are seeking to build out their business framework around what the Honourable Member for St. Philip West described as the night-time economy in part and obviously those things which are allied to the sale of alcohol in general.

Mr. Speaker, I feel satisfied that I can easily restate the basic premises in this wrap up. For me, Sir, and for this Government the basic concerns in these matters is to begin by asking ourselves about the public mischief that exists out there. We have in this legislation, Sir, recognise that there was a public mischief or is because the legislation has not yet passed both Houses and that public mischief is that there are impediments placed in the pathway of micro business people, small business people, medium sizes businesses, Mr. Speaker, and even the very largest in this island at an industrial level where the access to licences with regard to the sale or the manufacturer or the provision of intoxicating beverages is concerned.

The second question that we have to confront is the public interests that has to be protected and the public interests, Mr. Speaker, is that if we are going to be serious about business development in Barbados we have to remove the mischief. We have to correct the mischief and remove the impediment. We have to make sure that our people are given that opportunity that they need at all levels of the social and economic ladder so that they can go about their legitimate business without undue delay, undue impediment and frustration. The use of the word “irritant” has been heard several times in this Honourable House today and that is essentially what this piece of legislation has been. It is now unfit for a purpose and I come here as the Minister responsible to ask this Honourable House to support me in an effort to put something that is more fit for purpose in its place.

Mr. Speaker, the next question that we have is the issue of how best can we do that and in this piece of legislation we have deployed the use of digitisation by way of an e-service platform that allows for the people of Barbados now, no longer to have to go through the harassment of four sets of applications and going physically to appear in a Magistrates’ Court in each and every jurisdiction of the Magistrates’ Court across this island driving backward and forward consuming time, gas, money, et cetera, but to go online and have things done in real time. Mr. Speaker, the delivery of the licence, as I said, in the absence of objection from anybody to your application you should now be able to get your licence back in five days as opposed to a period, Sir, that would have carried you into five weeks or beyond. Of course, Sir, last but by no means least, the question that we continue to ask ourselves as we transform the way in which Government functions and the way in which we intervene in the society and social structure, Sir, in order to make life better for the people that we are here to represent and to serve.

The last question, Sir, is: What are the special interests, if any, that had to be protected? In this particular piece of legislation, Sir, as I said before, the clear special interests would be those people who are our children, the children of the nation. I could not speak, Sir, anymore fully or any better I could not articulate that concern in any way that is better than the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central. I think, Sir, that he captured it poignantly. They are the country’s future and we have to protect them and the fact of the matter is that for 30 days, Sir, would have been for too long for us to neglect the children of Barbados who had been exposed to the access to the consumption of alcohol and so on at age 16, but, Sir, we did it for 30 years and on the behalf of those children, Sir, I feel I have a duty to apologise on the behalf of this Honourable House to those children for the failure of this Honourable House to act almost in lieu of a parent in order to make sure that that which should have been done was

done, but today, Sir, is a happy day because we have done that which needed to have been done and we have done it and discharge that duty in a responsible manner.

The last observation I would to make, Sir, is that I think there were some questions asked about scenarios that might affect people in neighbours and so on and again, Mr. Speaker, the legislation does speak to this and it captures adequately all of the scenarios that might exist, but what we do that makes this legislation different from that which currently obtains is that, Mr. Speaker, we no longer solve a problem of somebody acting the way he or she may act out of a state of inebriation by giving them a permanent record. Mr. Speaker, we do not say that because you are inebriated tonight, but you will be sober tomorrow morning that you should go to prison for three months. Mr. Speaker, we do not say that because of the fact that you are loud or that you urinated on the neighbour’s wall that there should be a period of imprisonment. Rather, Mr. Speaker, we have a variety of methods that can be used in order to ensure the protection of people’s rights in this matter, in order to ensure and I said the people’s rights, the rights too of the neighbours who are affected. Equally, to be make sure that if matters relating to the surroundings in which there is an entertainment activity taking place or some other activity on those licenced premises get out of hand that they could be a vacation, as in vacating the premises for a period of time, up to one day if it is an ongoing recurrent type of activity, so that there can be a cooling down a cessation of improper practices. If it is that there is a fault to be had in terms of the way in which the licensee, the holder of the licences, allows the business enterprise to be operated then that licensee can get certain terms and conditions placed on his licence to restrain him and to constrain him in the way in which he allows his enterprise to be run and by extension, Mr. Speaker, if it that the matter is so severe that it warrants further intervention then with due notice being given to the licensee the director may exercise his discretion to suspend that licence for a period of time. If it needs even more severe intervention it may be a decision to revoke, but at every step of the way the director must share with the licensee the fact that he intends to take whatever action he intends to take so that the licensee is not only apprise of what is coming down the pipeline at him, but is in a position where he has a right of response. In that regard, Mr. Speaker, we do not think we can create the most perfect situation in the world because perfection really is not known to the law but what we do believe that we can create, Mr. Speaker, is an opportunity for there to be the continuation of business, the protection of those people who are neighbouring to the business and their rights and their interests and, Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the same time to ensure that there is even-handedness in the system of administrating this particular matter and perhaps most importantly that civil issues, those minor matters relating to how I behave and how you behave towards me, how I behave when I am at your place, Mr. Speaker, and how you

treat to me when I am at your place that these are matters that need not end up with you having a criminal record and having to wait six years or eight years for that record to be expunged during which time, Sir, your opportunity to get employment is compromised because you are a man who went prison, during which time, Mr. Speaker, Sir, your family does not have to carry the scourge of knowing that they got a father or a brother who is in prison or had been to prison because in a small society what we have done is something that is exceptionally injurious to the psyche and the well-being not only of a group of people who we call prisoners but more importantly we have done it to a group of people who are largely working-class people because I started out by saying, Sir, this does to humbug the well-to-do in Barbados. It does not humbug them because they can navigate their way through the slings and arrows of outrageous misfortunes, Mr. Speaker, with the lift of a receiver to reach high places in the society to make matters right but those who are born into the underprivileged class do not have that opportunity, do not have that reach, do not have that ease of access. Mr. Speaker, we got to be real about these things and we have to fix it while we can and where we can and this particular piece of legislation allows us to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I do not need to tarry any longer. I want to thank as I said all Honourable Members who have spoken. I want to thank the members of the staff of the Ministry of Energy, Small Business and Entrepreneurship most importantly the Ministry's Department of Commerce and Small Business. I also want to thank the Ministry of Information, Science and Technology because for us to get there they played a critical role in that. Again, this is representative again of a Government that is collaborating across governmental departments and across Government ministries. The Honourable Member for St. George South would have pointed out the very important role that had been played with the Legal Department of Government at the level of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and the Attorney General's Office and the Attorney General himself, so all of those persons I really feel a sense of indebtedness to and I want to go on record formally in This Place to thanking them for helping us come to this ground-breaking and historic moment in the way in which we deal with certain types of business in Barbados.

Last but by no means least, a question was asked about another companion piece of legislation which must come and that is the question of vendors. I say to the Honourable Member who raised that matter that cometh the man cometh the hour. That is going to be shortly laid in this House, Sir, for us to be able to deal with as well.

This Government remains fixed and committed to the issue of taking the burden off of the back of the workers in Barbados, taking the burden off the back of entrepreneurial activity in Barbados, unleashing the

entrepreneurial talent of this country. Mr. Speaker, Sir, nothing will hold us back from continuing to do that.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. K. D. M. HUMPHREY: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Honourable Member for St. George North be appointed Temporary Chairman of Committees.

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

On the motion of Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS, seconded by Hon. K. D. M. HUMPHREY, the House resolved itself into Committee, Ms. T. N. S-A. MOORE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Madam CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 3 inclusive were called.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Madam Chair, I want first of all to congratulate you for taking the Chair, and beg to move that Clauses 1 to 3 stand part.

Clauses 1 - 3 inclusive were passed.

Clauses 4 -- 5 inclusive were called and passed.

Clauses 6 -- 8 inclusive were called and passed.

Clauses 9 -- 19 inclusive were called and passed.

Clauses 20 and 21 were called and passed.

Clauses 22 and 23 were called and passed.

Clause 24 was called and passed.

Clauses 25 and 26 were called and passed.

Clause 27 was called and passed.

Clauses 28-32, inclusive, were called and passed.

Clauses 33-39 were called and passed.

Clauses 40 and 41 were called and passed.

Clauses 42-29, inclusive, were called and passed.

The Schedule was moved to be the Schedule to the Bill, and passed.

On the motion of Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS, seconded by Hon. W.A. ABRAHAMS, MADAM 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. K.D. SYMMONDS, seconded by Hon. W.A. ABRAHAMS, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Liquor Licences (Amendment) Act, 2021, CAP 182.

RECOMMITAL OF GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the Temporary Right to Severance Payment for Lay-Off or Short Time (Procedure for Settlement of Claims) Bill, 2021.

RECOMMITAL OF FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the First Reading of the Temporary Right to Severance Payment for Lay-Off or Short Time (Procedure for Settlement of Claims) Bill, 2021.

Hon. J.A. KING: I beg to second that.

The question that the aforementioned Bill be read for the first time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 4

To move the Second Reading of the Temporary Right to Severance Payment for Lay-Off or Short Time (Procedure for Settlement of Claims) Bill, 2021.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R.R. STRAUGHN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Bill before the Chamber which we will be considering this afternoon simply gives validity to the process as outlined last year, when we had to come to this Chamber because of the abrupt cessation of activity as it related to, firstly, the cessation of travel. Just for your recollection and that of the Chamber and those listening, Sir, you would recall that we extended the period of time from 13 weeks with respect to severance to 22 weeks, and we made those Amendments to give an opportunity to be able to see where tourism was going to recover in order to avoid significant liability to the various institutions. As you are aware, Sir, the Government of Barbados undertook to engage in the Barbados Employment and Sustainability Transformation (BEST) programme as a mechanism as part of the job retention effort with respect to the tourism sector. Therefore, having extended that right, obviously anyone that the previous Amendment had affected, we had made provision with respect to the making of an Order so as to give validity to the process.

Therefore, Sir, this effort this afternoon is just to ensure that we in effect just tidy up the process administratively, such that whether by tribunal or in fact if claims were not contested, the approval with respect to the Board would be validated in terms of the payment of those persons who were impacted. Sir, you would recall that we gave a commitment with respect to expediting any claims in relation to that so that the rights which were delayed because of the extension from 13 to 22 weeks would give validity under this Amendment before the Chamber. Sir, the reality is that COVID-19 is still impacting Barbados and certainly the rest of the world, and we look forward to when we can welcome tourists back to Barbados. This will, in effect, see the re-engagement of a number of persons for whom this last year has been a very significant and traumatic disruption, Sir. This Amendment this afternoon provides the validity with respect to the process that was outlined, and therefore allows now for the National Insurance Scheme to be able to ensure then that it can put its house in order with respect to that matter.

Sir, as you know that National Insurance Scheme paid out in excess of \$150 million with respect to claims for unemployment and as we move forward we hope that we can get the unemployment levels back down as we keep the economy going ticking over and I continue at every opportunity to urge Barbadians to follow the public health protocols such that we can maintain as much activity within the domestic space until such time as we can recover the level of activity that tourism and the other allied services often provided economic activity for Barbadians. Sir, therefore it is important as I speak to you hear in relation to not just an administrative matter but in real sense to encourage Barbadians to work hand in hand with the public health officials and with the Government at large and I know that as vaccines arrived this morning, as more

and more persons become vaccinated it then allows us to be able to continue to keep the economy open and by keeping the economy open it means that hopefully in the not too distant future we can see a full resumption of activity, but equally that Barbadians will no longer be at risk as it relates to COVID-19, but that requires a balanced approach. Sir we do know that with the supply still somewhat in question we are committed to being able to ensure that we can acquire as much vaccines as possible to allow all Barbadians to become vaccinated which hopefully will then mean that there will very little need for severance because businesses will be able to remain open and be able to maintain a level of employment that will commence with the kind of activity that we will want to see happen.

Sir, with those very few words I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: I beg to second that.

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

On the motion of Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN, seconded by Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS, the House resolved itself into Committee. Ms. T. N. MOORE, Acting Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

Madam CHAIR: This Honourable House is now in Committee.

COMMITTEE

Clause 1, was called and passed.

Clause 2, was called and passed.

Clause 3, was called and passed.

Clause 4, was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN, seconded by Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS, Madam CHAIR reported to His Honour the SPEAKER the passing of one Bill in Committee and His Honour the SPEAKER resumed the CHAIR and reported accordingly.

On the motion of Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW, seconded by Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS, the bill was read a third time had passed and cited as the Temporary Right to Severance Payment for Lay-Off or Short Time (Procedure for Settlement of Claims) Act, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you Mr. SPEAKER. With that we have come to end of today's Sitting. I beg to move the Sitting do now adjourn until May 25, 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: I beg to second that.

The question that the House be adjourned until May 25, 2021 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW.....	2
Hon. J.A. King, 2; Hon. Miss C.Y. Forde, 2.	

PAPERS

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW.....	2
----------------------------------	---

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW.....	2
Hon. J.A. King, 2.	

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1.....	2
Hon. K. D. Symmonds, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10; Bishop J. J. S. Atherley, 4, 5; Hon. Miss M. K. Caddle, 14, 16.	

RESUMPTION

ORDER NO. 1 (resumed)

Bishop J. J. S. Atherley, 18, 19, 22, 25, 31; Hon. K. D. Symmonds, 18, 41, 43; Hon. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, 23, 25, 26, 43; Mr. T. A. Prescod, 27, 29; Hon. D. G. Sutherland, 31, 34; Hon. A. R. Forde, 34; Hon. J.A. King, 37; Mr. E.G. Hinkson, 39; Hon. K. D. M. Humphrey, 43.

RECOMMITAL OF GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW.....	44
----------------------------------	----

RECOMMITAL OF FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW.....	44
Hon. J.A. King, 44.	

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 4.....	44
Hon. R.R. Straughn, 44; Hon. W. A. Abrahams, 45; Madam Chair, 45.	

SUSPENSION.....	18
-----------------	----

ADJOURNMENT.....	45
------------------	----

Hon. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, 45; Hon. W. A. Abrahams, 45.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ABRAHAMS, Hon. W. A.
ATHERLEY, Bishop J. J. S.
BRADSHAW, Hon. Miss S. J. O.

CADDLE, Hon. Miss M. K.
CHAIR, Madam
FORDE, Hon. A. R.
FORDE, Hon. Miss C.Y.
HINKSON, Mr. E.G.
HUMPHREY, Hon. K. D. M.
KING, Hon. J.A.
PRESCOD, Mr. T. A.
STRAUGHN, Hon. R.R.
SUTHERLAND, Hon. D. G.
SYMMONDS, Hon. K. D.

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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. Masthead and date. No sitting date was found in the text of the source; the date is taken from the file name. Please confirm.

Q3. Order No. 1, title and citation. The Order is to move the second reading of the ‘Liquor Licences Bill, 2021’, and the Minister presents it as replacing the 1957 Act, but the third-reading note cites it as the ‘Liquor Licences (Amendment) Act, 2021, CAP 182’. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Order No. 1, speeches of Mr. T. A. Prescod and Hon. D. G. Sutherland. A long passage (about 1,100 words) is printed under the label ‘Mr. SPEAKER’: it opens with the Speaker’s remark on the word ‘rum’ and runs on as a member’s speech. The Leader of the Opposition then interrupts ‘the Honourable Member for St. George South’, but Hon. D. G. Sutherland is never called and the start of his speech is not marked. The passage may belong to Mr. Prescod or Mr. Sutherland. Printed as in the source; please check the speaker attribution.

Q5. Order No. 1, Leader of the Opposition’s speech after the suspension. Early in Bishop the Hon. J. J. S. Atherley’s speech one paragraph breaks off (‘immediately become so’) and the next begins mid-sentence (‘impediments in place which prohibited people...’), which suggests a gap. His label is also given as ‘Bishop J. S. S. ATHERLEY’ in this part. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 1, Committee. One line reads ‘Clauses 42-29, inclusive, were called and passed’; ‘42-29’ is not a possible range. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Order No. 1, Minister’s opening speech. A stray line ‘LS-7’ appears twice, once among the points of order during the Minister’s opening speech and once in the middle of his reading of Clause 31 of the Bill. It appears to be a reporter’s or page marker. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Recommittal of Government Notices. The heading is spelt ‘RECOMMITAL’ here and ‘RECOMMITTAL’ in the next heading. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met in a hybrid sitting at the Worthing Corporate Centre on Tuesday, 11th May, 2021 at 10.00 a.m., with His Honour A. E. Holder, the Speaker, in the Chair; prayers were taken by the Reverend Father Mark Harewood. The Minutes of 15th March and 23rd April, 2021 were confirmed and those of 4th May deferred. The Leader of Government Business, Hon. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, laid the Proceeds and Instrumentalities of Crime (Value of Seizeable Listed Assets) Order, 2021, and Standing Orders were suspended.

Under Order No. 1, Hon. K. D. Symmonds, the Member for St. James Central, moved the second reading of the Liquor Licences Bill, 2021. He set it within three themes: the ease of doing business, legislative reform, and the use of technology to deliver services. He contrasted the 1957 colonial legislation with the new scheme, under which a Liquor Licensing Authority would issue several classes of licence within tight time frames, the Commissioner of Police and objectors could be heard, a tribunal would hear appeals, and licences could be suspended or revoked rather than shopkeepers fined or locked up. He criticised the old occasional licences as a disincentive to event promotion. His remarks about the Leader of the Opposition drew repeated points of order from Bishop J. J. S. Atherley, and on the Speaker’s ruling he withdrew the word ‘ingrate’.

Hon. Miss M. K. Caddle, the Member for St. Michael South Central, supported the Bill as part of the Government’s reform agenda. After the suspension until 1.45 p.m., the Leader of the Opposition, Bishop the Hon. J. J. S. Atherley, the Member for St. Michael West, supported its business purpose but raised alcohol’s effect on productivity and on students, cited a 2006 report of the National Council on Substance Abuse, and questioned Clauses 36 and 37, which allow a person living within 300 metres of licensed premises to complain to the Authority. A point of order from Mr. Symmonds over the word ‘little’ was ruled on by the Speaker.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw drew on her experience of managing a family business, Braddies Bar. Mr. T. A. Prescod, the Member for St. Michael East, called the Bill transformative and placed it within economic enfranchisement and reparations. Hon. D. G. Sutherland, the Member for St. George South, after exchanges with the Leader of the Opposition and the Speaker, said work on the legislation had begun in 1991, with Cabinet papers from

1999 to 2015, and welcomed seasonal licences for sporting clubs and entertainers.

Hon. A. R. Forde, the Member for Christ Church West Central, spoke on Clause 27 and the sale of liquor to persons under 18. Hon. J. A. King, the Member for St. Philip West, drew on 30 years in entertainment to speak on the night-time economy and personal responsibility. Mr. E. G. Hinkson, the Member for St. James North, supported raising the drinking age from 16 to 18. Mr. Symmonds wound up on the public interest, digitisation and the Administrative Justice Act. The second reading was agreed to without division. Ms. T. N. S-A. Moore, the Member for St. George North, was appointed Temporary Chairman, and

the Bill passed through Committee and was read a third time.

Miss Bradshaw then gave notice of, and moved the first reading of, the Temporary Right to Severance Payment for Lay-Off or Short Time (Procedure for Settlement of Claims) Bill, 2021. Under Order No. 4, Hon. R. R. Straughn, the Member for Christ Church East Central, explained that it validated the process adopted the previous year when activity stopped abruptly, so that approved payments would be valid whether or not claims went to the tribunal, and noted that the National Insurance Scheme had paid out more than \$150 million in unemployment claims. The Bill passed all stages, and the House adjourned until 25th May, 2021 at 10.00 a.m.